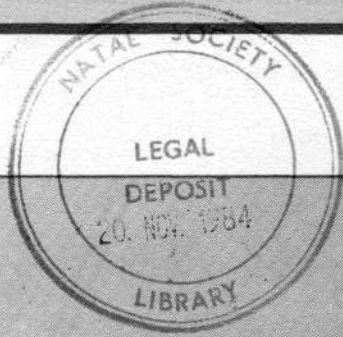


reality

NOVEMBER 1984

90 cents

**SPECIAL ISSUE - FOCUS
ON NATAL / KWAZULU**



A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL OPINION

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EDITORIALS

1. REMOVALS AND URBANISATION IN NATAL

Professor Jill Natrass in her article in this issue discusses the devastation already visited on the ecology of black rural Natal and the lives of its people by the migrant labour system. She argues that the only sensible way to deal with the disaster is through urbanisation. She says that this is what would have happened naturally anywhere else in the world but that here it has been prevented by the enforcement by law of an ideological myth, propagated by various governments since 1910. This myth has it that the towns are the white man's creation and preserve.

Another article discusses the further devastation threatening black rural Natal and its people through the Nationalists' programme for homeland consolidation and resettlement. This programme is based on other ideologically-inspired myths. One of these is that the homelands can, in some

miraculous way not yet revealed to non-Nationalists, become largely self-supporting. A second is that history justifies white South Africa in claiming 87% of the country as its own, and that black South Africa must find its home, and express its political aspirations, in the other 13%. A third myth is that black South Africa will be satisfied with this arrangement. In order to bolster the myth, black communities which an entirely white Consolidation Commission decides are living in the wrong place, will have to move. If in the process long-established homes are destroyed and treasured title-deeds torn up, bad luck.

One of the non-ideological arguments for moving black communities is that it is necessary to do so to preserve an overcrowded environment from further degradation. This

argument has recently been advanced once more by white farmers in the upper reaches of the Tugela River basin in Natal. They want the black people moved, whether Kwa-Zulu- or freehold-based. We suggest that before they press this campaign further they visit a few resettlement areas to see what happens at the other end of the process they are advocating. There they will find a burgeoning ecological and human disaster of potentially catastrophic proportions. If their campaign succeeds all they will have done will have been to move the problem they are complaining about somewhere else and out of sight, where it can continue and grow unchecked.

No one would dispute that many black areas in Natal are in a state of ecological crisis. They are often overcrowded, overstocked, seriously eroded and badly managed. There are good historical reasons for this. One is the restriction on the free purchase of land by Africans since 1913, which has forced them to crowd more and more closely into those areas which offer some prospect of security. Another has been the denial to them of access to the financial assistance for building and farming so freely available to whites. And another has been the legal restrictions placed on the normal urbanisation process which have pinned so many black families, who would by choice by now be townspeople, into the migratory labour cycle.

The answer to the Upper Tugela farmers' cries is not to move their problem somewhere else but to try to solve it where it is, on the basis of a long-term strategy worked out together with the black people concerned. Of course this will be difficult and take a long time, but who imagines that it will take anything but a long time to rebuild devastated ecological systems even if there are no people left in them? And what recompense may not one day be demanded of the white perpetrators of these removals by

their present victims? For they will not forget them. Nobody who has not experienced such a thing can possibly imagine the psychological shock which flows from the destruction of each home, and the tearing apart of the intimate community ties, which are inevitably parts of every forced removal. Surely we can do better than this?

Like many other parts of the world South Africa faces a threatening national ecological disaster, and it is not being caused only by black people. It is not they who are pushing the frontiers of the Karoo further and further into formerly rich farming areas each year. But the black contribution is compounded by laws which relate to them alone. Let the laws which restrict black access to land be lifted for a start. And let influx control be abolished, so that the process of urbanisation, which Professor Nattrass so convincingly argues provides the only long-term solution to our problems of rural poverty and devastation, can take its natural course. Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, new Minister of Co-operation, Development and Education, said recently that the government was giving a high priority to black urbanisation and that influx control should be seen as an instrument to ensure that it happened in an orderly fashion. We hope the first part of this statement reflects a change in government thinking. As for the second part, we would suggest that the best way to achieve reasonably orderly urbanisation is through the provision of properly supervised site-and-service schemes wherever there seems to be a need for them. The Urban Foundation should have some useful experience to pass on here. As for the old bogey of cheap labour undermining existing wages and security, the new trade unions should be able to handle that.

But as Professor Nattrass remarks, the political dimension to our rural/urban problem remains paramount, and it is likely to remain so until black people have the vote. □

2. THE OPPOSITION IN NATAL

Natal politics which, until not long ago, in terms of its white citizens anyway, were never in the vanguard of anything much worthwhile, have taken a decided turn for the better.

Not only does the province have a solid block of Progressive members in the white Parliament these days but in the boycott of the Indian and Coloured elections, spear-headed so successfully by the United Democratic Front, it registered the lowest poll of any province. Since then it has occupied the international headlines, first through the Natal Supreme Court's decision that the ministerial "detention-without-trial" orders served on 8 boycott

leaders were invalid; second through the six of those leaders with UDF affiliations taking refuge in the British Consulate in Durban.

So, as this special Natal edition of REALITY goes to press, opposition to apartheid there is alive and well. What is glaringly lacking is any indication of any prospect of the various components of that opposition getting together. Each one is so locked into its own "principles" and, dare one say it, prejudices, that there seems small chance of that.

It will need a very big person to break that log-jam. □

NATAL/KWAZULU – THE ROAD AHEAD

(This article is a condensation of a series which appeared in the *Natal Witness*. David Robbins's book on Natal 'Inside the Last Outpost' will be published by Shuter & Shooter early in 1985)

South Africans of all colours and political persuasions find themselves, in the mid-1980s, caught up in times of unprecedented change and uncertainty. The introduction of the new constitution, with its far-reaching political and social implications, means that life will never be the same again. We stand at the beginning of a new epoch.

Think of conditions ten or even five years ago. International hotels were novelties; mixed audiences in the theatre were the subjects of endless permits; job reservation was natural; trade unionism was a disreputable concept; and the idea of power-sharing at any level was scorned. The government thought it knew exactly where it was going, and the liberal left knew with equal certainty where the government was going wrong.

Now, much of this certainty has vanished. The National Party has split; those who remain in power have, on the surface at any rate, changed direction; the old touchstones of traditional South African society are crumbling even as we turn to them to verify our various positions.

As the world around us changes, our anxieties and uncertainties find expression in a single question: where will it end? The answer is not apparent. What IS clear is that apartheid is coming to an end.

An experienced Natal politician put it to me this way: "There is simply no way that Blacks will not be given real power at central government level in the future. I don't know when. Events will dictate the pace of change. This country is now set on a route to complete integration. You can have all the separate chambers, all the fancy safeguards you like, but you'll never stop the end result."

SPECIAL CASE

Natal is not immune to the forces currently at work in the rest of South Africa. Yet there are differences, and complicating factors, in this province which could create for it a future somewhat different from the rest of the country.

Many observers assert that Natal is, and has always considered itself to be, a special case. The 'solution' for Natal, it is argued, may not necessarily be the solution for the rest of the country.

It is worth glancing at the reasons why Natal is considered a special case. Take White attitudes. Natal is the only province with opposition party control at provincial government level. Although many White Natalians – especially in the north – might disagree, Natal is fundamentally a colonial enclave with, from a White point of view, a preponderance of English-speaking people. Then there is the sheer number of Blacks here. Whites are outnumbered 9 to 1 in Natal/KwaZulu as opposed to less than 5 to 1 in South Africa generally. This has given rise to what historian Colin Bundy describes as 'exaggerated and morbid forms of racially defined conflicts and fears.'

Such conflicts and fears are certainly fuelled by the geographic nightmare which the policy of separate development has created here in the form of the KwaZulu/Natal patchwork. In other provinces, by and large, the so-called Black homelands are arrayed around a central White core. Here in Natal, it's a mess. The Whites of the Transvaal could never be affected by Venda or Bophuthatswana as the Whites, Indians and Coloureds of Natal are by KwaZulu. Ulundi is one of the most important places in the province; the majority of people living in metropolitan Durban, for example, are administered from Ulundi.

As Professor Deneys Schreiner, vice-principal of the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, points out: "Most political thinking in South Africa is taking place in terms of the situation on the Reef where the vast majority of urban Blacks live outside the homelands. Solutions for the Transvaal are inapplicable in Natal where nearly all urban Blacks live in KwaZulu. KwaZulu is an integral part of all Natal's major urban conurbations; KwaZulu therefore cannot be seen as a rural government, separate from the 'problem' of the urban Black."

Stemming from the geographical patchwork is an almost total interdependence of the two regions. Economically, 'White' Natal prospers because of the abundance of Black labour and because of Black spending power. On the other hand, Blacks eke out a living thanks to the job opportunities available in 'White' Natal; there are precious few jobs in KwaZulu.



Chief Gatsha Buthelezi

For these reasons the notion of an independent KwaZulu will remain a dream, and a fading one at that. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, chief minister of KwaZulu, is adamant on the subject. 'Independence for us has always been, and still is, completely out of the question.'

So Natal/KwaZulu is not going to end up looking like the rest of South Africa: it is a special case. In 1980, Professor J.A. Lombard had his office bombed, presumably for suggesting alternative methods for turning KwaZulu into a viable state. A few years later the Buthelezi Commission amassed a formidable array of facts and figures which demonstrated the complete interdependence of Natal and KwaZulu, and recommended a common governmental structure to control the region in a federal South Africa.

If Natal/KwaZulu is a special region requiring a specially designed future, little progress in this direction has been achieved. Removals (in pursuance of the pipe-dream of consolidation) continue. And now a new constitution, designed for the country as a whole, has been superimposed on this uniquely complex region. Profound social, economic and political change is inevitable, but will such change be painful and destructive, or positive and progressive?

'It is crazy and short-sighted not to start sharing resources,' Professor Laurie Schlemmer, director of the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Natal in Durban, says. 'I believe that events and economic circumstances will ultimately force this sharing.'

TWO VOICES

Listen to two more authoritative White Natal voices:

'The current state of affairs is not satisfactory, but what is the solution? We will have to find a way of coming to terms with the situation, and put to the government something that is realistic, practical and acceptable to it. There will have to be much closer co-operation between all races, whatever structures are imposed. The facts of life will force it. Natal and KwaZulu cannot operate successfully as independent units.'

'Certainly, as far as KwaZulu is concerned, it is totally unjust that Blacks are not citizens of their own country. In the broader context, their country is South Africa; in the narrower context it must be Natal/KwaZulu. It's

impossible to divide Natal/KwaZulu. Therefore, if we are going to confine the citizenship issue, it is absolutely inescapable that they must be citizens of Natal/KwaZulu.'

The first voice is that of Frank Martin, Natal's senior MEC; the second belongs to Natal's foremost industrialist, Chris Saunders. Both these men, it will be remembered, voted 'yes' in the constitutional referendum last year; both are moderate and reformist, who see the new constitution as 'a step in the right direction'.

Mr. Martin does not believe that political unity is necessary or desirable, although it might evolve 'in the dim and distant future'.

'You'll never sell the idea of one political institution to the White electorate, and I'm only interested in selling things that can work. As I have said, Natal and KwaZulu are in my opinion economically and strategically indivisible. But not politically. Here we have two separate entities: the Natal Provincial Administration and Ulundi, both drawing their powers from acts of parliament, both acting as governments for their people.

'I am certain that an accommodation can be found for the region in terms of the new constitution. What I would like to see established is a common planning and administrative, rather than political, authority with statutory teeth.'

Mr. Saunders, on the other hand, told me that economic and political unity were inseparable. This would apply to South Africa as a whole as well as to Natal/KwaZulu. Indeed, to more fully understand the regional situation one needed to examine it in its national context.

'For a start, one-man-one-vote is out,' he said. 'We have to accept that South Africa is a modern, collectivist western state with liberal institutions. By collectivist, I mean we are a whole group of different sorts of people brought together by force of circumstances into a unitary state. Within that unitary state we have a high level of technology, a very large military establishment and even a nuclear capacity.'

'We must accept, too, that if these resources were suddenly turned over to a Black nationalist government, we would have here in South Africa the most powerful Black state in the world. We also must accept that it would be a state that would be sympathetic to the many external influences that have made their presence felt in other Black states — Marxism, a dictatorial one-party state, almost continuous revolutions, and so on.'



Frank Martin

'This scenario, therefore, must be avoided. And it's going to be avoided first of all by the force of western influence and interest in this country, and secondly it will be totally resisted by Whites who are in power here.'

'How can we have political unity, which you say is essential, without one-man-one-vote?' I asked.

'This I think is one of our greatest problems. We say as Whites: we are South Africa. Now we are going to have a tricameral system whereby the Coloureds and Indians can join us as South Africans. But what about the Blacks?

'It's no solution to say that eventually, by gradualism, they will form a part of the mainstream of South African politics. That is not the answer for now. Apartheid is totally undesirable; in fact it's unworkable. If majority rule is out, for reasons I have already noted, all that is left is some form of power-sharing and consensus-style government.'

The trade union movement, Mr. Saunders said, provided a reasonable blue-print for what could happen politically.

'In any enlightened factory now, Mr. Saunders continued, 'there is equal opportunity, a rate for the job, a situation where people will be advanced by merit and merit alone. But what happens when the whistle blows and you leave the factory? It's then that the inequalities begin. Why can't we have the same system of negotiation outside the factory as we have within? We've actually already granted Blacks the economic vote through the trade union movement, why not a political say on the same basis?'

SOME STATUTORY BODY

What will all this mean in practical terms for Natal/KwaZulu? Most people I spoke to agreed on one thing; force of circumstances and hard economic facts will ensure the emergence of some sort of statutory body which transcends the current administrative – and perhaps even political – divisions between KwaZulu and Natal.

Mr. Duchesne Grice, past president of the South African Institute of Race Relations, believes that Ulundi and the Natal provincial council should immediately set up joint committees dealing with such matters as health, transportation and communications, water and conservation, and so on. Indians and Coloureds should also be represented on these committees.

'If these committees can be seen to be working BEFORE the Government imposes its own second-tier government solutions, there is a good chance that such a system of



Duchesne Grice

joint control over resources and development in the region will continue.'

Mr. Grice acknowledged, however, that the development decisions made by these committees would inevitably involve the expenditure of money 'At the moment Natal is not allowed to spend money in KwaZulu, and vice versa. What the committees could do as a first step is to orchestrate joint recommendations to central government for the allocation of funds for specific projects to the two separate authorities. But we must clearly understand that when you have a system, in this case joint Natal and KwaZulu committees, which spends or influences the expenditure of money, you have a system which will ultimately become political.'

Ironically, it may well be as a result of the new constitution that a direct appeal for a united Natal/KwaZulu will come.

Pat Poovalingam, national chairman of Solidarity, told me: 'What we will be pushing for is the establishment of a compact committee comprising members from the House of Delegates, the House of Representatives, KwaZulu and the Natal Provincial Council to thrash out a system of joint control. If that committee can come up with an acceptable formula, Natal can speak to the government with one authoritative voice.'

Amichand Rajbansi, South Africa's first Indian cabinet minister, emphasised that all population groups should have an equal say in decision making, and that for Natal/KwaZulu 'a power-sharing structure should be worked out by all parties concerned'.

One need not be a political genius to understand that the single most important factor which will decide the quality of Natal/KwaZulu's future is the manner in which the political aspirations of the 5,5 million Zulu people living in the region are satisfied.

There are, broadly speaking, three ways in which these aspirations can be met. The first is a revolutionary situation leading to one-man-one-vote. The second is some form of negotiated power-sharing with the other major population groups, either at national or regional level. The third – and this still appears to be the government's official separatist policy – is through the full independence of KwaZulu.

I asked Chief Buthelezi why he was adamant that independence was 'completely out of the question'.

'For several reasons,' the Chief replied. 'Our belief is that South Africa is a unitary country and that we are South African citizens. On a purely regional level, how can independence be workable for a so-called country which is comprised of so many separate geographical pieces? It makes no sense. My people and the people of Natal are increasingly interdependent. For this reason, independence and all the necessary consolidation it entails are meaningless to us.'

NO CHOICE

Familiar ground; familiar arguments. But was there an anomaly here? I was, after all, speaking to a chief minister of a so-called self-governing state (but not an 'independent' one such as Transkei or Bophuthatswana). Why had Chief Buthelezi been at the head of this sort of state for the past decade if he did not agree with the principle of separate development for which it stood?

'The Zulu people had no choice in the matter,' he said. 'Self-governing status was forced upon them by an act passed in the White parliament. As part of the legitimate power hierarchy in Zulu society, I was asked to take the job of chief minister. Had I not done so, the government would have found a stooge, like Sebe, to do the job for them. Had that happened, we would long ago have been saddled with a completely unworkable independence.'

There are signs, too, that, privately at any rate, central government is no longer looking to KwaZulu's independence with the conviction it once had. Professor Laurie Schlemmer, director of the Centre for Applied Social Sciences in Durban, explains.

'I see one of the most interesting issues of the future as being the tussle between decentralisation and central control,' he said. 'What is happening, through the new constitution, is not a straight process of decentralisation. The responsibility for power is being delegated, but not the power itself.'

'The crucial issues in this country weigh so heavily on central government that one should not expect them to grant autonomy to any areas. They want control; control is security.'

When looking at Natal/KwaZulu in this context, certain facts needed to be grasped, Professor Schlemmer went on. First, the region was growing faster economically than the rest of the country, which meant that more and more national resources were ending up here. Second, the region had the most 'problematic' foreign border situation in the country, surrounded as it was by Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho and Transkei; if there was to be a continuance of insurgency, Natal/KwaZulu would be the point of entry.

'Given these two factors, it seems likely that the government will move away from the idea of complete independence for KwaZulu. The government will want to retain over-riding control.'

On the other hand, KwaZulu would not want to sacrifice any of the autonomy it currently has. This point was endorsed by Chief Buthelezi when I spoke to him.

'Now,' Professor Schlemmer continued, 'out of this situation we may well see a compromise emerging. And the name of this compromise will be, in my view, federation. In practice, this means that KwaZulu as it now exists could be offered some form of direct representation at central government level.'

'It's not difficult to see, though, that if this happened an anomaly would be created. Whites, Indians and Coloureds, not only in Natal but all over the country, will see that Blacks have greater regional autonomy than they have with their metropolitan bodies and so on. And it is at that stage that we'll very likely begin to see some real regional autonomy within a federal structure emerging.'

When I put this theory to Chief Buthelezi, he was non-committal and evasive, so I asked: 'If you reject KwaZulu independence as a way of satisfying the political aspirations of your people, what way would be acceptable to you?'

'I believed — and still do — in one-man-one-vote in a unitary state, Westminster-style. But, because I am for peaceful change, I have been prepared to compromise. I believe that the only possible future for us — given the realities of the present — is a negotiated one.'

'What sort of negotiated future would be acceptable to your people?'

'In spite of the fact that the Buthelezi Commission Report has been ignored so far, I believe that the principles it contains will be a fort in which we will all seek safety one day,' Chief Buthelezi said.

'If some forum for negotiation regarding a common future could be worked out, could we then look towards our future with some optimism?'

'If the forum for negotiation was workable, most definitely,' Chief Buthelezi said.

It is ironical that although the necessity of this sort of negotiation seems to loom so large in the emerging picture of our future, the new constitution makes no provision for it. The question of power-sharing with Blacks simply does not arise, in theory at least.

Added to this are all sorts of complicating factors, not the least of which is the growing rift between the region's urban and rural Blacks, or, expressed in purely political terms, the rural-based Inkatha (or exponents of Zulu nationalism) and the trade-union/community-action-group orientations of the cities.

'We are standing on the threshold of a civil war, man,' an urban Zulu said to me recently.

Sombre words. I heard them first after the killings at Zululand University last year. I have heard similar words since, as the animosity and violence between urban and rural Zulus has continued to seethe not far below the surface. It is not enough to say that the conflict is between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front. It is more accurately between the simple notion of Zulu nationalism on the rural side and the more complex preoccupations of urban dwellers on the other, preoccupations which inevitably appear to the Zulu nationalists as disloyalty.

Reverend Mcebisi Xundu, an executive member of the Durban-based Joint Rent Action Committee (Jorac) and Lamontville community leader, expressed it in this way: 'Our actions, and particularly our resistance in Lamontville now to incorporation into KwaZulu, are being interpreted as disloyalty to the Zulu king. We are not disloyal. But our political rights come before Zulu nationalism. Chief Buthelezi has been beguiled into thinking that the people love him more than they love their political rights.' 'What political rights?'

'All Blacks are oppressed under the present system,' he replied. 'Now Ulundi is saying to us (the residents of Lamontville): 'get out of one part of the system and come and join us in our misery in another part.' This is unjust. For a start, the people lose their Section 10 rights. What we should all be doing is fighting the whole system together.'

'There is another aspect to consider. It does seem as if Pretoria is going full-out to get KwaZulu to accept independence. In all likelihood, if Chief Buthelezi goes, independence will result. Then the people (the Urban Blacks in Natal) will find themselves unwilling citizens of a 'foreign' country instead of what they really are, South African city dwellers.

'Urban Blacks must not be intimidated,' he added, 'must not be taken by the scruffs of their necks and forced to accept what they do not want. Intimidation will not break the people's will in their quest for justice.'

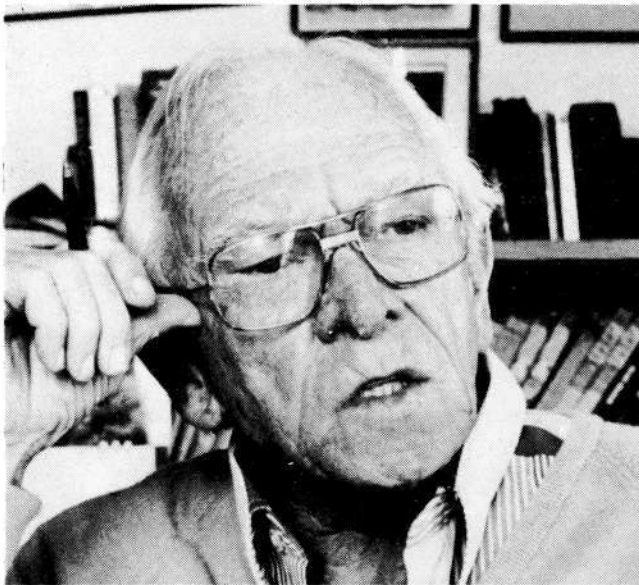
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ANIMOSITY DEPOSIT

Intimidation, the people's will, nationalism and justice. Are these the buzz-words of social instability, or are they, in the words of a recent Diakonia News editorial, 'the seeds . . . of a Black civil war — a conflict which could stretch far into South Africa's future — long after apartheid has come to an end?'

THREATENED

Whatever the answer, one thing is sure. Chief Buthelezi's power-base is being threatened as never before, perhaps simply because his brand of 'radical moderation' has no place in the swiftly polarising political situation in Natal/KwaZulu.

Dr. Alan Paton remarked: 'It seems to me that Chief Buthelezi faces more difficult questions than any other person in South Africa. People who call him a stooge make me very angry. He's not a stooge. He is trying to fulfil an historic and traditional duty. But where is he to go from here?'



Dr Alan Paton

Where indeed? By his own admission, independence is out, as is violence and subversion. There seems to be no middle path for him without the co-operation of Whites, and Whites have denied him that. Must he then be doomed to protect himself against those forces, free of the idea of Zulu nationalism, which seems to offer more radical — and attainable — goals?

Listen to Rev. Xundu again: 'Our aim is to get more and more people to be aware of their political rights. This in turn will create severe problems for the state. Unrest will increase; police action will become more harsh; adverse overseas publicity will place pressure on the big multinational companies to disinvest . . . I do not believe that a national convention can be very far away now.'

Dr Farouk Meer, chairman of the Natal Indian Congress expressed a similar view when he told me: 'The forces of apartheid have been systematically compelled to relinquish one bastion of their ideology after another. They are in retreat.'

'Ultimately, there must be an equalisation of forces. Think of it as a type of see-saw on one end of which is positioned the forces of apartheid, on the other the popular will of the people. At the moment, the forces of apartheid are in the

superior position, but, as I have already said, they are in retreat. The popular will is on the offensive. When these two opposing forces equalise, then the government will have to talk to the people.'

Whether we consider these views optimistic or subversive, the grim realities remain. KwaZulu exists as an entity. It is moreover an entity whose leadership is not only becoming more and more politically embattled but which is facing a future of almost certain administrative disintegration.

'When thinking about the future of Natal/KwaZulu,' a prominent Natal economist and agriculturalist told me, 'you need to understand that KwaZulu has been designed to fail. It's part of the master-plan.'

I asked for an explanation.

'Give Blacks some sort of control and then watch them mess it up,' he said. 'It reinforces the belief that Blacks are incompetent.'

'But how has KwaZulu been designed to fail?'

'Look at the way Ulundi must run its various departments, education or health for example. They are obliged to plan, not in terms of the actual needs of communities, but in terms of availability of funds. The effect is to place people, however able, in an impossible straight-jacket. They must fail. On top of this, the Ulundi administration suffers from a 'capacity to spend' problem. Say, for example, the Works Department's budget was suddenly quadrupled. They simply wouldn't be able to spend the money. They haven't got the engineers, the plant, the infrastructure.'

This point is amply demonstrated by the fact that the sprawling greater Durban townships of Umlazi and Kwa-Mashu are served by only one professional engineer, while the Pietermaritzburg City Council employs over 20.

'Given these basic flaws — insufficient money, insufficient manpower and administrative infrastructure — the only possible future for KwaZulu is that the various services the homeland government provides will become more and more shambolic, despite the earnest endeavours of the many capable people involved. Ultimately the whole administration of this so-called state will collapse.'

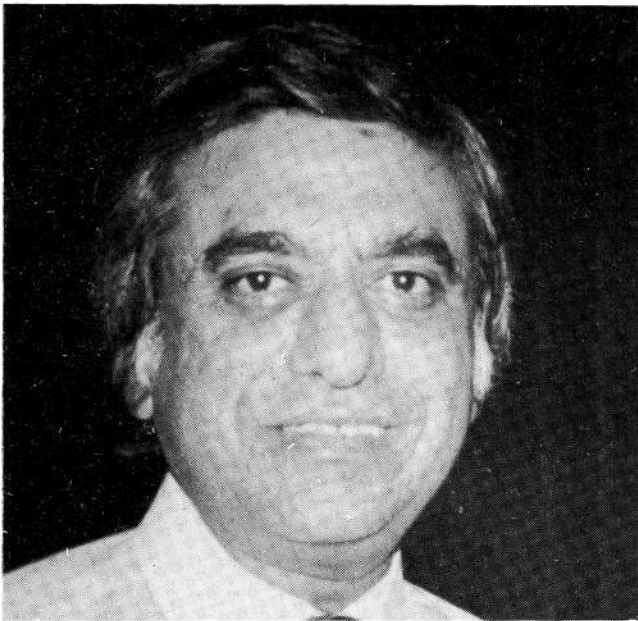
Disturbing words, but there was more to come.

'Other things are going to happen at the same time,' the economist told me. 'Look at it this way. There are several economic classes of citizens in Natal, and the second to lowest (or underprivileged) class is four to six times better off than the lowest. Now put labels on these classes. The second lowest is the urban Black, the lowest the rural Black. It's an obvious consequence that urbanisation is going to take place on a massive scale.'

'As the rural areas degenerate — and I believe that the recent drought has ultimately tipped the balance towards an irremedial situation — the populations of greater Durban, and greater Pietermaritzburg, will grow at a rate of up to 15 percent a year. All the associated problems of housing, education, employment, health and so on will increase at the same rate.'

I asked if there was no chance of a less terrifying future. The economist shrugged his shoulders.

'The economic and administrative imperatives for co-operation between Natal and KwaZulu are overwhelming. Politically, Whites don't want the sort of co-operation



Professor Hoosen Coovadia

necessary to improve the outlook. The whole history of White politics is for Whites to isolate themselves from problems and in the process compound them. Who is going to have the guts to take the optimistic road?'

NO SOLUTION

Yet it must be recorded that many people believe co-operation, and even political union, between KwaZulu and Natal would come nowhere near to solving the real problems which the region faces.

Professor Hoosen Coovadia, Natal regional chairman of the United Democratic Front: 'It is for us incomprehensible to work out a Natal solution without first achieving a South African solution. I really cannot see how a unified Natal/KwaZulu in some sort of federation will be able to solve its own problems.

'Think of just one aspect, health. Colossal sums will have to be spent to ensure minimum standards with regard to clean water, adequate food, housing and sanitation. Where is this money to come from, if not from central funds? South Africa is a unitary state. I think that this idea of a 'local solution' for Natal/KwaZulu is a pipe-dream.'

It is interesting to note that the only common ground between the far left and the National party is this insistence that South Africa is a unitary state and that no 'local' solution is tenable. Their reasons are not dissimilar, and have to do with power bases linked to the economic resources of the country as a whole. Yet there are indications that the Government at any rate might soon begin to move away from the rigidities of its current stance.

Speaking of the possibility of a federal structure for South Africa, in which a combined Natal/KwaZulu could form one component, Dr. Paton remarked to me that the Afrikaner Nationalist might not be so opposed to the idea of federation as he had traditionally been.

'The Afrikaner Nationalist has always stuck to the concept of a unitary South Africa because this has given him his power. Now, with the introduction of the new constitution, his power is less dependent on the unitary idea. In fact, P.W. Botha has been hinting that some form of federal idea might emerge in the future.'

Dr. Paton pointed me to a magazine (*Leadership S.A.*, Spring 1983) in which the Prime Minister was quoted as saying: "... another idea I have been propagating, which is broader in concept than what is generally understood by a 'constellation of states' (is) a confederation of states ... a more regular sort of co-operative commonwealth, if one can call it that.

'This would involve South Africa, the national states, and the independent states. I foresee that we will meet more needs if we succeed in bringing about a higher level of local government for the urban Black ... and I am looking for a formula ... to accommodate them in this federal system. Devolution, decentralisation and regional development are all ideas which must be developed to the full whilst retaining a broad basis of conferring with each other on matters of mutual interest.'

'The seeds of a federal system are clearly there,' Dr. Paton said. 'It is my belief that the only alternative to the federal concept is a path to revolution. The problem of racial fear in a unitary South Africa is almost insoluble.'

NEW MINISTER

I went to see Mr. Stoffel Botha, new Minister of Education and Culture for Whites, and Natal leader of the National Party, and asked for his views on the future.

He said: 'We are going to have to be prepared to accommodate the political aspirations of Black people, but not at the expense of the minority groups. This does not mean that White and brown people should be in a privileged position. We will simply have to do a great deal of soul searching — and practical searching — to see how these aspirations can be met. The position of the Black man must receive urgent consideration now.'

I asked if he meant urban Blacks only, if the Government still believed that the political aspirations of Blacks, especially rural Blacks, could be satisfied within the 'homelands' policy.

'Yes,' he replied, 'as far as those Black people who live in the national states are concerned, or those whose ties with their regions of origin are such that they still identify with their national states and who exercise their voting rights in those states.

'The position of those Blacks whose ties with their respective national states have grown looser, whether they live in urban or rural areas, is at present being investigated by a top-level Cabinet committee.'

Speaking specifically of KwaZulu, Mr. Botha said that if this self-governing state had not been created, development in the rural areas would not have occurred. Isithebe, for example, would never have developed. 'We must continue with this economic development of KwaZulu.'

'Does this mean that the Government will continue to press for the independence of KwaZulu, and continue with its consolidation programme?'

Mr. Botha replied that it was the policy of the Government to proceed with the process of 'meaningful consolidation' of Black areas 'as a matter of urgency'.

'This also applies to KwaZulu, irrespective of whether the

Zulu people would prefer their present status of a self-governing national state to that of full independence.'

I pointed out that Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's power-base was being threatened as never before, and that there were very real fears of a rural/urban civil war in Natal/KwaZulu. Would not some form of unification of the region, within a federal South Africa, partly resolve the Chief's problems, not to mention the general problems of the region?

'While accepting the economic and geographic intertwining of Natal and KwaZulu, I do not believe that Buthelezi's position would necessarily improve if the two areas were politically unified,' Mr. Botha said.

'And I must point out, too, that I do not believe the Natal/KwaZulu situation to be unique. It is not so very different to other regions in South Africa. Therefore, there can be no expectation of unique solutions.'

Could Mr. Botha define the difference between what the President had called a confederation of states (which implies a more specific relationship than the old 'constellation' idea) and the concept of a federal South Africa? What were his views on the latter, especially in relation to a unified Natal/KwaZulu comprising one federal unit?



Stoffel Botha

'A confederation is a league, alliance or body of confederate states. The Republic of South Africa, including a non-independent KwaZulu, would be one of the states to enter into such a confederation,' Mr. Botha explained.

'A federal South Africa, on the other hand, would be one where several states form a unity but remain independent in internal affairs. Clearly, you cannot equate the idea of confederation with a federal state. Moreover, the provinces have never since Union been states in the defined sense of the word and thus do not enjoy the authority to enter as a unit into any federal or confederal relationship.

'Therefore,' Mr. Botha stated, 'the notion of a unified Natal/KwaZulu comprising one federal unit in a federal South Africa is a spurious one.'

I asked Mr. Botha what his general view of the future of South Africa was. 'I would like to say this. While the present government is in power, the future will not be based on racial prejudice, on unreal fears, on everything in our thinking that is outmoded. We'll have to be courageous in terms of the legitimate aspirations of all the people in South Africa, but at the same time we dare not be fools.'

'What will be the practical implications of a future not based on racial prejudice? What will happen to the apartheid laws, laws like the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Native Urban Areas Act?'

'Racial prejudice is based on the notion of the superiority or inferiority of one racial group in relation to another,' Mr. Botha replied, 'and has no place in a society which aims at justice and fundamental human rights for all. That certainty does not mean, however, that measures which have been designed to maintain the identities of the various groups in our plural society — such as the laws to which you have referred — are unacceptable in a well-ordered, diversified society,' Mr. Botha said.

Categorical words, which leave little room for doubt. No tampering with the legal corner-stones of apartheid; no cessation of removals for the sake of the 'meaningful consolidation' of KwaZulu; no chance of a unified Natal/KwaZulu in a federal South Africa.

Juxtaposed against the problems already highlighted, such firm expression of official policy casts shadows over the future of our region.

TWO SOMBRE CERTAINTIES

The two sombre certainties of that future are profound administrative confusion amid increasing social conflict. Each is dependent on the other, yet requires separate analysis.

Take the administrative confusion first.

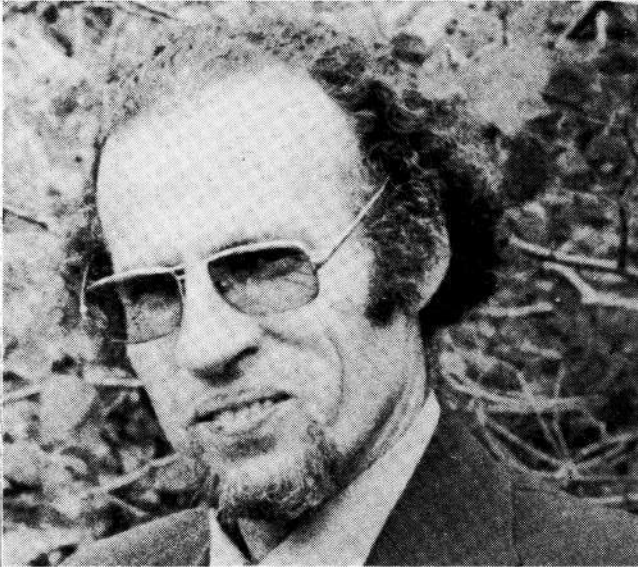
We have already heard from a wide variety of people that some form of joint control of the region is essential. Yet how will this be achieved within the framework of a constitution which makes no provision for Blacks at all, even though a cabinet committee is examining this omission? Black participation at national level will be the next step, say some, others assert that economic and development realities will force a unified administration on the region, but not necessarily coupled to political unity.

It is well known that the provincial councils, as we now know them, will probably be phased out, and replaced by some form of appointed bodies to administer the various regions. Put another way, second tier government will be depoliticised. An inevitable result will be the politicising of the third tier. Party politics will enter local government at both town council and metropolitan levels. Local authorities will not only become political, they will also become racially exclusive.

In practical terms, this will mean that Pietermaritzburg, for example, will comprise three separate local authorities, one White, one Indian and one Coloured, all of which will be represented on a metropolitan body (probably to be called a Regional Services Council).

But here Natal/KwaZulu poses immense problems for the theorists. There is no city in the region which, properly seen as such, does not contain significant portions of KwaZulu. Will KwaZulu, or at least Black city-dwellers, sit on these Regional Services Councils? The Regional Services Councils Bill, currently before a select parliamentary committee, makes no provision for this.

But Mr. Stoffel Botha told me that since the main object of these 'regional councils' would be 'to co-ordinate and rationalise the provision of certain local services, it would



Professor Lawrence Schlemmer

be logical that the provision of such services to adjoining Black urban areas should not be excluded from such co-ordination'.

'How the authorities of such Black urban areas can best be included in the co-ordination has not yet been fully determined and is receiving attention from a special cabinet committee.'

Professor Lawrence Schlemmer probably summed up the situation most accurately when he said: "The practicalities of local government will come home to roost. There'll be so much confusion, so much ad-hoc stuff going on to keep systems working that it'll become a case of the tail wagging the dog. People will realise that there'll have to be some constitutional concession to reality."

Many people with whom I spoke envisaged the same process occurring at second-tier government level. There will have to be some constitutional concession to the reality of the inextricable interdependence of Natal and KwaZulu.

We have already seen that the new participation politicians and others will attempt to force this reality on the Government. They talk of working out with Chief Buthelezi 'declarations of intent' and forming committees to decide on the details of a common future so that Natal/KwaZulu can speak to the Government with a united voice, and so on. The practicalities WILL come home to roost. And from an admission of the geographic, infrastructural, economic and administrative oneness of the region will follow strong attempts at some form of common political accommodation for all people living here. These attempts will give rise to the possibility of establishing a federal political system in South Africa.

Of course, these attempts to unify Natal and KwaZulu politically and move towards a federal South Africa will be opposed.

Predictably enough, the opposition will come from the extreme right, and for some considerable time, as we have seen, from the Government itself. Yet such a solution might well already be turning over, although privately, in the minds of top Government strategists.

Opposition will also come from the left. Professor Hoosen Coovadia of the UDF had already told me that 'it is for

us incomprehensible to work out a Natal/KwaZulu solution without a South African solution' and that he believed the idea of a 'local solution' to be 'a pipe dream.'

Whether it is or not, a definite element of our future, simply because of these widely divergent stances on the future, will be deepening social conflict.

BITTER STRUGGLES

'The new constitution,' Alan Paton said, 'has made the possibility of a Buthelezi Commission type of future much more difficult. The new constitution has fragmented the population more profoundly than I have ever before seen in my life-time.'

Will our future be marked with bitter struggles between Blacks and Indians/Coloureds, between Inkatha and the far left, between boycotters and participators? Almost certainly. From one point of view, the picture is of a traditional Black opposition (to White domination) in considerable disarray. This opposition will be replaced by a new under-privileged opposition, an opposition in which the trade union movement and community action groups will play a key role.

It is, moreover, easy to see that the formation of a huge popular base to this opposition, not only in Natal but throughout the country, will be greatly assisted by economic pressures. Listen to the opinion of Mr. Chris Saunders.

'I believe this country is on a disaster course economically. We are paying now for all the problems and mistakes made over the last 35 years by men like Strydom, Verwoerd and Vorster. The economic expectations created by the Government are simply not being met, and this will give rise to a polarisation of political opinion. The extreme right will use economic arguments for a return to full apartheid; the left will use the same arguments to try to bring about some form of socialism. In the short term, the problem is undoubtedly related to the falling gold price and the weakness of the rand. In the long term, we are paying, very simply, for the apartheid system.'

It is difficult to decide what impact the new tricameral parliament will have on this process. If many participation politicians are to be believed, a sustained assault on key apartheid legislation can be expected. Of course the inten-



Chris Saunders

sity of the assault will depend on the quality and resolve of the people elected. The Government's determination to press ahead with the tricameral system will give the new parliamentarians a clout which, to judge by the percentage polls, they do not really merit. Many people believe, however, that the real quality has remained outside of the new system, and that the activities of the houses of Delegates and Representatives will quickly degenerate to jockeying for power and squabbles about 'own affairs'.

But what if the new constitution fails, if it is destroyed from without by the boycott politicians, or from within either by an excess of pressure or a lack of it? Some say that this will lead to the calling of a national convention; others that it would spell the end of National Party rule and the coming to power of the extreme right; and yet others that the result could well be a military take-over.

The future of Natal/KwaZulu, and of the country of which it forms a part, is a sombre vista full of impasses, of con-

fusion and potential conflict, at the end of which is the shadow either of full-scale confrontation or some form of co-operation. The shadow is too far away to identify.

Whatever the shadow turns out to be, apartheid and the White domination it has so successfully supported will be swept away. On a purely regional level, it is safe to say that if this province does not attempt to take some form of initiative now (now that the whole question of second tier government is in the melting pot), if it does not come to some definite idea of what its future should be and an equally definite idea of how to achieve such a future, the power to decide its own fate, never considerable since Union in 1910, will disappear altogether.

Our future will be shaped, not in Pietermaritzburg, or in Durban, or in Ulundi, but in some remote corridors of power, corridors which have in the past all too clearly demonstrated an insensitivity to the complexities of this unique region. □

by JILL NATTRASS

RURAL POVERTY IN KWAZULU

South Africa boasts that in general she is not only able to feed herself but is also a member of that elite band of nations who are able to export food to those countries whose agriculture cannot support their people. Yet despite this proud (and true) claim, poverty continues to stalk almost unchecked in South Africa's countryside.

White farms prosper, white farmers enjoy exceptionally high standards of living. Black farming families cannot grow sufficient to support themselves and, if they are to survive, must send their menfolk to seek work in the towns.

Why is this so? Why also is it that in the face of exceptional economic progress in one of the best endowed countries in the world this has remained so?

Although the rate of economic development in South Africa during the twentieth century has been high and, indeed, the yearly growth rate of the money value of Gross Domestic Product over the past fifty-year period averaged 8 percent, the spatial and racial aspects of this change in economic activity was extremely uneven. And

further, the spatial patterns of development bore little relationship to the historical patterns of population distribution.

In most economies, such an imbalance in economic resources would have been largely corrected by massive levels of labour migration. In South Africa, however, the initial gulf that existed between the population cultures retarded migration in the early stages of industrialisation. As the culture gap narrowed, so it was replaced by increasing levels of State controls over black population movements. These legal controls, coupled with the spatially uneven development patterns, have had the effect of chaining large numbers of people, almost all of whom are Africans, to the wheel of rural poverty.

KWAZULU

KwaZulu is one of the victims of this history. In 1980 the value of goods and services produced within KwaZulu per head of the population resident there was R124, whereas that for South Africa as a whole (including the TBVC countries) was R1 950.

A large proportion of KwaZulu's citizens work in South Africa either as migrant labourers or as 'frontier commuters' and consequently average income levels per head in KwaZulu are very much higher than would be the case if she was forced to be entirely self-sufficient. In 1980 the annual income of an average KwaZulu inhabitant was R543, whereas that of the average South African was R1 900.

More worrying, however, than the gap between average living levels in South Africa as a whole and the average for KwaZulu, is the growing gap emerging within KwaZulu itself, between the average lifestyles of those living in the towns and those still in the rural areas. In 1980 half of the people living in the towns earned more than R1 600 a year, not a great sum when compared with white earnings but considerably more than could be earned by those living in the rural areas, where half earned less than R700 a year — and 45 percent less than R300 a year.¹

At the top end of the income scale, there were also differences. Amongst the town dwellers 10 percent earned over R6 000, whereas in the rural areas only 1 percent of the earners fell into this category, most of whom will have been government employees.

More recent surveys undertaken by the Development Studies Unit of the University of Natal confirm these statistics. In the Nkandla district beyond Eshowe, a beautiful district of rolling hills, where all the families have access to land, there is plenty of firewood and in which even in the terrible drought of 1983 the streams continued to flow, the average yearly income from all sources (including that from growing crops for home consumption) in 1982 was R144 per person.²

Of this R144 per person, R100 was in the form of cash income, whilst the remainder was earned from local crop production and animal husbandry. The major source of cash income was remittances sent back into the area by the absent migrant workers. This source accounted for 46 percent of the total. Welfare payments from the KwaZulu Government in the form of old age pensions and disability grants accounted for a further 29 percent of the cash income, whilst the balance came from the earnings from casual labour and small business activities.

FEW JOBS

In the black rural areas there are very few jobs, other than those in subsistence agriculture and the informal sector. This lack of economic opportunity, coupled with the overcrowding and general degradation of the land, makes it virtually inevitable that those who can, leave to find work in the cities and on the mines.

The study in the Nkandla area showed that 76 percent of the households had members away as migrant workers, 83 percent of whom were men, mostly in the 20 — 50 year age bracket. Most of the migrants (77 percent) sent money back to their families on a regular basis. However, the amounts sent back were small and typically ranged between R12 and R22 per month. When one remembers that urban African wages in 1983 averaged from R800 — R1 200 a year, it is clear that migrants are able to send home only a small proportion of their urban wage earnings.³

The low average remittance rates coupled with the virtual absence of local work opportunities and a high rate of migration amongst men, mean that the face of rural poverty in KwaZulu — indeed in South Africa as a whole — is not only black but it is also usually female. Indeed it is the women, the children and the old people who bear the brunt of the suffering caused by the poverty in the black rural areas.

The mechanisms of the migrant labour system also contribute to the persistence of the cycle of rural poverty. The high absentee rate amongst men of working age increases the work burden placed on those adults who remain in the rural areas. Typically, dependency burdens (the ratio of non-economically active individuals to economically active), in black rural areas are 35 percent higher than the average for South Africa as a whole.



Further, the very low ratios of men to women in the age groups 15 — 64 years means that families in these rural areas lack sufficient of the masculine influence — children grow up in a fatherless world and a large number of women shoulder the burden of raising a family alone, with only economic assistance from their menfolk — and often that is sporadic.

INCREASED GAP

It also seems that the migrant labour system itself contributes to the general level of underdevelopment found in the black rural areas, as it militates against investment and technical progress in the regions supplying the migrants. By doing this, it acts to increase the gap between the returns on investment in agriculture and those from migrant labour, rather than to introduce conditions that would

equalise these returns. The somewhat anomalous relationship operates in the following manner.

Firstly, the migration process is age- and education-selective in nature with the chance of a person migrating being significantly higher than average amongst the young and the better educated.⁴ As youth is the innovator of most change, a high rate of absence amongst those aged under forty years, means that it becomes increasingly difficult to introduce new techniques in an area so denuded of men in those age groups. In a rural African context where the man is traditionally the decision maker, this effect is reinforced and the decision making process becomes increasingly cumbersome as the proportion of men who are absent from the area rises.

Secondly, innovation in agriculture requires investment. The low level of remittances by migrants to the rural areas, coupled with the low levels of productivity in the areas themselves, which are intensified by the drain imposed by the continued residence of the migrant's dependents, means that rural family incomes are too small to permit any substantial savings to be made out of these incomes.

Thirdly, the massive transfer of labour from the homeland rural areas to the urban areas alters both the economic and social relationships in these communities. Changing demand patterns in the job market have encouraged innovations and changes in techniques that will facilitate the acquisition of jobs in the modern sector. Hence one finds a substantial growth in investment by the black rural family in education and in labour saving equipment on the farm, such as cultivators and ploughs, in order, firstly, to fit the emergent worker for a job in the modern sector and, secondly, to free him from his traditional tasks so that he can take up the desired occupation.⁵

NO ALLEVIATION

In a number of studies of labour migration in other African countries, it has been argued that the process can lead not only to the alleviation of immediate sufferings from rural poverty but also the generation of development in the areas from which the migrants come.⁶

This does not seem to be the case in KwaZulu. Participation in the migrant labour system seems instead to be the engine for the further underdevelopment of the rural areas. It distorts the social and economic relationships to the point where the market acts to reinforce the imbalances in the system rather than to correct them. There is no tendency to stability in the system; migration continues and indeed the rate of migration increases as the general impoverishment of the rural areas rises, intensifying the problem. Investment in agriculture all but ceases, past capital accumulation is consumed by neglect and traditional agriculture stagnates. The inhabitants of the region become totally reliant upon the modern sector: even their very existence depends upon the remittances received from the absent migrants.

Policies to Combat Rural Poverty

Poverty-stricken people are largely poor because they were born poor, born encapsulated in the conditions that perpetuate poverty; malnutrition, disease, poor education facilities and generally low levels of public amenities, and are surrounded by others who are poor like themselves.

Poverty generates poverty and because it is a trap situation, it is very difficult to break into the cycle.

Rural poverty in South Africa stems from three main sources — firstly, the relative underdevelopment of the areas in which the major proportion of Black South Africans live. Secondly, the constitutional controls over the movement of Africans between regions, which have led to the growth of the migrant labour system and have severely restricted the rights of Africans who are not migrant workers to leave these underdeveloped areas. Whilst the third source of poverty is discrimination. Racial discrimination in the past in South Africa has limited the access of blacks to education and training, as well as confining them to the lower rungs of the job ladder. Black women seem to be particularly hard hit and are 'crowded' into the low productivity jobs. The problem is complicated, as we have seen, by the extent to which the system of temporary migration has denuded the black rural areas of economically active men, whilst at the same time the population pressure on the land has steadily increased.

Under these conditions, it seems imperative that a significant part of any policy package designed to alleviate black rural poverty is devoted to encouraging a greater degree of urbanisation amongst blacks, with a concomitant reduction in the size of the flow of migrants. The permanent settlement of the migrant work force would eliminate one of the major causes of rural poverty, namely the misallocation of resources within the family. In a situation in which the worker maintained only one home, he would be highly unlikely to consume nearly four-fifths of his earnings, leaving only the remaining fifth for his family.

An attitudinal survey undertaken amongst migrant workers by Professor Schlemmer and Dr. Moller showed that many migrants, particularly those in the younger age groups, did not wish to retain their rural links and were quite ready to settle permanently in the urban areas in which they worked. The remainder, however, had retained strong links with the rural community and wished to return there on completion of their workspan in the modern sector. This division is of great importance from a policy viewpoint, as it may provide the basis on which a voluntary population resettlement program could be built.

DETERMINANTS

A recent study of the determinants of regional growth in South Africa suggests that, as far as the underdeveloped areas of South Africa are concerned, two factors are particularly important in increasing the level of area output per head: agricultural productivity, and the level of government expenditure. Since output per man in agriculture can be increased either by increasing output or by reducing the labour input, the first of these, agricultural productivity, again emphasises the need for both rural development and increased urbanisation.

The second determinant of development in these backward areas, was the relative level of government activity in these regions. This reflects the fact that rural dwellers are not only poorer, they find it more difficult to obtain education, more difficult to obtain a productive job, have further to go to obtain health care, suffer from higher levels of malnutrition and are less well served with basic public amenities, such as access to clean water, roads, transport, post offices and stores. The lack of an adequate social infrastructure not only lowers the quality of life in these areas,



but also militates against further development, particularly as far as the private sector is concerned, as it increases both the establishment costs and the level of risk faced by an enterprise seeking to locate in these areas.

Finally, underdevelopment and poverty have a political, as well as an economic aspect to them. Since economic development patterns tend to reinforce themselves, any measures that are designed to change these patterns, will have to be vigorously implemented. In South Africa, a significant proportion of rural poverty results directly from moves that have been taken in the political arena – firstly to limit black access to the regions of the country that offer greater economic opportunity and, secondly, once they have gained entry, to limit black advancement in these areas. These sources of poverty are unlikely to be eliminated without meaningful political reform. Not political reform that is pitched at satisfying the aspirations of the economic ‘haves’, but true reform. Reform that enfranchises the ‘have nots’, in a political system that will enable their political muscle to influence the allocation of economic resources – particularly public sector resources – in their favour. □

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“HOMELAND CONSOLIDATION”

“The Western world was very sensitive to the large scale removal of people merely because someone wanted them moved. In South Africa as well there was growing sensitivity in this regard which the government had to heed,” P.W. Botha blandly announced at the Cape Congress of the Nationalist Party in September. This statement was part of the explanation of the government’s decision to abolish the coloured preference labour policy and to grant 99 year leasehold to some black residents in the Western Cape.

Does this statement give some hope to the half million people threatened with removal in Natal in terms of the 1975 Consolidation plan?

The continuing activity by the department of Co-operation and Development in the area between Ezakheni and Ekuvukeni, earmarked for the 100 000 people from the Lady-smith freehold areas presently threatened with removal, gives a clear answer. The long term presence of Africans in the Western Cape was negotiable. The government has already reconciled itself to the people of Soweto remaining there for the foreseeable future. Why not in the Western Cape?

However removals of black freehold areas, ‘black spots’ and ‘badly situated areas’ for purposes of consolidation are intrinsic to Pretoria’s new constitution. Africans must find their political destiny in their designated ‘bantustans’ and for the world to take this idea seriously, these bantustans must be fashioned into geographical entities.

Most of the consolidation is complete. But KwaZulu provides a huge problem for Pretoria. For at the present moment KwaZulu consists of 48 large pieces and another 157 small pieces. The 1975 Consolidation plan envisaged a KwaZulu of 10 pieces. This would necessitate the removal of half a million people.

In 1975 consolidation plans for the entire country were released. However in 1979 Mr. Botha announced that an exhaustive investigation into consolidation was necessary. The investigation would be conducted by the Commission of Co-operation and Development headed by Hennie van der Walt. In July 1982 van der Walt handed over his commission’s recommendations to the cabinet and in that same year Pretoria announced that consolidation would be completed within four years. However final consolidation plans for KwaZulu have still not been released. This year Pretoria announced that the release of final consolidation plans would have to be postponed because of the Rumpf Commission’s continuing inquiry into the Ingwavuma question. This was clearly a delaying tactic.

PRESSURES

New political developments and pressure from different groupings within Natal have made the consolidation of KwaZulu increasingly difficult.

*The Natal Agricultural Union has constantly requested the government to finalise consolidation plans so that uncertainty can end. White farming interests have made it clear that they are reluctant for highly productive farms to be handed over to KwaZulu. This is especially true of the sugar-cane farming lobby.

*White farmers are opposed to having boundaries redrawn in such a way that their farms now border on KwaZulu. As the Weenen farmers have discovered, when white farms border on overcrowded and impoverished reserves like Msinga, the result is cutting of fences, stealing of cattle, attempting to graze cattle illegally and poaching. In 1977 the fence which marks the boundary between the Weenen white farms and the Msinga reserve was renewed, paid for on a 50/50 basis by the farmers and the KwaZulu government after the farmers had exerted pressure through their local Member of Parliament. However the Weenen farmers discovered that fences cannot keep out the hungry.

*Generally white farmers are eager to see black freehold areas and reserves which border on their farms moved — as often they do not draw any labour from these areas. However sometimes removals of African people jeopardise white economic interests. Ndaleni Mission Reserve (population 30 000) was earmarked for removal in the 1975 consolidation plans. However the small town of Richmond which borders on the reserve is heavily dependent on the buying power of the Ndaleni people. Whites in Richmond are therefore strongly opposed to the removal of the Ndaleni people.

*Increasing publicity around removals both locally and internationally has forced Pretoria to describe removals as a ‘development process’.

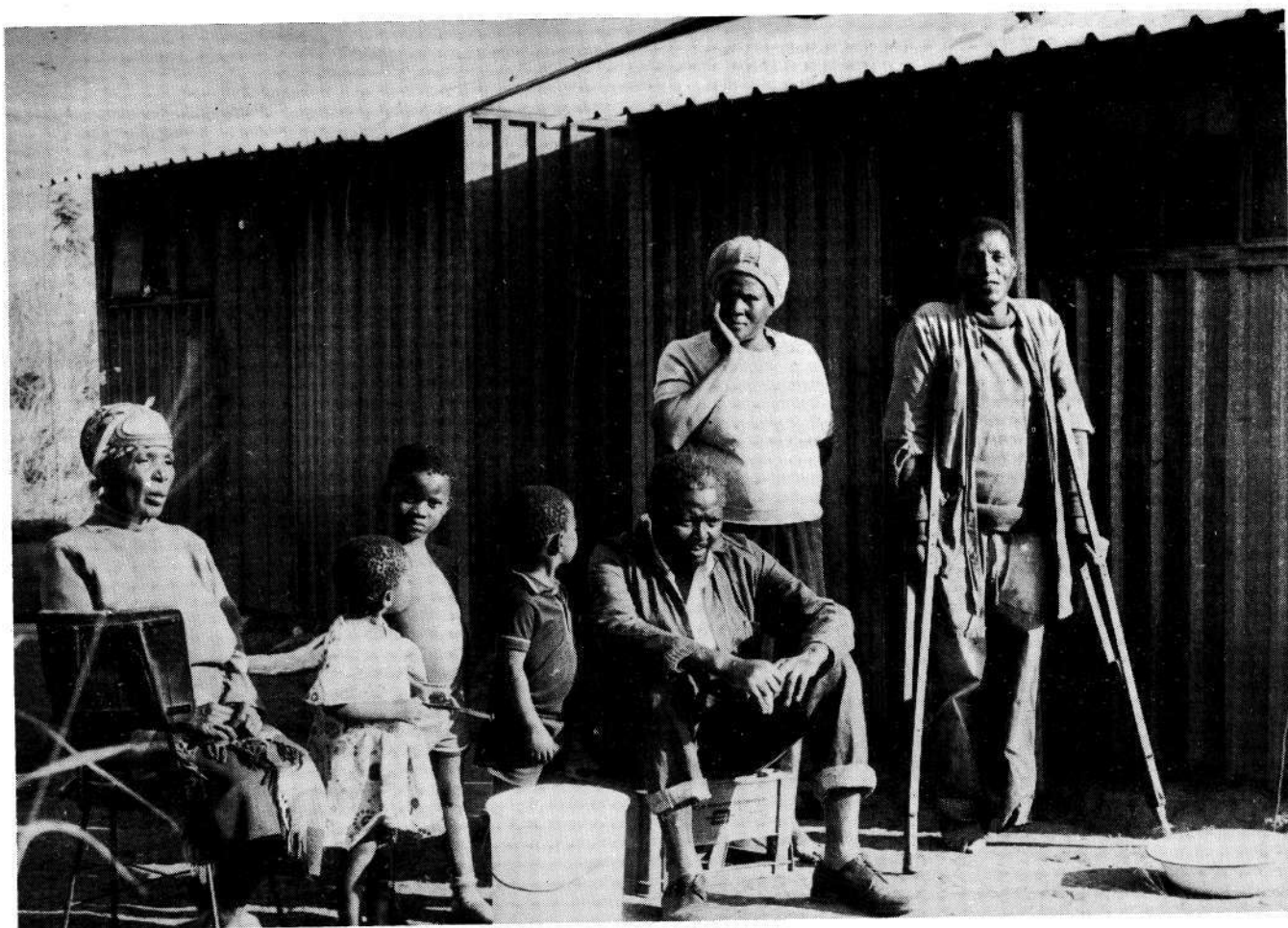
In 1976 the Government was confident that it would easily move the 20 000 people of Reserve 4. After little resistance from the people of Reserve 6 they assumed that the same would be true of Reserve 4. However, resistance in the area halted the state’s plan of dumping the Reserve 4 people at Ntambanana.

Now, having loudly proclaimed removals as ‘a development process’ it will be increasingly difficult to move the people of Reserve 4, a fertile area with an abundance of water and one of the highest potentials for forestry in Natal.

*In 1981 Dr. Koornhof stated that one of the major obstacles to consolidation was the ‘unwillingness of the Zulu people to be moved’. This problem for Pretoria, continues. The case of the Upper Tugela Location illustrates this point.

UPPER TUGELA

In June 1984 a delegation from the Upper Tugela Location went to Ulundi. They were hoping to hear if there were any new developments concerning their fate.



In the 1975 Consolidation proposals the 80 000 people of the Upper Tugela Location were marked for removal. This was not the first time that the people of the Upper Tugela Location had been threatened with removal.

In the early 1970's Farmers' Associations in Natal began to lobby for the removal of the people from the Upper Tugela location as well as the people from Location No. 1 and 2 in the Drakensberg foothills further to the south. They argued that these were the catchment areas for the Tugela and their badly eroded condition was leading to uncontrolled run-off. In a memorandum submitted to the minister the Estcourt Farmer's Association used strong language, "our children will curse us for having left to posterity a festering sore in their midst." They pointed out that if the Upper Tugela Location and Locations No. 1 and 2 were consolidated into KwaZulu "the Republic could be put in the highly invidious and embarrassing position by having the greater bulk of its water resources controlled by some foreign power."

Although agreed that these people should be moved, the different farmers' associations couldn't agree where they should be moved to. The Mount Moriah farmer's association believed the Weenen area, which borders on the already overcrowded and eroded Msinga area, was suitable. The Weenen Farmers Association was not enthusiastic. They submitted their own memorandum to the Minister. Allegations were that members of the police force, dip inspectors and telephone operators joined the Weenen Farmers Association to give it greater membership and therefore lobbying power.

EROSION

Last year the President of the Natal Agricultural Union again pointed to the eroded conditions of the Upper Tugela Location. He suggested that Chief Buthelezi should meet with Pretoria to settle this matter. He offered no solution but it is likely that his solution would be the old one of the 1970's, the removal of these people.

The government, susceptible to the farming lobby and aware of this crisis, have also been pointing to the situation in the Upper Tugela location. In Parliament this year, Volker, MP for Ladysmith, described the erosion in the Upper Tugela Location as "prejudicing the entire economy of Southern Africa." This was because "That land and the strategically important water catchment area of the Tugela from which water is at present being pumped to the Transvaal, because the Transvaal is unable to supply sufficient water for its own development, is causing even the pumps that pump the water over the mountains to wear out as a result of the high silt content of the water."

Mr. Volker failed to point out that the crisis was of the government's own making. Through influx control the state has forced people into the rural areas where overpopulation has led to the erosion of places like the Tugela catchment area.

In 1980 construction began on the Woodstock Dam. This dam flooded some of the Upper Tugela Location and Pretoria regarded it as an ideal pretext to move all the people of the Upper Tugela Location. However strong organization and the urgency of completing the dam, forced Pretoria to buy up adjoining white farms for the people affected by the flooding.

The 80 000 people of the Upper Tugela Location are adamant they will not move. The government is caught in an impasse. Its own policy of bantustans and influx control has created a situation which it can no longer control. The strategic Tugela Catchment area is gradually being eroded away as the people of Upper Tugela resist further impoverishment through removal.

The emergence of new black political organization has meant that existing organizations like Inkatha, so as not to lose popular support, will be compelled to take up the issue of removals with ever more vigour. This is bound to make consolidation even more difficult for Pretoria.

The government is thus caught in a difficult situation. Determined to press ahead with consolidation and already having spent vast amounts of money on it, it has to attempt to juggle the numerous pieces of KwaZulu into some sort of geographical unity and at the same time take into account the many pressure groups at work. Inkatha, for instance, must now take a more and more active interest in removals or be discredited. Half a million more people are to be moved in Natal and Pretoria is forced to realise that the discontent engendered by this massive relocation can be used by political organizations for their long term ends. □

by COLIN GARDNER

TWO POETS IN NATAL

In the last fifteen years or so there has been an explosion of lively and varied South African literature in English. Why should this have been so? The answer to such a question is never easy: the causes of any socio-cultural development are complex. Indeed the development itself may have to be viewed with circumspection: a number of the important writers of this period had been at work for some years — Alan Paton, Es'kia Mphahlele, Nadine Gordimer, Richard Rive, Guy Butler, James Matthews, Douglas Livingstone. It seems safe to assert, however, that a crucial fact in our cultural as well as our political history was the rise of corporate black confidence in the early 1970s; this was manifested in the black consciousness movement, in labour activity, and in literature and other arts. All this in turn produced ripple-effects throughout all the alert areas of South Africa's political and cultural life, in such a way that even the writing of white authors whose focus is not primarily political has been subtly affected.

Natal is in many ways a microcosm of South Africa. It happens at the moment to be fairly rich in poets who have brought out work recently: Douglas Livingstone, a poet of great range and depth, a master of many different tones and forms;¹ Mafika Gwala, one of the most notable of the new black 'poets of resistance'; Nkathazo kaMnyayiza, whose quiet voice expresses strong and compassionate views;² Chris Mann, an imaginative and thoughtful observer and analyst; Shabbir Banoobhai, who has produced powerful lyrics on mystical, political and personal themes;³ Peter Strauss, a poet of subtle, almost metaphysical intensity;⁴

Dikobe wa Mogale, painter and poet, who was sent to jail for ten years (under the Terrorism Act) in the same month as his first book of poems appeared;⁵ and several others.

In this article I am going to consider two books of poems, both published in 1982: **No More Lullabies** (Ravan) by Mafika Gwala, and **New Shades** (David Philip) by Chris Mann. A comparison of this sort is bound to be in some ways unfair to both poets — after all, they published their poems so that they would be read and responded to for what they are, not so that they might be compared and contrasted with another set of poems — but I hope that the juxtaposition may prove fruitful and suggestive, that it may indeed provide some insights into two of the most significant impulses in contemporary South African poetry. This is not to say that either Gwala or Mann can be thought of as merely typical. Both seem to me to be fine, important poets.

Mafika Gwala was born in Verulam in 1946. He has worked in a variety of jobs and has had a spell at the University of Zululand, but he has for many years been closely involved in the community life of Mpumalanga, the township adjacent to the so-called 'border industry' area of Hammarsdale, between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. At the moment he is a teacher. He has been engaged in both political and cultural work, and has suffered periods of detention-without-trial. Besides poems he has published short stories and articles of social, political and literary criticism and analysis. His first book of poems, **Jol'iinkomo** (Donker), appeared in 1977.

Chris Mann was born in Port Elizabeth in 1948. He has degrees from Wits, Oxford and London, and has taught in Swaziland and at Rhodes University. He is now one of the directors of the Valley Trust, a medical and agricultural project in the Valley of a Thousand Hills. He has an active and learned interest in African oral traditions, has mastered Zulu and Xhosa, and is a leading member of a Zulu band, Zabalaza. He has co-edited an anthology of South African verse. His first book of poems, *First Poems* (Bateleur), appeared in 1977.

These two poets, of about the same age, living and working a few kilometres apart, have certain important things in common. They are both very conscious of themselves as inhabitants of Africa; they both write in English while penning an occasional poem in Zulu; they both feel, in their different ways, the need to keep in touch with and extend certain African oral traditions. Yet no two writers could be more different – in their conceptions of poetry, their types of urgency, their tones, their forms, their music.



Chris Mann

Mafika Gwala's starting-point, like that of almost all recent black writers, has been the experience of oppression, frustration, dehumanization, particularly in the urban townships. He has felt himself to be a part of and a spokesman for a community: communal feeling, far more spontaneously alive among Africans than among most whites, has on the whole been heightened by shared suffering. This doesn't mean however that black solidarity is a phenomenon that Gwala simplifies or sentimentalizes; he is acutely aware of the 'black status-seekers', the social climbers, and those whom he calls 'non-whites', the people who for whatever reason acquiesce or appear to acquiesce in customary white evaluations of themselves. Gwala's poetry exhibits a number of modes and approaches, but in general he has felt the need to pass beyond the stage of protest and ironical analysis (which one associates with Mtshali's first volume and with much of the poetry of Sepamla) into what he would feel to be the more positive and energetic phase of creative resistance.

Often he speaks for his people with a prophetic intensity:

As our heroes die
As our heroes are born
Our history is being written
With the black moments given
looking the storm in the eye
Our hope is not gone

Our blackman's history
is not written in classrooms
on wide smooth boards
Our history will be written
at the factory gates
at the unemployment offices
in the scorched queues of dying mouths.

(from 'Afrika at a Piece', p. 44)

But even when he speaks more quietly and altogether more personally, one has a sense that, though he may have had to endure isolation, he carries a community with him:

Tap-Tapping

Rough, wet winds
parch my argonized face
as if salting the wounds of Bullhoek
Sharpeville
Soweto,

unbandage strip by strip
the dressings of Hope;
I wade my senses
through the mist;
I am still surviving
the traumas of my raped soil
alive and aware;
truths jump like a cat leaps for fish
at my mind;
I plod along
into the vortex
of a clear-borne dawn.

(p.7)

This seems to me a very effective poem: it manages to dramatize both pained weariness and an undying determination to move onwards, however stubbornly, towards a transformed way of life – towards what eventually begins to emerge, 'through the mist', as a sudden dawn of new hope. We feel that the dawn is partly created by the protagonist's way of combining wading, surviving and plodding with all that is suggested by 'alive and aware' and the cat-like jumping of truths at his mind; but the dawn is also partly inevitable – the righting of wrongs and the making of new structures, that emerges as surely as day follows night. The poem provides us, incidentally and unself-consciously, with a vivid sense of what it means in practice to be heroic in circumstances of oppression.

While Mafika Gwala's poetry, then, is rooted in a particular situation and radical in its tendency, Chris Mann's might well be described (in the rather combative parlance of current socio-cultural debates) as liberal. Though he is a sensitive South African involved inexorably in anxious, sometimes anguished probing, as a white person he has not had to endure oppression beyond that of being born into, and to some extent caught up willy-nilly in, the white ruling class. He has travelled, he has studied here and overseas, and he has taken up and tackled in verse a great variety of themes. In this respect he is a poet in a very traditional Western sense: a largely free person, slightly disengaged from the immediate practical concerns of most people; a man given to sympathetic imaginative response, to contemplation and meditation. He has not

however been wholly content with this role: as a number of his poems make clear, he has pointed his creative capacities in the direction not only of a specifically South African awareness but of an awareness which attempts to bring together certain traditional features of Western thinking and of African consciousness (as he has come to conceive of it, as a result of his personal contacts and of his study of Nguni oral poetry). If Gwala's title **No More Lullabies** is a call to his fellow blacks and to other South Africans to wake up to the real psycho-political demands of their situation, Mann's title **New Shades** is an invitation to the reader (white or black, but probably more often white than black) to recognize the rich humane significances that can be discovered in the shades, the **amadlozi**, 'those who although physically dead or absent influence the living' (p. 43). One of the points of interest — and one of the ironies — of the comparison that I am making is that Gwala, though he shows a lively belief in the potency of the example set by heroes, would probably be in some ways doubtful about the **amadlozi** as they are re-created by Mann. There are no simple answers to the questions that Mann's poetic speculations pose.

Because of the varied nature of his concerns, it isn't easy to offer wholly typical poems. Here is one of his references to the shades:

Nerves, heart, the gut . . .
they root and register feeling.
Same with napes.
Sometimes a density gathers into them from the shoulders.
There's a phrase in Zulu for this,
'**Nginezibopho**', it goes, 'I'm troubled by knots.'
That means your shades have congregated,
your teachers and loved ones and lost ones are there.
They want you to slough off the petty passions of the day
and be attentive, deeply attentive to them.
Napes!
Life fingertips,
they give us access to a realm beyond.

(from 'Napes', p. 19)

This is a poetry of the human psyche, an exploring of the subtle relationships between the body, the mind, and the world of the spirit. The socio-political implication, in so far as there is one, is that we are all human beings who can learn from one another's intuitions: we are all part of one potential community.

The "politics" of most liberal poetry works, and has always worked, in roughly this way. An imaginative grasp of ourselves, of our world, opens up the possibility of a richer humanity, a deeper set of resonant harmonies between people, and between people and 'nature' and even God:

And yet these images of earth and sky
are present myths that scholars build and break,
for science, that leads us like a honey-bird
will never rest, will never grant us more
than transient truths, productive metaphors,
before it flutters round our heads again,
and draws us onward through the dim receding bush.
Small cries, like 'Primum Mobile', or 'God',
escape our lips when we confront the deeps,
the lights and frozen dark through which we spin.
Such sounds, like little drops of midnight dew,
crush up the stars within a speck that melts,
and yet they are our signs of human awe,
and when science's theories alter, awe remains.

We say, this night, that Saturn's slimy gas,
the mammoth ferocity of the stars,
are by their placement made harmless as mice,
and I, gazing through their tranquil glitter,
know only that we are carefully poised
among infinities, have life, can love,
and that there's reason to give thanks and praise.

(from 'Words before Sleep', p. 13)

Mann's concern here, within the formality of the metrical pattern, is intensely personal; in fact the piece has begun as a love poem, as he expresses:

a calm delight, that we
who float upon a ball of boiling rock,
can lie in steady cool within each other's arms.

But the poem culminates in perceptions that are social, scientific, philosophical, religious.

Mann tends to focus upon the world of nature, and more particularly the open country: stars, sky, birds, bush, midnight dew, mice. In this too he is working within a Western tradition, which in English takes us back through Hughes, Lawrence and Frost, to Wordsworth and Blake's **Songs of Innocence**, and beyond them to Milton, Shakespeare and some of the poets of the Middle Ages. Gwala on the other hand, like so many twentieth-century writers, and like Dickens and Baudelaire and the Blake of the **Songs of Experience**, is an urban poet. (It is surely no coincidence that while Gwala lives in Mpumalanga, Mann is at the Valley Trust.)

By now some readers will be asking an inevitable question, which might perhaps run like this: 'Mann's poems display various kinds of sensitive awareness, but can his type of writing be considered truly **relevant** in contemporary South Africa? Isn't he missing the really salient issues? And doesn't his work, in its tendency towards idealism (in several senses of that word), fail to offer, implicitly or otherwise, the sort of rigorous analysis of social and political developments that a serious approach to South African reality demands? Indeed doesn't a poem like 'Bush and Sky' (p. 23) —

Stare, stare at the seething bush
and wonder why berries grow.
Gaze a night at the Milky Way
and think where the galaxies go.

For berries are a throng of heads
and stars nod in a crowd,
and no one knows his genesis
or how to shrug off his shroud. —

present an unfocused philosophizing which in the end has to be described as self-indulgent or irresponsible?' I hope what I have said already will suggest how I respond to that question. There obviously are important approaches to South African reality which Mann doesn't — perhaps couldn't — attempt. But what he gives us is, it seems to me, deeply valid. As a poet he offers us his own particular insights into the reality that he apprehends: the only question we can honestly ask is whether what he presents makes vivid sense. (Of course some readers and critics may find themselves unable to dwell on Mann's images and themes). It must be said, too, that it is only from one very specific perspective that 'Bush and Sky' could be said to be 'unfocussed': the poem has just the degree of particularity that it needs in order to set in motion the swirling — and serious — issues which provide its dynamic.

But of course to defend Mann in this way is not to belittle Gwala. There can be no doubting (it seems to me) the value, the profound human necessity, of Gwala's vision:

In Defence of Poetry

What's poetic
about Defence Bonds and Armscor?
What's poetic
about long-term sentences and
deaths in detention
for those who 'threaten state security'?
Tell me,
what's poetic
about shooting defenceless kids
in a Soweto street?
Can there be poetry
in fostering Plural Relations?
Can there be poetry
in the Immorality Act?
What's poetic
about deciding other people's lives?
Tell me brother,
what's poetic
about defending herrenvolkish rights?

As long as
this land, my country
is unpoetic in its doings
it'll be poetic to disagree.

(p. 10)

But some readers would question Gwala's poetry, in some such terms as these: 'One appreciates his urgency, his anger; the life of a black person in contemporary South Africa is indeed a painful and frustrating one. But don't his concerns restrict him to a very narrow emotional and imaginative range? And indeed can such a straightforward series of complaints as we find in 'In Defence of Poetry' really be called 'poetry' at all?' Of course Gwala's poem is very different in its methods and its texture from most of Mann's. There are certainly no images of nature (though such images are to be found in 'Tap-Tapping', which I quoted earlier), but what the piece offers is a considerable richness of political and (implicitly) human detail, and the set of questions is swept along by an impassioned but supple rhetoric. The poem culminates in a cathartic resolution – a clinching of the issue, a clarifying of the emotion – which gives it an almost traditional pattern. And of course the whole movement is buoyed up by its initial irony; the piece is distilling its own poetry from – precisely – 'unpoetic' materials. It is the poet's human response which makes things poetic; poetry is the articulation of a true humanity.

In one respect the two poets have a common aim: each is an observer of the world he knows – though (as one would expect) Gwala's poetic intensity is almost always fairly closely related to his central commitment. For example:

You blew
You pianoed
You strummed
You drummed
And the Shange brothers
 Claude your teacher
 Boyce
 Sandile
– all the jazzing brothers
listened to your music play
As tyres from Mayville
painted Blackhurst with red mud

(from 'For Bhoji', p. 52)

Mann observes a scene with a similar precision, but with a certain detachment, in this case affectionately ironic:

On Saturday morning, half-past ten,
Aunt Frieda, Aunt Winnie, and Flo,
Aunt Anna, Aunt Dolly, and Granny Nel
meet at the West Beach kaif for scones,
meet at the kaif for tea.

And Frieda's eyes are deep as the sea's,
and Winnie's are bright as the spoons,
And Flo and Anna, and Dolly as well,
have faces that droop with soft lace,
have bodies soft as lace.

(from 'Saturday Morning at the West Beach Café', p. 18)

A brief article cannot hope to do justice to these two volumes of verse. Each has more variety than I can illustrate. Each has its high points and its slightly lower points. On the whole Gwala's book seems to me a little more uneven than Mann's; but this may be partly because it contains more elements – details of content, facets of attitude and tone – which are not wholly familiar to me as a white person.

Mann's treatment of political themes, of the kind that form the staple of Gwala's work, is not always indirect. In two poems particularly he discusses political commitment.

The first is called 'Naturalists' (p. 20). In three full stanzas he describes, with good-humoured admiration, those who have devoted themselves entirely to the intricacies of the life of biological nature. Here is the first stanza:

The naturalists I know
have brown arms and green thumbs,
and butterflies roost in their beards.
With tiny pads, they wipe polluted dew
from tender throats, and when they sneeze
they pollinate peaches and plums.

He points out how many valuable discoveries they have made, how much sensitive and alert people owe to them. One has a sense that Mann is in many respects a naturalist himself: perhaps much of his poetry is to be seen in this light? But after stanza two one comes to this quatrain:

Molecules and galaxies
swirl and erupt
in universes beyond their focus.
They find enough to live by in between.

They are content, they have quite enough to keep them going; yet they are blind to certain greater and smaller facts. But does that matter? Then after the third stanza the poem concludes with a modified quatrain:

Quarrels and conquests
swirl and erupt
in universes beyond their focus.
They find enough to marvel at between.

The Naturalists are also apolitical. Does it matter? Mann admires them; yet he records a narrowness. Perhaps if they weren't narrow they couldn't do what they do, be what they are. But politics is important. Is it important for everyone? Can some people live out valid lives without it? Or do the naturalists dwell, in the end, largely in a world of illusion? The poem is carefully and subtly poised between two alternative visions. Mann is not wondering whether political events are important: clearly 'quarrels and conquests' are as solid and momentous as 'molecules

and galaxies'. The question is whether every person needs to be a political animal.

'Strategies' (pp. 34–5) adopts a different approach. In five six-lined stanzas, each with its refrain of three lines, the poet ranges through South African society, through its 'statistics of woe', its many sufferings, its angers; its failures of communication, its despairs, and he concludes in each refrain that revolution is inevitable:

**And they are right, surely they are right:
revolution smoulders within the ghettos,
revolution shudders the ground.**

Many cry out; he too has cried out:

I've been one amongst the prophets,
a writer of tracts and anxious poems . . .

and they and he have been right to cry out:

**And I was right, surely I'm right:
revolution gathers beneath the surface,
revolution shudders the ground.**

Those who feel the necessity for revolution, and those who warn of this necessity, are all justified. We are here fairly close to the world of Mafika Gwala. But the last stanza and refrain offer us a different perspective, a different 'strategy':

Homer, Milton, Cetshwayo's bard,
while men about them hacked and howled,
while galaxies and planets burst
and spilled across the lifeless skies,
reworked their time's religious ore,
and crafted it to shapes that sing.

**And they are right, surely they're right:
revolution burbles beneath the earthcrust,
revolution shudders the ground.**

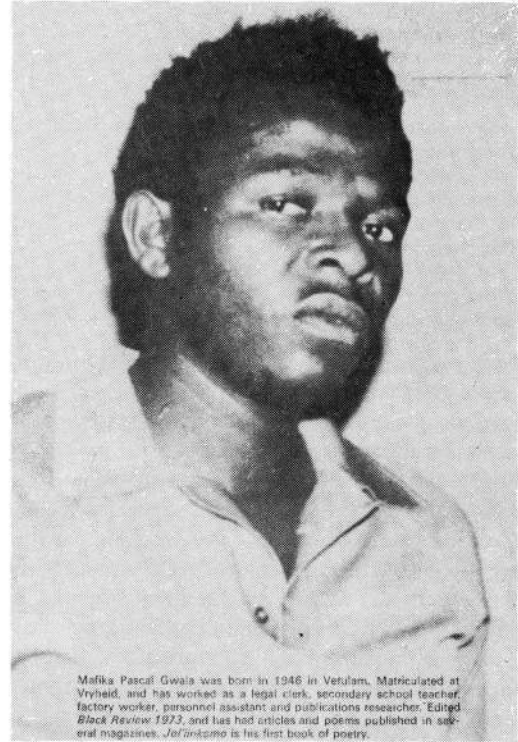
The line 'while galaxies and planets burst' reminds us of 'Naturalists', and Chris Mann is perhaps offering here something of a solution to the problem posed at the end of that poem. Poets must be concerned, involved even, in the great and necessary movements of society; they cannot opt out like the naturalists. But they can be a little like them in attempting to take as their themes, even at the very moments of crisis and transformation, some of the deepest subject-matter of human life. Does this mean — a sceptic might ask — that Mann is suggesting that while political battles are being fought a poet may retire to themes that are simply 'eternal' and 'universal'? No, for Mann makes clear that poets have always taken up the deeper themes (as he sees them) in their specific socio-historic contexts: they have

**reworked their time's religious ore,
and crafted it to shapes that sing.**

The poet, then, for Mann, lives and works in an area between commitment and a kind of detachment, or rather his commitment to what he sees as most valuable involves a certain strategy of detachment.

Gwala — who incidentally has defined his aims in prose in a way that Mann has not — would no doubt accept that a writer, to be a writer at all, needs some degree of detachment; but for him the equation is inevitably very different from Mann's. He would probably agree with Richard Rive's view that black literature 'must differ in texture and quality from that emanating from a people who have the vote, suffer no discrimination and are in a power position because of the colour of their skins'⁶ and this way of seeing

things might well imply an acceptance of what white writers are able to do. Certainly Gwala suggests that black culture, in challenging the domination of white culture, has brought about a situation where both may become 'sub-cultures, part of a greater South African national culture'.⁷



Mafika Pascal Gwala was born in 1946 in Vetulam, matriculated at Vryheid, and has worked as a legal clerk, secondary school teacher, factory worker, personnel assistant and publications researcher. Edited *Black Review* 1973, and has had articles and poems published in several magazines. *Vetankomo* is his first book of poetry.

Mafika Gwala

But his own concern has of course been with the concrete particularities and the human and political urgencies of the world in which he lives: 'We cannot write outside of our experience in a society where social deprivation is taken for granted'.⁸ But doesn't this suggest — our other sceptic might again ask — a poetry that is debilitatingly circumscribed? I think not, for several reasons. First, as I have suggested earlier, what might from one point of view appear to be Gwala's narrowness of base is in fact his great strength: a socio-economic and cultural community which is rendered vibrant by powerful ideas and feelings, a group of people many of whom are on the move towards liberation and justice. There could be no more potent source of poetic inspiration. But (it might be asked) isn't this 'justice' in danger of being sectional, divisive? Not as far as Gwala is concerned; he is firm on this point:

One would have to seek an approach which, from certain perspectives, would be desirable after blacks have achieved their liberation. Or rather, after South African society has become normal, open to all its people.

and

Our critical attitudes towards racism, exploitation and inequality will inevitably dominate. It is total criticism of that inhumanity of man to fellow man that carries the hope of our regaining humanity for all.¹⁰

One must remember too that every poet, whether he admits or knows it or not, is to some extent a mouthpiece for a particular community or group, or set of experiences; this is true of Mann as well. And it is **through** his or her particularity of vision that 'general truths' can be arrived at.

(In saying this I am not wishing to imply that only 'general' truths are of value; but a perception must have some degree of 'generality' if it is to be apprehended at all fully by a reader — like myself, in this case — who is not a member of the poet's immediate community.) Finally, it is useful to know that Gwala — who is a well-read person, with a considerable range of cultural experience — is very conscious of the artistic and linguistic process that is being brought about by himself and his fellow black writers of commitment:

It has not been easy to harmonize our black subject matter with the language forms of a dominant English culture. No one can objectively blame us if at times the culturally enriched English language has been stripped naked. One is reminded of how, at the height of cultural resistance by black Americans, Imamuli Baraka (Le Roi Jones) advocated 'poetry that kills' amongst blacks.¹¹

and

This means that the language of oppressed cannot always be lyrical, highly nuanced and frolicsome. Our language often answers to immediate needs . . .¹²

'Lyrical, highly nuanced and frolicsome' are words that could be applied to a number of Mann's poem. What then does Gwala offer by way of alternative? Here is roughly the second half of 'A Poem (after James Matthews)':

Collect yourself to truths that remind you:
 you were not born to slave
 for the boss who drops you Rand notes
 so's you can play Judas on your fellow workers,
 your people who scare you;
 Remind yourself how many times
 you've betrayed the future of your children
 as you came out bloody number ten
 by your playing second fiddle;
 Upturn your thoughts
 as you fugue away from yourself
 to healthy moments when life was real;
 Rechannel your inner soul's fears
 as you wipe your salty eyes
 with a beer mug dripping froth
 pausing on the token of the 'Best Taste'
 at the boozejoint next to your matchboxhouse;
 Jump to the values of your ancestors
 as you cling to sober traditions
 worrying about those children with ribs
 like steel rods
 dying of kwashiorkor and dehydration
 in some remote bundu;
 Brace yourself when the sun, hot as your tears
 scans the gables of your neighbourhood,
 with children laughing and chasing
 dreams they may never grow to realize.

(pp. 18–19)

The voice is vigorous, pressing, tough, but humane; and above all it is a voice. One has a sense that one person is addressing another in an all-too-real situation; and yet there is an element of ritual in the poem too. A great deal of meaning is packed into the energetic verbs of command or exhortation: 'collect yourself', 'remind yourself', 'upturn', 'rechannel', and so on.

Mafika Gwala's voice is also a voice of hope. He tells us that at the moment when black consciousness began to emerge and he found himself working with students and others in a shared dedication,

my poetic life, if one may call it that, changed accordingly.
 The brooding was replaced by an understanding of hope. I
 have been striving to define that hope since then.¹³

Chris Mann in his very different way is also a poet of hope:

How dimly in its yolk of flesh
 a fledgling taps the shell and sings,
 and I will tap and grope until
 there comes the cracking of the eggs,
 until her rose grey nape appears,
 and then if grace be given us, wings.

(from 'The Growth of the Dove', p. 14)

Are these two hopes compatible? Can they in any sense live and work together? I believe that they can, and that these two voices — so different in tone, in urgency, in wavelength, in focus — enrich and help to propel our literature, our humanity and our ever-mobile social formation. □

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7. **Momentum**, p. 49.
8. **Momentum**, p. 47.
9. **Momentum**, p. 46.
10. **Momentum**, p. 47.
11. **Momentum**, p. 47 — 48.
12. **Momentum**, p. 51.
13. **Momentum**, p. 40.

THE ROLE OF LAW AND LAWYERS IN AN UNJUST SOCIETY – CURRENT TRENDS

Lawyers continue to be regarded by the majority of South Africans as an extension of the broader establishment – elite, expensive, and, by and large, in favour of maintenance of the political and social status quo. The daily contact that thousands of people have with the law in its widest context, is hardly likely to promote a positive attitude in the minds of those on the receiving end: arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, random pass searches and impromptu road blocks at the hands of an increasingly aggressive and hostile police force, callous and indifferent treatment by prosecutors, magistrates, and commissioners who every day sentence thousands of unrepresented persons to prison terms or fines for 'offences' no more serious than failing to carry a reference book, frequently violent treatment at the hands of warders in grossly overcrowded prisons – all experiences which lead to the rapid alienation from the state, its laws and its law enforcement agencies. Not surprisingly, a common perception of the lawyer in a society that cries out so desperately for protection and help against oppressive laws and brutal law enforcement, is that of a cynical opportunist, living off the misery generated by the establishment to which the lawyer belongs.

The lawyer naturally sees himself differently. He must of necessity, ply his trade within rigid professional limits, obey the rituals of procedure, dress with decorum, operate from an urban base – all factors which generate expensive overheads which the lawyer in turn looks to his clients to pay. He has, by a simple process, become part of the elite.

The scepticism with which lawyers are regarded is further enhanced by the nature of the laws with which they deal. To their credit, a sizeable minority of South African lawyers have aligned themselves closely with the unenfranchised majority in this country and have doggedly fought to prevent the complete eclipse of the few rights and privileges which Black South Africans enjoy. They have been harassed every step of the way and what little gains have been made in the Courts, have frequently been simply over-ridden and side-stepped by the Legislature. Legal loopholes have been closed whenever they have been exposed, leaving lawyers powerless and frustrated. A good example is the Black (Prohibition of Interdicts) Act of 1960. It was passed largely in response to a series of successful legal actions instituted in the 1960s by Blacks in townships around Johannesburg, who were being forcibly removed from their homes by the agents of the new apartheid Government. Interdicts, a potentially powerful legal remedy, were brought to resist removal, causing great frustration and embarrassment to an administration imbued with the righteousness of its distorted cause. The answer was simple – remove the common law right to Blacks to

bring interdicts in regard to removals and housing. The cynicism behind legislation of this nature defies easy comparison.

GAINS

Despite this, lawyers have traditionally assumed leadership roles in the various forums of the struggle against the successive repressive regimes in South Africa – largely because the law has been considered one of the few platforms outside of unlawful violent activity, from which positive gains have been made in the context of social and political change in South Africa.

But how important are these gains? With what relevance should one regard them, considering the supreme power of the South African state and its pervasive relentless ideology? Some recent legal conflicts allow us to analyse the importance of legalism as a forum for change in South Africa.

The cornerstone of the Government's urban Black policy is the Urban Areas Act of 1945. Its basic aim is to keep, in the cities, a stable, functional population of employed and employable Blacks, to man industries, mines and essential services, and to generally perform those unskilled and semi-skilled functions considered to be beneath the dignity of Whites. Section 29 of the Act is one of the methods of removing from the urban areas, persons who are performing no 'useful' function and who are or who have become, in the eyes of the law, 'idle' or 'undesirable'. The section has no equivalent in any Western system of jurisprudence and is widely acknowledged to be a particularly drastic piece of legislation with often horrific social consequences. The Act empowers a commissioner to declare people who have been unemployed for a particular length of time to be idle and undesirable, and to send them to be detained at places which amount to prison farms for up to two years, to do hard labour. The commissioner's decision is subject to Supreme Court review. In the past, the courts have fairly consistently 'rubber stamped' the decisions of the commissioners. In 1982 almost 3 000 people were 'removed from the urban area in this way.

In June, 1983 the Supreme Court, in reviewing the decision of the Durban commissioner to declare a woman idle and undesirable, placed a different interpretation on the section, which would have the effect of requiring a commissioner to decide whether a person was within the ordinary dictionary definition of the terms 'idle' and 'undesirable', and not according to the technical definition which had been used by the commissioners in the past. The decision was received as a landmark judgment; and indeed, if properly

applied as a precedent, the judgment will have the effect of drastically reducing the number of people who are subject, each year, to the possible consequences of the section's application. Clearly, the decision does not affect the substance of the Act, and may not do so. It is as well to bear in mind that the Constitution Act provides that no court of law may pronounce upon the validity of any Act of Parliament. Thus, any law, no matter how discriminatory and partisan, is rendered unassailable by the stroke of a pen.

WIDE POWERS

The State President, Ministers, and administrative bodies and office holders, are often given extremely wide powers by statute to make decisions, rules and regulations which directly affect the lives of others: so-called 'executive legislation'.

Because of the wide powers conferred, those exercising the powers are often required, prior to making decisions materially affecting the lives of others, to apply what may be generally called the rules of natural justice, i.e., the obligation to give the persons affected a fair hearing, to allow them to be represented, and to put forward their version of the events, before some form of independent or non-partisan tribunal. Administrative officials are also, in terms of the laws that create and control them, obliged to perform certain duties and to do so reasonably and timeously. A pension official is, for example, obliged to consider an aged person's application for a pension and, if certain requirements are fulfilled, to pay the pension.

Administrative officials frequently act in total disregard of their obligations and introduce an element of personal or bureaucratic discretion into their roles, creating the firm impression that public office is synonymous with stagnation, corruption, and the right to control and to dispense largesse at will.

The administrative powers and responsibility held by certain pension officials in Natal, officials of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, officials of the Department of Education and Training and certain officials in control of certain Black townships in Natal, have recently been the subject of vigorous litigations following on either their failure to fulfil their administrative roles, or their acting in disregard of the limits placed on their powers. Large numbers of Supreme Court applications have been brought by affected persons against the KwaZulu pensions authorities for non-payment of social pensions and unlawful suspension of pensions. None has ever been challenged by the Respondents and the department concerned has just launched a commission of inquiry into pension matters, calling upon interested parties to submit recommendations to facilitate the functions of the department. Similar sustained legal action was taken over the plight of workers against an inefficient, ineffective, and understaffed U.I.F. office in Natal. Again, no cases were ever successfully defended and indications and assurances from the Fund now show that extensive steps have been taken to improve and streamline the operations of the Fund in Natal to ensure the achievement of its prime function, viz., the timeous payment of benefits to unemployed people.

Successful legal action has been taken this year, on several occasions, against particular township administrations

following arbitrary and unlawful evictions of people from township houses.

Seen in their context, these decisions of the Supreme Court may be regarded as particularly important, regard being had to the dangers inherent in placing the control of extremely limited and highly sought after resources, i.e. housing, in the hands of relatively minor administrative officials.

Similarly, legal action has prevented arbitrary and unlawful attempts by school and university heads to expel students and staff, and been used against education officials who withhold examination results from students.

The number of cases that reach court is miniscule when looked at against the number of administrative officials exercising power, and the number of arbitrary and unlawful decisions made by them, but there is no doubt that as test cases, with the attendant publicity, wasted legal costs, departmental admonishing, etc., they usually have a disproportionately affirmative effect.

INDUSTRIAL COURT

With the establishment in 1982 of the Industrial Court – a statutory tribunal which deliberates on labour disputes and is designed specifically to encourage disputes' settlement by lawful means rather than by resorting to strike action, – Natal has been the site of some protracted legal battles between unions and employees on the one hand, and employers on the other. The legal field of industrial relations is a new and burgeoning one and the participants are eager to make new law through the courts. Although the state has traditionally shown an open bias towards capital in its clashes with labour, and has freely made available to embattled employers its coercive agencies in the form both of the security and regular police, the Industrial Court has introduced an element of neutrality to the struggle between the two groups, and has, to a degree, detracted from the doubtful benefits of strike action.

The recent judgment handed down by the court in the case of **M. Khan and Others v Rainbow Chickens** represented a fundamental limitation on the rights of a large corporation to treat its employees at will. The company had always regarded itself as a farming operation for obvious financial and tax policy reasons, as well as for the vital exclusion of farming operations from all laws and statutes that provide protection for employees in the work place and which lay down minimum conditions of employment and wages. Despite the fact that it is, in nature and operation, an obvious industrial operation operating in an industrial township, Rainbow perpetuates this fiction. In February this year, seven young workers were dismissed for refusing to do overtime. They challenged their dismissal as unfair and applied for reinstatement. The Court reinstated them and classified Rainbow as an industrial concern rather than an agricultural one, thereby fundamentally affecting the position of the many hundreds of other employees in the giant concern. The effect of cases such as this is of particular note for the organised labour movement which thereby vicariously gains confidence and is able to demonstrate to individual members of the working class that they are, in some measure, able to direct the forces that control them.

Denied any other form of viable expression, the Black working class has, in the Industrial Court, a potentially powerful and effective means in its attempts to achieve a greater degree of autonomy and expression in a society geared and conditioned to the continued subjugation of that class.

The recent decision of the Natal Supreme Court declaring unlawful the detention of several UDF and NIC members, is also seen as significant, and encourages the belief that our judicial system is independent, is in favour of upholding the rule of law and will not rubber-stamp the decisions of the administrators which are based on narrow sectional interests. Irrespective of whether this is true or not, the impression that it is independent is essential for its continued use by organizations and communities seeking to advance their interests in the short term.

OPPOSITE VIEWS

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasise a most fundamental contradiction which arises when debating the issue of the judiciary in contemporary times. This involves looking at two diametrically opposite views of the courts as a site of struggle.

The social relations of racial capitalism that exist in South Africa today are basically unjust. The courts are, according to this view, an extension of the coercive influences of the state, and apparent 'independence' merely serves to legitimise the state locally and internationally and to detract from the real **locus** of the struggle – the community, the trade union, the progressive church. The opposite view, legalism or reformism, proposes the notion that the law is neutral and is capable of benefitting the masses provided all people are given equal access to the courts and to lawyers; i.e. access to law will resolve the conflicts in society.

Both views may be criticised – the former is essentialist and entirely non-pragmatic, ignores the important gains made by the disenfranchised communities in the courts and places them in direct confrontation with the establish-

ment. The latter is probably more dangerous. It reflects a naive faith in the neutrality of the courts and their ability to bring about change. The excessive use of the courts as a forum for change often results in decisions being imposed on persons or communities which they could otherwise have successfully resisted. It de-emphasises the importance of grassroots community organisation, suppresses local democratic leadership, and places undue faith in professional experts who have very often no links of any sort (other than financial ones) with the community, and generally removes the forum of the struggle from the community to the court room – often in vain. The courts must be seen in perspective – if they posed a serious threat to the ruling order they would undoubtedly be curbed.

Between the two a pragmatic and strategic path can be taken. The assistance of the courts can undoubtedly be usefully sought by people and communities. The attendant publicity of a successful court action can regenerate the confidence of a community. Popular strategic gains can be made to show that conflicts such as those waged between unions and intransigent capital can be usefully resolved with obvious benefit to organisations. One has in mind a recent action taken by a large Black union in Durban. It was refused permission by the Chief Magistrate to hold an open air annual general meeting. The Supreme Court overruled this refusal and the meeting went ahead. University of Zululand students unlawfully expelled by the Rector, recently took successful court action to bring about their reinstatement and the setting aside of their expulsion.

If the decision has been taken to seek relief from a court of law, it is equally important to consider the effect of an unpopular verdict upon an expectant organisation or community: i.e., frustration, disillusionment and increased potential for confrontation. This spectre should serve to remind those actively engaged in the struggle for a just society of the need to act pragmatically, and to retain an organised community as the real basis for change. □

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Chief M.G. Buthelezi | : | Chief Minister, KwaZulu; President of Inkatha; Chairman, the South African Black Alliance. |
| Colin Gardner | : | Professor of English, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. |
| Richard Lyster | : | Attorney at the Legal Resources Centre, Durban. |
| M.D. McGrath (Dr) | : | Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. |
| Jill Natrass | : | Professor and Head of Development Studios Unit, University of Natal, Durban. |
| David Robbins | : | Feature Writer, The Natal Witness , Pietermaritzburg. |
| A.J. Thembela | : | Professor of Educational Planning and Administration, University of Zululand. |

THE INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN NATAL

This is no more than a quick review of the independent trade union movement in Natal. The unions to be considered are "independent" in the sense that they are outside the establishment trade union movement (such as TUCSA – the Trade Union Council of South Africa), are not company unions, and are part of the 'new wave' unionism that has swept the country since the early 70's. However they do not constitute a 'movement' in the sense of a single, unified structure.

In Natal, this form of unionism is represented by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (CCAWUSA), Food and Canning Workers Unions (FCWU), General Workers Union (GWU), South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), National Federation of Workers (NFW), Media Workers Association (MWASA), Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU), and African Workers Association (AWA).

FOSATU, CUSA, CCAWUSA, FCWU and GWU can be grouped together as they, along with the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association, are in the final stages of 'unity talks' aimed at creating a new national federation that will bring together some 300 000 workers – probably early in the New Year.

In Natal FOSATU is the largest and most established grouping of these unions, with a membership of about 27 000. It is a tight, disciplined non-racial federation of nine unions, seven of which have offices in Natal: Chemical Workers Industrial Union, Metal and Allied Workers Union, Natal Sugar Industries Employees Union, National Union of Textile Workers, Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union, Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union and Transport and General Workers Union.

CUSA is a much looser federation of 12 industrial unions, 10 of which operate in Natal: Building, Construction and Allied Workers Union, Food Beverage Workers Union, South African Black Municipal Workers' Union, South African Chemical Workers' Union, South African Laundry, Dry-Cleaning and Dyeing Workers Union, Steel Engineering and Allied Workers Union, Textile Workers Union, Transport and Allied Workers Union, United African Motor Workers Union, and Security Workers Union. CUSA follows a Black-only (Africans, Coloureds, Indians) policy – though more recently this has come to mean that Whites are allowed to join CUSA unions as workers, but cannot take up any official position as CUSA is firmly committed

to encouraging Black leadership. CUSA membership in Natal is just about 10 000, while nationally it has about 140 000 members. The well-known National Union of Mineworkers is its largest affiliate.

The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa organizes mainly in the commercial and distributive sectors. It has recognition agreements in some of the large chain-stores like O.K. Bazaars, Woolworths and Checkers. Of its national membership of just over 40 000, about 5 000 are in Natal. It was until very recently open to Africans only, with Coloured, Indian and White workers in the same sector being organized by the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW), an ex-TUCSA affiliate. However, at its conference in Pietermaritzburg in July this year, it opened its ranks to all Black workers – just a few weeks after the majority of NUDAW's members in Natal decided to join CCAWUSA.

The Food and Canning Workers Union operates together with the African FCWU as a single non-racial union. The FCWU was established in 1941 and was one of the leading affiliates of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in the fifties. With the crushing of SACTU in the early sixties the union was reduced to dormancy. It was revitalized in the early seventies and the Natal branch was revived a few years ago. It organizes mainly in the food and canning industry around Durban and the North Coast and has about 1 200 members. Membership nationwide is believed to be about 20 000.

The General Workers' Union (GWU) organizes mainly stevedores. Its strength is based on the dockworkers. It organizes too in the transport, building and engineering industries. It has about 2 500 members in Natal, with a national membership of around 9 000. It is a non-racial general union, with its headquarters in Cape Town.

These then are the unions in Natal which are to be part of the new national federation. Although there are differences between these unions, sometimes marked, they are evolving a unity, and there are certain general characteristics that might be said to define them even if these general features do not apply to all of them to the same degree.

To begin with, the unions are committed to the establishment of strong shop-floor structures and a shop-steward system that will allow for as much worker control as possible. Depending on the resources available to the different union groupings, they organize shop-steward education and training programmes to provide workers with the skills

necessary to more effectively assume leadership of the unions and erode their dependency on intellectuals.

They aim to establish strong, national industrial unions – and it is on the success of this, as well as the creation of strong shop-floor structures and democratic worker control, that the ultimate strength of the new federation will be based.

In this context, the question of registration and participation in Industrial Councils is not seen as a matter of principle; the view seems to be that where unions feel that advantage can be gained and that they can be strengthened by it, they should opt for it, but if it will mean their being weakened or shackled in any way they should avoid registration and participation in Industrial Councils. The basic issue is whether it advances or retards the development of a strong organized trade union movement.

And it is on the basis of a powerful, united well-established trade union movement that these unions will more stridently take up political and community issues beyond the shop-floor. Not that they are not doing so at the moment – but at this stage, even if there are differences in emphasis on this between the different unions, there seems to be a general agreement that the political issues taken up should be those that affect workers most immediately and as far as possible they should be taken up through the structures of the unions themselves. These unions do take part in campaigns waged by community and political organisations which also affect workers – but they do so without affiliating to these organisations and on the basis of their organisational strength on the shop-floor. They see as their basic political task the building of a strong, united, independent trade union movement – and precisely how this will impress itself on the wider struggle for change in South Africa remains to be seen – and is awaited with the keenest anticipation.

The South African Allied Workers Union and the National Federation of Workers share many similarities. Actually they are both break-aways from BAWU and they are both non-racial general unions which are in the process of demarcating their membership into organised, industrial unions. To this end SAAWU has created the following affiliates: Baking and Allied Workers Union, Blind Workers Union, Building and Allied Workers Union, Mine and General Workers Union, National Industrial Steel and Metalworkers Union, National Stevedores Workers Union, Printing and Allied Workers Union, Textile and Allied Workers Union, and the Unemployed Workers Union. SAAWU's national membership is between 100 000 and 130 000. Figures for Natal are difficult to come by.

The NFW operates only in Natal, with offices in Durban, Empangeni and Ladysmith. It has an estimated membership of 20 000. It has the following affiliates which it hopes to establish as industrial unions: Brick and Clay and Allied Workers Union, Commercial and Distributive and Allied Workers Union, Farm Workers Union, Health and Allied Workers Union, Liquor, Catering and Allied Workers Union, National Domestic Workers Union, National Municipal Workers Union of South Africa, National Post Office and Allied Workers Union, Security Guards and Allied Workers Union. Until recently it also had the National Iron, Steel, Metal and Allied Workers Union as an affiliate.

SAAWU and NFW are what have come to be termed 'community unions'. They take a very much more overt

stance on political and community issues beyond the factory-floor and lend their support to many campaigns in the community, believing that "the workers are the community and the community the workers". They tend to blur the distinction between shop-floor and community issues. They don't seem to have very strong shop-floor structures – which both reinforces and is reinforced by their community orientation. Both of them have affiliated to the United Democratic Front. Their overt involvement in community and political issues has meant constant police harassment of their officials – indeed at the moment of writing SAAWU's leading organizer in Natal, Sam Kikine has had to "disappear" to avoid being served with a detention order. Both the unions are opposed to registration and Industrial Councils, believing that compliance will mean the bureaucratization of unions and their control by the state.

Being general unions with a 'community orientation' has meant that SAAWU and NFW have very different structures and organizing strategies and practices from the unions that will constitute the new federation – and so at the moment they are not part of the proposed federation, though the door remains open to them to join once they have constituted themselves into industrial unions and arrive at some agreement with the other unions on how to take up political issues.

The Black Allied Workers Union is also an unregistered general union. It sees itself however as a federation of industrial unions, having the following affiliates: Black Allied Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Workers Union, Black Allied Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, Black Allied Shops, Offices and Distributive Trade Workers Union, Black Allied Building and Construction Workers Union, Black Allied Air, Railways and Harbour Workers Union, Black Allied Municipality Workers Union, Black Allied Mines and Tunnels Workers Union, Black Allied Passenger and Goods Transport Workers Union, Black Allied Electrical Workers Union, Black Allied Chemical Workers Union, Black Allied Rubber and Tyres Workers Union, Black Allied Nurses Union, Black Allied Garage and Motor Industry Workers Union, Black Allied Liquor, Hotel and Motel Workers Union, and the Black Allied Household Technicians Workers Union. Its membership in Natal is difficult to determine, but the information available suggests about 12 000. While it is not a registered union, it is not opposed to participation in Industrial Councils and in fact attends some Council meetings as an observer.

BAWU was initially a 'Black Consciousness' union having close ties with the now-banned South African Students Organisation and Black Peoples' Convention. At present it follows a Blacks-only policy but stresses that it is basically concerned with African workers. It does not have any ties at the moment with any of the 'Black Consciousness' groupings, and seems to keep a low profile; at least it's not known to overtly identify itself with political or community issues outside the shop-floor. BAWU is however very much against the involvement of whites at any level in the independent union movement. It also has severe reservations about the new federation.

The Media Workers Association which seeks to represent all workers in the media industry, irrespective of skill, is a very small union. It has a national membership of around

1 400, of whom there are about 300 in Natal. An unregistered union, it has recognition agreements with South African Associated Newspapers and Argus. It has been a staunchly 'Black Consciousness' union, but in recent years cracks have appeared, and early this year, in fact, the union split over the issues of having a non-racial membership and affiliating to UDF. The union is in disarray at the moment with some of the regions following a non-racial, pro-UDF policy and others a Blacks-only non-UDF position — though there are talks underway to bring the two factions together. Natal is firmly committed to the 'Black Consciousness' position and in fact was one of the regions which walked out of the congress at which the split occurred.

Little is known of the African Workers Association — but that it survives on the energy and determination of its one full-time organizer, Thizi Kumalo. It has a membership of just under 7 000, many of whom are not paid-up. The union functions from an office in Durban, with the most limited resources. It organizes mainly in Durban and the surrounding areas, and does not have any members outside Natal. It is a registered, general union and takes part in Industrial Councils. It organizes mainly in hospitals, municipal departments and hotels, and has some membership amongst security guards and in the engineering sector. AWA is a non-racial union but believes firmly that leadership roles in the unions must be served by Blacks. The union is against affiliating to any political or community organisations but 'respects' organizations that are fighting for democratic rights in South Africa.

Though there are these definite differences within the independent trade union movement, as a whole it can be distinguished from the established trade union movement. There is actually an uneasy relationship between the independent unions and the established trade union movement. In part, this is because in some sectors the independent unions are attracting TUCSA members — who are often forced to belong to these unions because of the operation of the closed-shop.

In Natal this tension has surfaced several times this year. For example, in Pinetown there were difficulties between the National Union of Leatherworkers (NULW), a TUCSA affiliate, and SAAWU in the shoe industry, and at present the NULW is resisting the claim for recognition by the National Union of Textile Workers, a FOSATU union, at Jaguar Shoes in Pietermaritzburg. The Garment Workers Industrial Union of TUCSA has even threatened to take strike action if necessary, in defence of the closed-shop which it sees as being undermined by NUTW organisation in the garment industry. The tension between the independent trade union movement and TUCSA is likely to increase as they both seek to establish their dominance within the working class.

But there is rivalry too within the independent trade union movement. Of course the new federation will eliminate this somewhat — but there are sections of the independent trade union movement which are not part of the new federation, and continued, and possibly even increased, competition for members between them and the unions in the new federation is likely. Only time will tell — but at this stage there appears to be only the most remote possibility of a single federation of all the independent unions. We have looked only at Natal, but if we have to throw our glance outside it, a whole number of other independent unions catch the eye, making the picture even more hazy.

Ultimately, however, behind the differences in organising strategy, shop-floor structures, notions of worker control, attitudes to industrial unionism, and relations with the community lie political differences — and so the fractures in the trade union movement are not likely to be healed completely. But this isn't cause for dismay. For in a society as complex and volatile as South Africa, one could hardly expect otherwise.

N.B. The figures provided of union membership should be treated with some caution. Accurate statistics on union membership are notoriously hard to come by — but every effort has been made to provide reasonable estimates. □

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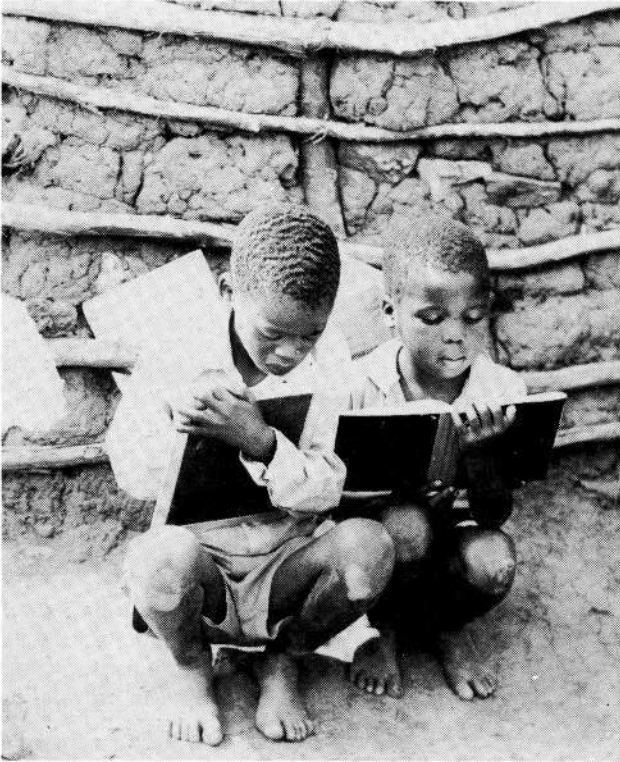
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THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE EDUCATION FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA



This article will not devote much attention to the political and economic issues underlying educational problems as these have been widely and sufficiently discussed and documented elsewhere. It only needs to be emphasised in passing that the political and economic issues cripple the education for Blacks in a very serious manner. In this article no sophisticated research findings or persuasive arguments will be given to prove that the education for Blacks suffers tremendously also as a result of **social** and **cultural** issues that exist in the South African social system. A few of these issues will be discussed in this article.

First, let it be borne in mind that school education for Blacks is a foreign imposition that was grafted into the social and cultural life of the various tribal societies by the missionaries. This introduction of school education divided Blacks into educated and non-educated classes but also divided them into Christianised and non-Christianised classes. When later industrialisation and urbanisation came about, both groups mentioned above were affected. These social processes set in motion a dynamic movement from stable norms of traditionalism to highly unstable conditions of modernisation. Those groups or individuals who were favoured by circumstances and who also possessed the ability to adapt quickly to new conditions moved faster through the process of

social transformation. Those groups who were left behind at the various stages of development were mainly found in the rural areas. Even in these areas there are varying levels of rurality. The urban people are also at the various stages of urbanisation. This is complicated by the political system in South Africa which frustrates the free movement of Black people.

If education is understood as a process of cultural transmission of beliefs, norms and values of society, the issue that arises for Black education is: whose cultural values, beliefs and norms are being transmitted by Black education? Let me quickly stress that I am not pleading for the so called black oriented education. During the missionary era (up to 1953) the Christian norms were clearly and deliberately pursued. Schools were found in and around mission stations and pupils came mainly from families that had accepted Christianity. When **mass education** was promoted during the 25 years of Bantu Education, pupils began to come from all sorts of families who were at the various levels of transition from traditionalism to modernism.. The heterogeneity of social background of the pupils made it very difficult for the teachers to uphold a consistent value system. The teachers themselves did not understand the educational implications of these social dynamics because of their own background and poor qualifications. The consequence of this situation was that school education became concerned merely with the imparting of bare facts of the subject matter which were hardly related in any way with the daily lives of the pupils. It was not infrequent to find teachers teaching **hygiene** to dirty pupils in dirty classrooms and surroundings. I must also stress here that that were several examples of schools and pupils that were always very neat and tidy. The point I am making here is that many things that were learnt at school were only remotely related to the pupils' daily lives and experiences in their homes. Historical and geographical facts were memorised without much understanding. Scientific facts were taught without developing a sense of scientific inquiry. One can find several examples from any school subject which illustrate lack of congruence between the culture of the school and the culture of the home.

NORMS

Secondly, let it be understood that in Western societies (from whence formal education for Blacks came) school education promotes middle class norms. Pupils from the lower classes have always found it difficult to do as well as the pupils who come from middle class homes. Black people in South Africa are not only coming from a

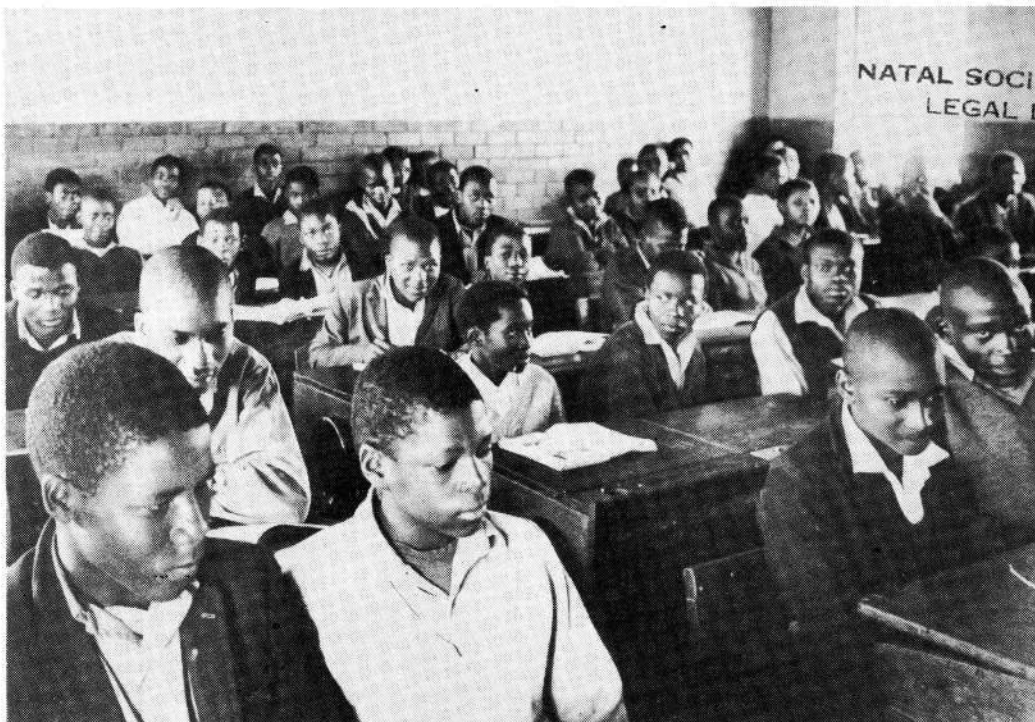
culture in transition, but are also at the bottom of the South African social structure which happens to be determined by race as well. It is to the Black's great credit that a sizeable number have been able to surmount these social and cultural barriers and are able to compete favourably with the other race groups. But these are exceptions. The great majority is seriously handicapped and cannot get out of this dilemma. A few children who get admitted into White private schools escape this dilemma but probably get into a worse one. They get alienated from their cultural group without being accepted or assimilated into the White cultural group. This is complicated by the political issues which create an atmosphere of discrimination of Blacks and make it difficult for them to surmount their educational problems. If the Blacks were left to handle the problem of coping with a situation of adjusting a foreign system of education to their social and cultural circumstances, they would have enough homework to do. What I am saying here is that if Blacks were afforded the same type of facilities and equal provision of everything, they would be faced with the one problem of adjusting to a discontinuity between their home culture and school culture. Problems (about overcrowding, high failure rates, high drop-out rates, leaks of examination question papers, lack of facilities, poor teaching, under-qualified teachers, delayed or non-payment of teachers' salaries) add up to a situation in which Black schools are functioning at a very low level of productivity. An attempt to improve the quality and qualifications of teachers is frustrated by all these handicaps. How does one teach a group of 70 pupils, through a medium of a foreign tongue, a subject that one has hardly mastered himself, under drab and dreary conditions with no aids at all? The use of rote learning and the intense recourse to corporal punishment by some teachers may be a mechanism adopted by them to survive in an extremely difficult situation. The insistence by Inspectors on such matters as the keeping of records, giving of tests and plenty of written work is not very helpful in improving the quality of education.

SCHOOL CONDITIONS

The imparting of knowledge to enable the pupils to gain real understanding and insight into the subject matter is absent. The proper development of the physical, mental and moral skills and wholesome attitudes and appreciations is absent. There are no means at school, the teachers have very little capacity and the environment is not conducive to the development of creativity, original thinking and reasoning powers. This does not mean that these qualities are not developing in Black children. They develop in spite of the situation obtained in schools and not because of it. What I am saying here is that the school is not very helpful in developing these qualities to the full. The conditions which exist in many schools tend to dwarf or even wipe out the very good work that is still done by many teachers in some relatively good schools. The tragedy is that in all these schools there are excellent, innocent children who are endowed with great talent which is not being developed to its full potential because of the present conditions. The result is that schools are not producing properly developed and educated individuals who can hold their own ground anywhere in the world in science and art, literature and religion, commerce and industry. Instead schools are providing a keg site of resistance as more and more people perceive the conditions at school to be an inevitable consequence of the general socio-political situation in the country. When pupils attack teachers and burn down school buildings they are reacting against the immediate symptoms of their frustrations. It is a suicidal syndrome of desperation. Many pupils, of course, may not be aware of the causes of their discomfort and may even be manipulated by some people with other motives.

If we left these overt issues for a moment and looked at a deeper level, the following questions emerge:

- 1) Is education an ideologically neutral process of acquiring knowledge and skills?



Unfortunately the architect of Bantu Education made pronouncements that were not very helpful when he said 'the native should be educated for his station in life'. This leaves us with another question:

- 2) What is the role of schooling in maintaining the domination of the dominant class and its culture, and the subordination of the subordinate classes and their culture?

Viewed against this light the discriminatory practices in the provision of education for the various racial and cultural groups seem to vindicate the assertion made by some people that Black education is education for slavery. Once this perception is filtered down to the consumers of a system of education, the credibility of such system is reduced to zero. Anything you do after that to try to improve the system is also going to be rejected. This explains the Black university students' inclination to boycott classes at the slightest provocation. To the outsiders this sounds like a futile and stupid exercise that is self-defeating. My interpretation is that it is a rejection of a system that is not acceptable. This is a dilemma in which Black education finds itself today.

The budget for the Department of Education and Training may have improved dramatically since 1976 and much improvement and innovations may have been effected. But if a perception of a 'system of education for slavery' still persists, the system will still be rejected. In this case the social arrangements in the country, born out of a political system which prevails, are a main cause of dissatisfaction.

DISCIPLINE

There are two further issues of a cultural nature which affect the education for Blacks in South Africa. The first is the concept and practice of discipline. Whereas all societies accept obedience to and respect for authority as a virtue, traditional Black societies have absolutised these norms. A child is expected to obey his superiors without question. According to this norm what the elders and people in authority say must be accepted without question. In a school situation this tends to suppress creativity, initiative and originality. Teachers who do not understand the need to encourage these qualities will insist that pupils must do as they are told.

In classroom practice this is translated into rote learning and teacher-centre instruction. This situation is compounded by the fact that teachers operate in a school system that is highly centralised and over-prescriptive. All instructions come from above and a team of Inspectors see to it that these instructions are obeyed without question. This stultifying atmosphere re-inforces the traditional norm of obedience without question and reduces everybody into a state of resigned docility that is antithetical to the development of the desirable state of self-assertiveness. When this distressing condition is stressed to its limit, the students begin to rebel. In many Black schools there is always a tense atmosphere. What is more, the whole system is overwhelmingly examination-oriented. Departmental officers, teachers, parents and thus the pupils overemphasise the importance of examination and certificates on the one hand. On the other hand there is a very high failure rate. A large number of pupils are

taught 'to fail'. This generates a high level of frustration and a loss of self-esteem. These pupils may lose self-confidence and self-respect.

Teachers try to enforce their authority by a military form of discipline and the pupils rebel against this.

This situation of poor adult-child relationship is not assisted by the child's home atmosphere. In many rural homes the father is away as a migrant labourer at his place of employment for many months. Boys grow up without parental influence from their fathers. In the urban areas children seldom see their parents because these parents leave home before 6 a.m. and are not back home before 6 p.m. We are talking here about those children who still have intact families. Many children come from homes with broken families. This social factor of the disorganisation of many Black families is bound to have a deleterious effect on the child's school life. Some children actually leave their homes and squat in shacks near the school. A decent place of study is not known to them. I am leaving out of this discussion the problem for education that is created by poverty and malnutrition.

LANGUAGE

The second issue of a cultural nature which affects the education for Blacks is the language of instruction. There are several threads which come in to complicate this issue. First there is the colonial hangover and indoctrination that made some Black people to think a really educated person is one who speaks English very well. Then there is an apparent contradiction between the desire for the development of national and cultural pride on the one hand and the desire for westernisation on the other. This conflict finds its manifestation in the language policy of the school. A very strong argument for the use of English as a medium of instruction is that it is an international language; a language of commerce and industry, science and literature. It is asserted on the other hand that African languages possess none of these characteristics yet. Therefore their use as media of instruction in schools would lock the Blacks into their small tribal cultural kraals from which they would not emerge. The pedagogically sound principle of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction throughout the school system is frustrated by non-pedagogical consideration arising from the economic and political issues. Black children learn through the medium of their mother tongue for the first four years (i.e. up to standard two) and thereafter switch over to English as a medium of instruction.

Pupils from rural areas seldom hear or use English outside the classroom. Obviously the use of a foreign medium presents the child with a double problem of having to struggle with the language as well as the concepts of a particular subject. It must be pointed out that the subject matter is itself western-oriented, selected and ordered from the western culture. The child learns about electricity when there is none in his environment. Even highly urbanised areas like Soweto have only recently had electricity installed. The extent to which the use of a foreign tongue as a medium of instruction affects the cognitive development of Blacks has not been properly investigated. It can only be imagined that a great majority struggles along and gives up sooner or later. Add to this difficult

situation the fact that the teachers who teach these pupils have themselves not mastered properly both the language of instruction and the concepts they are transmitting.

CONDITIONS AND COMPETENCE

Since educational disability is found among socially and economically disadvantaged groups in all societies, we can conclude that there is a systematic relationship between social conditions and educational competence. The culturally deprived child is also retarded in cognitive skills by the time he enters school. Many Black children come from squalid slums which exist on the periphery of large cities. These urban slums with their overcrowded apartments offer a limited range of stimuli to a child. The scarcity of objects to manipulate and lack of diversity at home, in addition to the absence of individualised training

(because mother is busy looking after a large family or is away at work) give the child few opportunities to manipulate and organise the visual properties of his environment and thus learn to discriminate perceptually the nuances of his environment. Discrimination of form is essential as a basis for later reading readiness.

The purpose of this article was not to provide answers to the many problems that beset the education for Blacks in South Africa. The purpose was to raise issues in order to emphasise that in planning and administering an educational system for a system that abounds in socially and culturally disadvantaged children, one cannot merely be concerned with expanding facilities for learning, however worthwhile and long overdue that may also be. This calls for a wider attention to the transformation of society and deliberately attending to all those issues that constitute obstacles to the realisation of educational goals. □

by M.D. McGRATH

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL WEALTH IN NATAL

1. Introduction

Personal wealth consists of the physical and financial assets which are owned by individuals, and is distinguished from income by the fact that it is a stock of assets whereas income is a flow over time of the receipts accruing from the ownership of assets (and from other sources such as earnings).

Important reasons can be given for studying the distribution of wealth in any particular economy. Incomes from wealth account for at least 20 per cent (and often a larger proportion) of national income, and a concentration in the ownership of wealth will operate to concentrate the distribution of incomes. Wealth is also an important determinant of economic welfare, through the control it generates over resources and firms, and because it is a source of social and political power. Further, in the present search for just economic and social arrangements for South Africa the distribution of wealth is a major source of potential conflict.

This article outlines the results of research on the personal wealth of Whites, Coloureds and Asians in Natal in the year 1975.¹ That year was chosen for investigation since it was fairly recent, and it represented a turning point in the business cycle when 'fairly' normal values would have been recorded for assets such as shares and property. The study was based on the records of deceased estates lodged at the Supreme Court in Pietermaritzburg in the year 1975, and these estates were extrapolated to represent the population

of the living using an Estate Multiplier technique.² Although this procedure has many limitations it is nevertheless regarded as being the most accurate for obtaining an estimate of the distribution of personal wealth, and it is used in the production of annual wealth statistics by the British Central Statistical Services.

African estates were ignored, since in most cases they were insignificantly small, and the data drawn from the Supreme Court records was not representative as most African estates are processed by district administration commissioners. The omission of African wealth is unlikely to bias the results severely, for African personal wealth is a negligibly small fraction of the total, as has been shown by the small proportion of the income from wealth which accrues to Africans.

2. The Distribution of Wealth

The average estimated value of wealth for the race groups is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Average Wealth by Race, 1975 (R)

	White	Coloured	Asian
All members	13 731	688	2 408
Men	18 384	1 006	3 064
Women	9 361	406	1 753

In making all the estimates which follow, the population has been limited to members over the age of 20 years as younger people are unlikely to have accumulated any wealth.

The values of assets such as farms, fixed property and shares in unquoted companies are undervalued here, but if they are revalued to more realistic levels, the level of White per capita wealth shown in Table 1 is increased by approximately 30 per cent, and that of Coloureds and Asians increases by less than 15 per cent. The estimates which follow are all based on actual reported wealth, and can thus be regarded as low estimates of concentration between the racial groups.

The sources of the disparities shown in Table 1 are to be found in inequalities of income and savings in past years, and in the rates of return which have been earned on various types of assets.

From Table 1 we see that the average value of White per capita wealth is respectively 20 and 5,7 times greater than the Coloured and Asian figures. These wealth disparities are greater than the income disparities between Whites and Coloureds, and Whites and Asians, which were 5,8 and 4,5 respectively in 1975.

Large inequalities are also found between men and women. The average wealth of White, Coloured and Asian men is respectively 2,0, 2,5 and 1,8 times greater than in the case of women, reflecting the lower earnings and levels of participation of women, as well as the division of assets within families, where men appear to predominate in the nominal ownership of family wealth.

The wealth accruing to selected percentiles of the population of Whites, Coloureds and Asians in the age groups over 20 years are shown in Table 2. An examination of this table shows that the distribution of wealth for Whites is less unequal than for Coloureds and Asians, and that Coloureds and Asians have very similar distributions. Indeed, the share of the top quintile and decile of Whites was smaller than in the equivalent percentiles in Britain and Australia, indicating lower levels of concentration, and was not much higher than in Sweden.

Table 2: Estimated Shares of the Top 1, 5, 10 and 20 per cent of Wealth Owners by Race, 1975

Percentage share of population	Percentage share of wealth		
	White	Coloured	Asian
Top 1	27,7	42,3	52,1
Top 5	50,7	79,9	80,7
Top 10	65,3	96,2	93,7
Top 20	82,0	99,9	99,4

Even though the distribution of wealth appears more equal amongst Whites, the absolute levels of wealth which divide the higher percentiles of Coloureds and Asians are much lower than those which divide the higher percentiles of Whites. These wealth levels are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Levels of Wealth Dividing the Top Percentiles of the Distribution (R)

Percentiles	White	Coloured	Asian
Top 1	142 194	11 936	33 819
Top 5	50 604	3 535	9 616
Top 10	31 132	1 069	3 426
Top 20	16 312	78	375
Top 50	2 300	0	0

Table 4 shows proportions of the racial groups above specified levels of wealth for the extreme ranges of wealth holdings. The distributions shown in this table highlight once again the low levels of wealth of the female population of all racial groups and, when examined together with Table 3, indicate clearly that the major cause of the greater level of inequality in the Coloured and Asian distribution is to be found in the very large proportion of these populations which have negligible personal wealth.

Table 4: Percentages of the Racial Groups above Specified Levels of Wealth

Level of wealth (R)	White		Coloured		Asian	
	Total	Men Women	Total	Men Women	Total	Men Women
1	76	84 69	24	43 7	30	46 14
1 000	60	67 52	11	17 5	19	23 9
5 000	38	46 31	4	6 3	9	13 5
50 000	6	8 4	-	- -	1	1 1
250 000	neg	1 neg	-	- -	neg	neg neg

Occupations and Wealth

Average levels of income usually rise with additional years of education completed, and so too does the occupational grade which is attained. We would expect therefore that wealth and occupation would be related and the estate data which was collected allows an analysis of occupation and wealth.

The average levels of wealth of selected occupational groups are shown in Table 5.

The results of this table confirm the intuitive prediction that economists would have made. Amongst White men in Natal farming is the occupation with the highest average wealth, and this is consistent with estimates of income which can be made from the 1970 census. Occupations requiring higher levels of education and discretion in decision making usually earn high incomes, and the data show that they also have higher-than-average levels of wealth. The large inequalities which exist between the wealth of Whites, Coloureds and Asians in the same occupational groups show the effects of wage discrimination within occupational groups, the inevitably lowered savings from lower incomes, and lower rates of return on small wealth holdings. Accumulation by past generations of Coloureds and Asians was also prevented by discriminatory practices in the labour market and in their deprived access to education and training, depressing the levels of inheritances received by the present generation and causing some of the current disparities in the racial ownership of wealth.

Table 5: Average Wealth of Economically Active Men in Selected Occupational Groups, 1975 (R)

	White	Coloured	Asian
Professional/Technical	56 190	5 230	24 490
Director/Manager	100 670	24 860	49 670
Senior Civil Servant	25 230	-	27 290
Farmer	121 250	4 960	30 610
Salesman/Sales Rep.	38 070	-	10 790
Clerical worker	18 370	1 260	8 690
Artisan/Skilled Worker	18 080	4 660	14 120
Semi-skilled Worker	15 930	2 780	8 580
Unskilled Worker	8 700	170	4 450

The relationship between occupational group and wealth can be illustrated further by examining the proportions of men which fall into the top quintile and decile of the wealthy. Table 6 shows these proportions for Whites. For White men very large proportions of professionals, managers and farmers fall into the top decile of wealth owners, whereas, artisans, semi-skilled and unskilled workers fall predominantly into lower deciles.

Table 6: Percentages of White Men in Selected Occupational Groups falling into the Top 5 and Top 10 per cent of Wealth Owners

Occupational Group	Top 5%	Top 10%
Professional/Technical		
Director/Manager	21,3	40,3
Senior Civil Servant	6,9	13,6
Farmer	47,7	57,6
Salesman/Representative	7,6	19,6
Clerical Worker	0,7	13,0
Artisan/Skilled Worker	1,4	5,3
Semi-skilled Worker	3,0	3,4
Unskilled Worker	-	-
Retired	13,1	22,0

4. The Ownership of Assets

The value of privately owned farms, fixed property, and quoted and unquoted shares (including shares in partnerships) was also extracted from the estate records, and these data can be used to give an idea of the ownership of these assets. The private ownership of all these assets was highly concentrated by race since, ignoring the insignificant African share, Whites owned 98 per cent of farms, 93 per cent of fixed property, 99,7 per cent of quoted shares, and 95,7 of unquoted shares. An analysis of the distribution of these assets within the White population, shown in Table 7, can therefore give a good approximation of their distribution in the population.

The results show a pronounced concentration of economic power within the higher echelons of White wealth owners. The ownership of these assets, with the exceptions of fixed property, is markedly concentrated in the higher percentiles: the top 10 per cent own 95 per cent, 84 per cent and 92 per cent respectively of the value of privately-owned farms,

quoted shares and unquoted shares. The distribution of the income accruing from these sources is likely to be even more highly concentrated since all these assets yield relatively high real rates of return over the course of the business cycle.

Table 7: The Distribution of Ownership of Selected Assets in the White Population of Natal

Percentage share of population	Percentage Share of Total Value				
	All wealth	Fixed Farms	Quoted property	Quoted shares	Unquoted shares
Top 1	27,7	55	15	44	54
Top 5	50,7	88	33	76	79
Top 10	65,3	95	51	84	92
Top 20	82,0	98	78	92	95
Top 50	98,4	100	99	98	100

Conclusion

Incomes from wealth account for approximately 20 per cent of the incomes of Whites, and are therefore an important factor contributing to the skewed racial distribution of incomes which exists in South Africa. Furthermore, the concentration of the ownership of wealth which has been revealed here, will work to perpetuate racial income inequality, even if opportunities in the labour market are widening.

The results show that the disparities between the per capita wealth of Whites in Natal, and Coloureds and Asians were greater than the respective disparities of their incomes. Large inequalities were also found between the average wealth of men and women. A pronounced concentration of economic power was also shown within the higher echelons of White wealth owners. Occupations associated with higher levels of income were also found to be associated with the highest average levels of wealth, and large inequalities were found to exist, within the same occupational level, between the wealth of White, Coloured and Asian men.

The characteristics of the Natal population may allow very tentative generalisations to be made about the distribution of wealth in the whole economy. The distribution of estate values in Natal in 1974/75 is very similar to the national distribution. Average incomes in Natal for Whites and Asians, and the age distributions respectively for Whites, Coloureds and Asians are all close to their respective national counterparts. It would appear therefore that the Natal wealth data can be used to provide a good surrogate for national data.

Only the most myopic of observers could deny that the survival of capitalism and the future security of the White community in South Africa requires urgent, imaginative reforms in the economic, social and political fields. It has long been realised that a redistribution of incomes will be needed to induce Black South Africans to desire to perpetuate the 'free enterprise' economic system. The racial inequalities in the distribution of wealth, which have been shown here, suggest that a redistribution of the ownership of wealth will also be necessary before the economic systems can gain legitimacy in the eyes of all South Africans. □

¹ A more detailed account of the research can be found in M.D. McGrath, *Distribution of Personal Wealth in South Africa*, Economic Research Unit, University of Natal, Occasional Paper No. 14, 1982.

² Discussed in McGrath, *ibid.*

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIVING HISTORY AND VIEWS ABOUT HISTORY

It is a great pity that Peter Colenbrander seems not to have grasped the importance of what Dr Dhlomo was saying in response to his article "The 'Year of Cetshwayo' Revisited." (Reality, July 1984). It would appear to me that an important issue is at stake in the discussion between Dr Dhlomo and Peter Colenbrander, and I believe that this issue should be teased out and that debate about it should continue either until consensus is reached, or until Peter Colenbrander and ourselves have nothing more to say to each other because each has adopted a position unassailable by logic.

For me the issue at stake is what history is and is not. Peter Colenbrander seems to be saying the following. Inkatha is an ethnically based political organisation and KwaZulu is ethnically based and if Inkatha and KwaZulu take initiatives to commemorate King Cetshwayo, his historical significance will change. He says: "... Cetshwayo runs the real risk of assuming a specifically Zulu and partisan significance." And he asks: "How can it be otherwise when his commemoration as an historical and cultural hero was initiated by a political organisation closely associated with the ethnically based KwaZulu Government, and when these organs are led by a person who is proud of his descent from Cetshwayo?"

Peter Colenbrander is making the assumption that what I and Inkatha do or do not do could alter the historical significance of King Cetshwayo. History is not made by historians, and King Cetshwayo's role in South Africa has historical significance precisely because his life and rule, and the circumstances through which he rose to the true heights of an historical hero, are recognised by ordinary people and have influenced the behaviour of millions of Black South Africans ever since. King Cetshwayo continues to influence current events. Because the influence he exerts does not conform to Peter Colenbrander's view of what the South African realities should be, he makes the assumption that King Cetshwayo needs a White liberal guardian. He does want to tell the millions who are influenced by this historical figure how they should be influenced and what they should be doing about King Cetshwayo. He tells six million Zulus not to venerate their past King in the way they choose to do so.

In our honouring of King Cetshwayo we have reflected a living historical sense for the current political circumstances in which we find ourselves. It is we who are being influenced by King Cetshwayo and the historical significance of King Cetshwayo is in part established by the fact that this is the case. King Cetshwayo to us lives in a vibrant and vital living tradition. He continues to exert his influence in a positive way, and our commemoration of him is in part a deeply felt realisation of how relevant he remains to the whole of South Africa.

True South African

I see King Cetshwayo as one of the first true South Africans. He was never the narrow ethnic Zulu King of Peter Colenbrander's perception. During his lifetime he related to other ethnic groups in a vision about South Africa which makes us proud to be Zulus. King Cetshwayo had diplomatic exchanges with King Moshoeshoe and with King Sekhukhuni. He shared thoughts with them about the common fate of Black South Africans, and he actually sent King Sekhukhuni golden sovereigns to help him buy guns to enable his people to defend themselves against attacks from the Boers. King Cetshwayo was the reigning King when the Zulu State was dismembered, and when KwaZulu was incorporated into South Africa willy nilly by history itself, as a people we accepted the new and broader identity which was imposed upon us by the superior military might wielded by Whites.

No Zulu today talks about the re-establishment of a Zulu Kingdom. We are South Africans with a Zulu contribution to make. It is an historical absurdity to assert that only those who have shed their cultural identity can shape history in the right direction.

I have no intention of apologising to Peter Colenbrander or any other White liberal for being of Zulu extraction and being proud of it. I and other Zulus will enact the responsibility which history has placed on our shoulders, and we will do so as South Africans. For us there is no contradiction in this statement.

Zulus as Zulus contributed towards the founding of the African National Congress and its subsequent growth. It is those who feel the need to carry out a vendetta against anybody being Zulu who are a problem, not those who are inspired by being Zulu. Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme was a Zulu. He founded the ANC and Chief Lutuli was a Zulu. He was the last President-General of the ANC. My pride in being Zulu in no way detracts from my contribution to the struggle for liberation as a South African. In fact my contribution is enhanced by my awareness of being a Zulu.

I sincerely hope that Peter Colenbrander will now find it possible to grasp some of the things we are saying, and in conclusion I feel constrained to add that it would only be polite of Peter Colenbrander to desist in future from calling King Cetshwayo simply Cetshwayo. He must feel free to follow norms in academic circles, but he must also be aware of how insensitive some of these norms are in some circumstances. □

(We regret that for reasons of space, this discussion, must now be closed. Editorial Board)