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### FRONT COVER/VOORBLAD

"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you also are in the body." (Hebrews 13:3)  
—About 38 members of the South African Students' Organization (SASO) and the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC) were arrested after the pro-Frelimo rally in Durban. They are still in detention after six months.

"Dink aan die gevangenes asof julle mede-gevangenes is, en aan die wat mishandel word, as mense wat self ook 'n liggaam het." (Hebreërs 13:3).  
—Ongeveer 38 lede van die Suid-Afrikaanse Studente-organisasie, (SASO) en die „Black People's Convention“ (BPC) is na die pro-Frelimo saamtrek in Durban gearresteer. Hulle word nog steeds na ses maande aangehou.

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# DETENTE : 'SECURITAS' OR 'CERTITUDO'?

In his struggle to give expression to the liberation and peace which faith brings to Christian people, Martin Luther distinguished between 'securitas' (security) and 'certitudo', (confidence). To-day in our society we can still do so and indeed we must make a clear distinction between these two concepts as they lead us to different goals. At this stage of our history it is especially important since the South African government is trying to bring about security within the framework of its policies, and the latest method which it is using in Southern Africa and in Africa at large is detente. (In a previous editorial—Jan. 1975, we tried to define 'detente'). The question about 'detente' must then be put in this way: should it mean 'safety because of self-interest, or trust and co-operation with a view to peace for our fellowman also?'

No one will deny the fact that it is the task of the state to create external social and political conditions in which men and women can live safely, in other words enjoy security. Furthermore, one must acknowledge the duty of the government to establish good relations with the neighbouring states as well as with the world at large. We are assured that 'everything possible' is being done to secure the future of South Africa and the safety of its people. In other words security, 'securitas', is the major objective of our society, at least of the 'white' society and everything possible is done to secure law and order, safety and stability for the future. Despite all this, however, we have less security today than ever before, and we shall have no prospect of more security in the future than we have enjoyed in the past. Why is this so? Why is it that the 'white' society is still threatened by insecurity and the possibility of 'full scale war' on our borders? To this question many answers can be given, some political, some social or economic, but we would like to formulate the underlying theological reason: For as long as the main emphasis is on security, we shall not enjoy 'securitas'. True security will only succeed if it is maintained in the service of 'certitudo' (trust), and not the other way round.

'Certitudo', faith in God and man, trust in people, healthy relations with other people, is the basis of a true community and the guarantee of peace. When we forget this we destroy ourselves in the effort to

be secure. In Luther's time it was the church which dominated society and which claimed to provide this security. It claimed that the human race was contained within an eternal order here on earth which embraced and secured even the powers of commerce and empire. Luther opposed dependence on earthly institutions to guarantee universal order as a manipulative act of human religion whereby man as his ultimate goal aims at securing himself in time and eternity by his own actions. There is no 'securitas' in heaven or on earth. Instead there is something more promising: 'certitudo', the confidence that grows out of a relationship of faith and trust. It is the fruit of a covenant of fellowship between God and man, and man and man, and it may even destroy the self-image or security of a person or group—but out of it comes new life in a fulfilling community.

### peace is a relationship

It is desperately necessary for the church in South Africa to re-interpret the divine context of human politics. Peace is not an order, nor is it a policy, nor is it power; it is a relationship. The government has a God-given task to create external conditions of peace and justice which would liberate people enabling them to hear and respond to the divine calling, but this is a task to be accomplished—not a hard and fast structure already firmly established. The basis or covenant of any society is first a human relationship and not a structure of laws and regulations. When society is threatened with collapse, the first question to be asked is not, how can the law be strengthened and security tightened, but how can human relations be reconstituted? The central issue must always be loyalty to the neighbour and *not* merely: what is legal? It is only truly Christian if one asks what relational structure, what conditions of life express a true appreciation of the needs of one's neighbour. It is of the utmost importance that security be a peripheral theme and that 'certitudo' (trust) must be central, otherwise we reverse the order of true peace. What first disturbs security is not the enemy's attack, but the shifting of trust or confidence in God and basic human relationships to the so-called security of riches, power, arms and self-interest. The social structures of our society and the laws of our country have produced an alienation from the trust and harmony which must underlie our

security and laws. In this withdrawal of trust and confidence in other people our security is threatened both in the sense that we are endangered by violent attack and that we are placed in moral doubt about the rightness and goodness of our institutions against which so many inwardly rebel.

The church has a very important function to fulfil in society. It must turn the state away from dependence on its own possessions such as wealth, armaments and land, or intangible ones such as nationalism and patriotism, towards dependence on the true God who by his covenant of basic human relationships defines what the function and promise of politics are. The early Christians tried to obey and support the Emperor, but for the Christians of the second century it meant refusing military service, the undermining of the public morale by their opposition to brutal games, the undermining of the economy by their distrust of excessive commercial gain and ultimately refusing to pledge allegiance to the Emperor as the ultimate authority by sacrificing before his image.

The message of the Christian faith to our society is that the safety of our state does not lie in the 'securitas' which it builds up by its own power and by the worship of its own national image, but in the 'certitudo' with which it seeks to enable covenants of justice and peace among people. The danger at the moment in the internal history of South Africa is that the government has established an ultimate principle in politics, namely that of 'separate development' to which everything must conform, and which forms the basis of the movements outwards for detente, and the framework for moving away from discrimination. A society destroys itself when, instead of taking risks to establish broader and deeper relations with other classes and people, they make their own structure and policy absolute; when this happens it is inevitable that freedom is replaced by control, justice by expediency, identity by alienation, service by self-interest, individual responsibility by social determination, and friendship by enmity.

It is also not a question of security existing side by side with trust, 'securitas' with 'certitudo', the church with the government each with its own task. No, both the church and state as institutions exist in the service of God, the active God in history, to establish 'certitudo', justice and peace.

Detente can only succeed if it is placed in the context of an open society where self-identity and self-interest are re-interpreted to include as a major concern the rights, needs and interests of others. If this does not happen people will be lulled into the false belief that peace and justice are being taken seriously by our detente, and thus a "system of slavery so well designed that it does not breed revolt" will emerge. \*

## OBITUARY

**ANDRE MALAN HUGO** *M.A. (Stel.), D.Litt.et Phil. (Utrecht)*

We report with sorrow the passing of Prof. Andre Hugo on 24th January, 1975 at the comparatively young age of 46.

He was a founder member of the Christian Institute and served for many years on the national Board of Management and, until his death, on the Cape Board of Management.

In 1964, he initiated the Stellenbosch group of the Christian Institute and despite considerable opposition inspired them to maintain their witness in that difficult situation.

As chairman of the Spro-cas political commission, he rendered signal service to the cause of peaceful change in South Africa.

Dr Hugo had a brilliant academic career culminating in his appointment as Professor of Classics at the University of Cape Town in 1969.

In 1970, Dr and Mrs. Hugo were the recipients of a Christian Fellowship Trust scholarship and travelled to Europe, where early in 1971 he was struck down by an incurable disease and forced to return home prematurely.

Despite the great physical pain he has suffered during these last four years, he was never heard to complain. His immense courage, unfailing faith and abounding cheerfulness have been a source of great inspiration to colleagues, students and friends.

The funeral service at the Moeder Kerk, Stellenbosch was a triumphant occasion. The Christian Institute was represented by the Rev. and Mrs. Theo Kotze, Mrs. D. Cleminshaw and the Stellenbosch group.

We extend to Mrs. Hugo and her family our loving sympathy, while at the same time giving thanks for the many years of glad fellowship we have been able to enjoy with both Andre and Hanneke.

# DETENTE : ,SECURITAS' OF ,CERTITUDO'?

In sy stryd om uitdrukking aan die bevryding en vrede wat geloof vir Christene tot stand bring, te gee, het Martin Luther tussen ,securitas', (sekuriteit) en ,certitudo', (vertroue) onderskei. Vandag in ons samelewing kan ons nog, ja, moet ons inderdaad nog tussen hierdie twee konsepte onderskei aangesien hulle ons na verskillende doelwitte lei. Dit is in besonder op hierdie tydstip van ons geskiedenis belangrik aangesien die Suid-Afrikaanse regering probeer om sekuriteit binne die raamwerk van sy beleid tot stand te bring, en die nuutste metode wat hy gebruik is detente in Suider-Afrika, en Afrika as 'n geheel. (In 'n vorige inleidingsartikel het ons probeer om ,detente' te definieer—Jan. '75). Die vraag oor detente is dus: veiligheid ter wille van eie voordeel, of, vertroue en samewerking met die oog op die heil ook van die naaste?

Niemand sal die feit ontken nie dat dit die taak van die staat is om sosiale en politieke toestande te skep waarin die mens veilig kan woon; met ander woorde, om sekuriteit te geniet. Verder moet 'n mens ook die plig van die regering erken om goeie betrekkinge met die aangrensende state, sowel as met die wêreld in sy geheel te handhaaf. Ons is verseker dat ,alles moontlik' gedoen word om die toekoms van Suid-Afrika en die veiligheid van sy mense te verseker. ,Securitas' kan egter so die hoofmerk van ons samelewing, ten minste die ,blanke' samelewing word terwyl alles moontlik gedoen word om ,wet en orde', veiligheid en stabiliteit vir die toekoms te verseker. Ten spyte van so 'n besorgdheid egter, het ons vandag minder sekuriteit as ooit tevore en ons het ook nie 'n toekomstige uitsig op meer sekuriteit as wat ons in die verlede gehad het nie. Waaraan is dit toe te skrywe? Waarom is dit so dat die ,blanke' samelewing steeds die dreiging van insekuriteit en 'n moontlike ,volkskaalse oorlog' op ons grense onder oë moet sien? Op hierdie vraag kan baie antwoorde gegee word waarvan sommige polities, sosiaal of ekonomies sal wees, maar ons wil graag 'n onderliggende teologiese rede uitspel: Ons sal nie ,securitas' geniet solank as wat die hoofklem op sekuriteit as sodanig is nie. Ware sekuriteit sal alleenlik slaag as dit in diens van ,certitudo', vertroue staan en nie andersom nie.

,Certitudo', vertroue in God en die mens, vertroue in groepe mense, gesonde verhoudinge met ander mense op die basis van ware gemeenskap is die waarborg vir vrede. As ons dit vergeet, vernietig ons onself in die poging om sekuriteit te bekom. In Luther se tyd was dit die kerk wat die samelewing gedomineer het en wat daarop aanspraak gemaak het dat hy sekuriteit bied. Hy het voorgegee om die ganse menslike geslag hier op die aarde binne die ewige orde te plaas, en dat dit selfs die magte van die kommersiële wêreld en die politieke ryk se bestaan gewaarborg het. Afhanklikheid van die aardse institute, ook die kerk, wat die ewige orde waarborg as 'n gemanupileerde aksie deur middel van menslike godsdienste, en waardeur die mens vir homself dan sekuriteit in die tyd en in die ewigheid as sy hoogste doelwit bevestig, is deur Luther teengestaan. Daar is geen ,securitas' in die hemel of op die aarde nie. In plaas daarvan is daar iets baie meer belowend: ,certitudo', die vertroue wat uit 'n verhouding van geloof en toevertroue spruit. Dit is die vrug van 'n bondgenootskap tussen God en die mens, en die mens en sy medemens, en dit kan selfs die eie-beeld of die sekuriteit van 'n persoon of groep vernietig, maar daaruit kom nuwe lewe in 'n vervulde gemeenskap.

### vrede is 'n verhouding

Dit is dringend noodsaaklik vir die kerk in Suid-Afrika om die Goddelike verband van menslike politiek te herinterpreteer. Vrede bestaan nie in 'n orde, of 'n beleid, of 'n staatsmag nie, maar dit spruit uit verhoudings voort. Die regering het 'n Godgegewe taak om maatskaplike toestande vir vrede en geregtigheid te skep wat die mens sal bevry om die Goddelike roeping te hoor en te beantwoord, maar hierdie taak is nie die totstandbrenging van 'n onbuigsame struktuur nie! Die basis of die verbondsgrondslag van enige samelewing is in die eerste plek menslike verhoudinge en nie 'n struktuur van wette en regulasies nie. As die samelewing bedreig word met ineenstorting, is die eerste vraag wat gevra moet word, nie hoe die wet strenger gemaak kan word en die sekuriteit verskerp kan word nie, maar hoe die menslike verhoudinge geherkonstitueer kan word. Die sentrale saak moet altyd getrouheid aan die

naaste wees en *nie* wat *wettig* is *nie*. Dit is alleenlik waarlik Christelik as 'n mens vra watter strukture van verhoudings en watter toestande in die samelewing ware waardering vir die nood van die naaste uitdruk. Dit is van die uiterste belang dat sekuriteit 'n tema moet wees wat op die periferie lê en dat *certitudo*, vertroue sentraal moet wees, anders keer ons die orde van vrede om. Dit wat die vrede versteur is in die eerste plek nie die vyand se aanval nie, maar die verskuiwing van vertroue en geloof in God en die basiese menslike verhoudinge na die sogenaamde sekuriteit van rykdom, mag, wapens en selfbelang. Die sosiale strukture van ons samelewing en die wette van ons land het ongelukkig vervreemding van die vertroue en samewerking van talle mense, wat die grondslag van ons sekuriteit en wette moet vorm, tot stand gebring. In hierdie onttrekking van die geloof en vertroue van ander mense word ons sekuriteit bedreig, in die sin dat ons bedreig word met gewelddadige aanvalle, sowel as die feit dat ons in 'n posisie van morele twyfel geplaas word oor die regverdigheid en die reg van ons instellinge, waarteen so baie mense innerlik rebelleer.

Die kerk het 'n baie belangrike funksie om in die samelewing te vervul. Hy moet die staat laat ophou om op sy rykdom, wapens en land te vertrou, of ook om in onaantasbare dinge soos nasionalisme en patriotisme sy vertroue te plaas, en hom tot vertroue op die ware God, wat sy bondgenootskap in egte menslike verhoudinge definieer, wat ook die funksie en belofte van die politiek is, oorhaal. Die vroeë Christene het probeer om die keiser te gehoorsaam en te ondersteun, maar dit het ook vir die Christene in die tweede eeu beteken dat hulle geweier het om aan militêre opleiding deel te neem, dat hulle die publieke moraal ondermyn het deur hulle opposisie van die wrede spele, dat hulle die ekonomie ondermyn het deur hulle wantroue van uitspattige komersiële wins en die belangrikste, dat hulle geweier het om getrouheid aan die keiser, as die hoogste outoriteit aan wie voor sy teken geoffer moes word, af te lê.

Die boodskap van die Christelike geloof aan ons samelewing is dat die veiligheid van die staat nie in die *securitas* geleë is wat die staat deur sy eie mag en die aanbidding van sy nasionale beeld opbou nie, maar in die *certitudo* waarmee hy probeer om bondgenootskappe van geregtigheid en vrede tussen mense te bewerkstellig. Op die oomblik is die gevaar in die interne geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika dat die regering 'n hoogste beginsel in die politiek vasgestel het, naamlik dié van „afsonderlike ontwikkeling” waaraan alles onderwerp moet word, en wat ook die basis van detente na buite, en die raamwerk van die beweging „weg-van-diskriminasie” na binne vorm. 'n Samelewing vernietig homself as dit, in plaas daarvan om waagstukke te neem om breër en meer omvattender verhoudinge met ander klasse en groepe mense aan te gaan, sy eie strukture en

beleid absoluut tot maatstaf verhef, aangesien dit dan noodwendig is dat vryheid deur kontrole vervang word, geregtigheid met voordeligheid, identiteit deur vervreemding, diens deur selfbelang, individuele verantwoordelikheid deur sosiale determinisme en vriendskap deur vyandskap.

Dit is ook nie 'n vraag of sekuriteit naas vertroue moet bestaan nie, *securitas* en *certitudo* nie, en of die kerk op sy eie terrein los van die regering 'n taak moet vervul nie. Nee, sowel die kerk as die staat as institute is in diens van God, die aktiewe God, wat in die geskiedenis besig is om *certitudo*, geregtigheid en vrede te bevestig.

Detente kan alleenlik slaag as dit in die raamwerk van 'n ope samelewing, waar selfidentiteit en selfbelang weer geformuleer word om die regte, behoeftes en belange van ander as 'n belangrike besorgdheid in te sluit. As dit nie gebeur nie, sal die samelewing 'n „sisteem van slawerny, wat so goed uitgewerk is dat dit nie opstand kweek nie”, opbou, omdat dit mense sal mislei om te dink dat ons detente vrede en geregtigheid ernstig opneem. \*

## DOMESTIC

Maandagoggend ...

Ek ken al die poem so goed.

Sarah dek gou die tafel,  
master moet eet!

Sarah dek gou die tafel,  
master moet drink!

Sarah doen dit, Sarah doen dat  
die madam is darem so difficult;  
weet maar altyd beter,  
is maar altyd reg.

Maar laat ek net een dag uitbly  
dan is die huis mos deurmekaar,  
master is moody; madam wil huil  
die kinders is kwaad vir mekaar.

Maar daais hulle worries.

As ek siek is

bly ek net by die huis.

—Howard Eybers

# THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION AND THE CHURCH

## WALKING SMALL WITH GOD

**peter hinchliff**

*The Rev. Canon Peter B. Hinchliff was professor of Ecclesiastical History at Rhodes University from 1960 to 1969. From 1969 to 1972 he was Secretary of the Church of England Missionary and Ecumenical Council. In 1972 he became a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford.*

Since this article is written from a very personal point of view, I must begin by saying something about myself. I am a South African and was ordained twenty-three years ago in the Church of the Province of South Africa. I worked in a parish, taught in a theological college and was for ten years professor of ecclesiastical history at Rhodes. Five years ago I went to England to run the central department of the Church of England that deals with mission and evangelism and with relations with other churches. I am now back in the academic world, being a fellow of an Oxford College. I have, therefore, been able to see something of what the Anglican Church is like from within, in England as well as in South Africa and, at the same time, have been sufficiently detached to observe both churches with some objectivity. I want to write about certain ideas which have occurred to me as I compare these observations.

### **the church is tired**

When I first moved to England I was horrified by the state in which the church seemed to be. It seemed to be lost, un-missionary, fragmented, old-fashioned, dying. The South African church seemed so much more vigorous and sure of its direction. I used to be invited to speak in various parts of Britain and used to give talks on "what is wrong with the Church of England" in what now seems, in retrospect, a very brash and judgmental tone of voice.

Now that I have got over the first shock, I am able to make a rather cooler assessment. There *is* a great deal that is wrong with the Church of England, as with all the English Churches. One does feel that they are old and tired and have given up the struggle. Some things strike a foreigner as really horrible—the pomposity and the arrogance which seem to belong to the nineteenth century and the failure of nerve exemplified by those who try to tailor the gospel to what they think are the ideas of the twentieth century. But it is at least arguable that the problems faced by the English Church are actually far worse than those of its South African counterpart.

Here (I am visiting South Africa as I write) there is

one, single overriding issue which challenges the Church—the racial one. No one can pretend that this is a simple issue. One often does not know what one ought to do or how to do it even when one does know. But one cannot escape the sense of being at grips with real and fundamental moral issues. One's faith and one's conscience are at full stretch all the time. One cannot be a conventional, unquestioning Christian. With 'terrorism' on the one hand and all the brutal machinery of a 'police state' on the other; the stakes are too high for conventional religion.

In England the problem is so much more elusive. It is not at all clear whether some of the things that people worry about are problems at all. The Church used to be dominant, wealthy, autocratic, identified with the ruling classes, powerful, influential and "triumphalist". This was, of course, truer of the established Church of England than of the other churches. But it was true of most of them. One only has to think of the enormous deference paid by politicians to the "non-conformist conscience", even in the first half of the twentieth century, to realise that.

When the Church was powerful it was not missionary—or at least it was missionary in the wrong way. (And by "missionary" I do not mean "missions to the heathen". I mean the zeal and enthusiasm for bearing witness to the Christian truth at home as well as abroad.) The Church "belonged" to the upper middle classes and it failed to identify itself with the vast mass of ordinary working class people.

Of course this sounds like some glib Marxist analysis of the failure of bourgeois Christian society. The apologist for Christianity will cite all sorts of evidence to prove that most members of the English churches in 1900 were, in fact, working class. But this is not quite what I mean. It is obvious that the *membership* of the churches in nineteenth century England cannot have been predominantly upper and middle class. The outlook and attitudes of the churches, however, was that of those classes. They provided the leadership in secular society and they provided it in the Church. By and large—and in spite of some notable exceptions—the churches failed to penetrate the new urban and industrial working class society. The church buildings which were erected on almost every street corner were put up less to satisfy a demand from the masses than because do-gooders thought it desirable that there should be enough cubic footage of church to house the industrial poor. In Southwark and the East End of London religion is still described as something "they" do for "us".

### 'someone else's church'

In effect the churches ceased to be *indigenous* to the culture and society of the majority of the population. They were identified with the ruling classes, the holders of political and economic power. No doubt a large proportion of the people still went to church, but it was someone else's church to which they went.

Now in a fiercely and militantly secular context the churches find themselves on the wrong foot. An enormous social revolution has taken place in Britain since the second world war. It has not been an entirely peaceful revolution but its extent sometimes escapes notice. The huge and arbitrary power which wealthy industrialists were able to wield at the turn of the century is now matched by the equally huge and arbitrary power of the trades unions. Society is affluent and class distinctions are no longer exactly the same thing as distinctions based on wealth and power. The Church finds itself at a loss in a society now dominated by the people with whom it lost touch a century ago. Ideas and ideals which it seeks to propagate seem like a foreign language to most Britons. It has to become missionary now or disappear altogether.

To make the task more difficult the Church has come to realise that so much of its earlier attitudes were wrong. The Church was not created by Christ to be rich and powerful, arrogant and "triumphalist". It was created by Christ to be like him, humble, servant-like, gentle—evoking rather than compelling a response. It is far from easy to learn this lesson anew at the same moment that one has to learn to be missionary. The tentative, gentle manner that is appropriate to the Christian is ill at ease alongside the sense that one must propagate the faith or die out altogether. They can be combined—and must be—but it is easier not to attempt the combination. Some Christians lose their nerve and give up hope, some—a very few—become secularisers. Some become more pompous and establishment-minded than ever in an attempt to convince themselves, if no one else, that the Church still counts for something. Hence the disarray of the contemporary Church. Neither the reactionary nor the radical is likely to have the answer. The man who walks small, gently and humbly exploring and presenting the truth, is much more likely to appeal to a generation that is tired of power and materialism. It is possible to be unaggressive and missionary at the same time. It is, indeed, the only way of being truly missionary. But it is not easy to learn the lesson when one has suddenly lost one's footing because of a social revolution.

### social revolution in S.A.

And this, I fear, is precisely when the South African Church will find itself very soon. There can be very little doubt that a social revolution is coming to South Africa. No one can be certain what kind of revolution it will be. The rapid collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Africa has underlined the fact that violent *political* revolution

is unpredictable. Coming back to South Africa after an absence of some years, one finds newspapers and conversations full of reports about "terrorist" activities on the borders in a way one does not remember noticing before. One has a sense of a violence beneath the surface which is not present so noticeably even in a Britain threatened by I.R.A. bombs.

Nor need revolution be of such an overtly violent kind. I have already referred to the not so quiet revolution that happened in Britain. It was a social revolution largely carried through by industrial action and the working classes' realization that collectively they possessed a great deal of power. Strikes are another feature of South African life now in a way that they were not five years ago.

And the newspapers are also full of indications that white South Africans are now ready for revolutionary social change in yet another sense—by constitutional means. One reads of the United Party embracing radical policies it would have been terrified to mention a few years ago. Nationalists are openly talking about Coloured representation in Parliament. The leaders of the Bantustan governments are openly critical of the policies of *apartheid* and are being courted by the opposition parties. There can be little doubt that change will come very soon and that it will be 'radical' and 'revolutionary'. The only doubt seems to be about which method will operate most rapidly and will, therefore, win the race.

It is not the science and technology of modern society nor the empiricism of modern secular philosophy which is responsible for the disarray of the Church in England. It is the fact that it was associated with the rich and powerful and alienated from the ordinary people. It was unprepared for the social revolution and now finds it difficult to learn what it ought to have known all along. The Church in South Africa is about to be faced with a social revolution which, even if it comes in its gentlest and least violent form, *will be far more of an upheaval than the British revolution*. The vast majority of the population are in the process of acquiring a power in which they have never really been allowed even to share before. The process, once started, will inevitably accelerate and what will emerge is an entirely new society in South Africa. Power and wealth will be distributed in quite new patterns. The whole shape and structure of life will be different. And this will be true even if the form the revolution takes is that which the government has been planning for nearly a quarter of a century, the independence of the Bantustans.

### the church 'belongs' to the white man

The churches are going to have to cope with the effects of this revolution. As in Britain, there is a real danger that they may find themselves on the wrong foot by the upheaval when it comes. It is true, of course, that there are more black Methodists in South Africa than white ones, more black Anglicans than white ones, and so on.



But there is also a very real sense in which the churches are thought of as "belonging" to the white Christian. Just as in Victorian England the churches seemed to represent the attitudes and outlook of the ruling classes, so in South Africa today they seem to represent those of white society. There are all sorts of restless signs which point in that direction. One hears rumours of black/white strife ... in the elections in some Anglican bishoprics. The recent S.A.C.C. resolution on conscientious objectors also reflects unease about a Church establishment identified with white ideas about social stability.

The Church in South Africa could learn a great deal from what has happened in Britain. A Church which took steps to disentangle itself from being wrongly identified with a sectional power-structure *before* that structure is radically altered by a social revolution is in a far better position to launch the missionary effort needed in the new society, than one which has to do the two jobs together. To walk humbly with God is the only way to proclaim Christ effectively. The proclamation is the more effective when the Church has learnt the lesson voluntarily rather than had it thrust down its throat by force. \*

## CIVIL LIBERTIES AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

**desmond tutu**

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In order to discuss this important subject adequately, one must approach it with a definite view about the nature of man, because it is man who exercises or has the rights about which we are going to talk. (I am no male chauvinist and really mean to include women in the generic term "man"; how could it be otherwise when I am talking about liberty?)

I reject the view of secular humanism simply because it does not, in fact, take man seriously enough. On the one hand, it errs by holding a far too optimistic opinion of human nature, despite all the evidence of history with its full record of man's inhumanity to his fellowman, a record whose sombreness is hardly lightened by the contrary evidence of man's achievements and the record of his altruism, his creativity, etc. On the other hand, it can give way to a debilitating pessimism because of being disillusioned by the fact that man can often sink so low.

My starting point, then, is the Christian understanding of man, because I believe Christian anthropology is eminently level-headed. It takes man seriously. It does not think he is an unsullied angel, and so it is not surprised at his dastardly acts; nor does it take him for an irredeemable rogue. He has a high destiny as the child of God; he is of infinite value to his Maker who made him in His own image and who prized him so highly that the Son of this Maker died for His creature.

For this discussion, it is this divine image which is of crucial significance. I believe it is this that makes human beings persons. It is an irreducible element in their personhood—that they are persons with the freedom to

say aye or nay, to obey or not to obey, to love or not to love. When this freedom to choose, this *freedom to be responsible* is compromised, then in my view, man's personhood is impaired and his humanity is distorted. This appears to have been the attitude of Jesus himself. In the account of his Temptations which are a preface to his public ministry, we are given imaginative descriptions of some of the options that were open to him about the kind of Messiah he should become. We know that he rejected these options because they would have betrayed his vocation to be a Suffering Servant of God. One of these options had been for him to dazzle would-be believers with spectacular acts which would compel them to believe in him since they would seem to be incontrovertible evidence of his Messiahship. They would have been denied their inalienable right to choose freely whether to believe or not to believe. And he refused to emasculate them in what for him would have been a dehumanizing way. In 'ON NOT LEAVING IT TO THE SNAKE' Harvey Cox enters a caveat against the Biblical myth in Genesis which would make Adam and Eve disclaim their responsibility by passing the buck to the snake, because, in his opinion, this would make them less than human persons. Their glory as persons resides in the fact that they have moral responsibility which is the obverse side of free will; which is the faculty which enables one to choose freely whether one will obey or disobey. At this point I concur heartily with Cox. I am an unrepentant libertarian against all kinds of determinism. If determinism is true, if we can't help doing or being what we do or what we are, then it would be meaningless to apportion blame or praise. Man is made for freedom and this is his chief glory. Herein lies his likeness to God, who is so deeply personal. God is personal because only thus can he create, love, and redeem freely, since in the Christian scheme of things these are all free acts and can ultimately be only free acts.

God created man to be a person and in doing so took

the enormous risk of endowing him with this inalienable freedom to choose. And God respects this freedom so much that he had much rather we went to Hell freely than compel us to go to Heaven. The individual person's charter of freedom is based on the astounding fact that God, who alone has the perfect right to be a totalitarian exhibits this profound respect for man's dignity and personhood.

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It will be clear that my philosophy is averse to all forms of authoritarianism and any attempts to brow-beat a person into conformism. I am an ardent advocate of personal liberty and, because this is the consequence of creation, what has so far been said of man is true for all persons. It does not depend upon the incidentals of race, colour, or sex. All have been created to this high dignity; all are of equally infinite worth in the eyes of their Maker in whose own image he created them. Any assault on their personhood, any insult to their dignity as human beings, is in the final analysis an act of blasphemy, because such an act does scant honour to the crown of God's creative act. What then are the implications of this creative act for man?

### **the right to full life**

Man, by virtue of creation, has a right to life and we do not mean merely biological existence. No, he has a right to life lived at a certain level with a minimum standard below which no person should be expected to eke out an existence. He is, after all, not merely an animal, but also a spiritual creature who requires a certain social, political and economic milieu conducive to a full life. There must be a certain degree of security of existence and a deep reverence for the life of human persons. Because life is of a piece, it is not surprising that in a society where violence is done to the lives of others (as shown, for instance, in a high rate of executions or mass removals of communities) there are equally alarming suicide and divorce rates and an increase in crimes of violence among the more privileged as well.

In Christian anthropology man was never meant for solitude and separation but for companionship and fellowship; Christianity therefore sets great store by marriage and *family life* because this is the setting in which the individual human being learns his first lessons on the way to mature personhood. It is here that he first learns that in order to live in harmony with others, he has to modify his egocentrism and personal freedom in the give and take of a normal family life as a preparation for life in society where individuals must be ready to give up

certain rights in order to enjoy a greater good and to establish the proper framework for exercising their freedom meaningfully. This begins to show that healthy tension which will constantly exist between the rights of the community over against the rights of the individual. A healthy family life is a right to which everybody is entitled, with security of tenure and a home he can call his own and which gives him stability to resist the beguilement of political ideologies which would ultimately subvert the security of the state. Most social scientists aver that house-owning and property-owning, reasonably well-off persons are the best guarantee for a stable society. They are hardly likely to encourage a state of affairs which would lead to the destruction of their hard-earned possessions. Most social delinquency is closely connected with a defective family life. Thus, to deny a person's right to a stable family life is in fact self-defeating. It seems a fundamental right for workers, for instance, to live near where they work if they are not to be separated for long periods from their families, with the intolerable strain this places on the fabric of both the family and society and the deleterious effects on individuals involved in such a reprehensible system.

The story in Genesis shows Adam as a tiller of the ground who has charge of the Garden of Eden. This was before the Fall, to be fully human, man has to *work*; but his work is to be an outlet for his creative energies and not a mere drudgery. The consequence of the Christian doctrine of creation is that persons must be helped to do work as far as this is possible. And this work must be fulfilling and challenging and adequately recompensed. Because of his inherent right of choice, he should be ready to pick and choose subject to the vagaries of the market and relative to the greater good of the wider community. His work should be congenial and he should be free to give or withhold his labour in order to sell it to the highest bidder in a responsible kind of way through collective bargaining, if need be. But equal opportunities for self-improvement, etc., and equal job opportunities for all are an incontestable corollary of the Christian understanding of man. It must be obvious that in this view, workers are human beings, persons with fundamental rights and not mere economic or labour units or cogs in a machine. The ultimate prosperity of the entire community must surely depend on whether a so-called labour force is satisfied or whether it is restless and unhappy.

The aim of *education* is to help the individual person to develop his gifts to the full and so to realize his potential that he can then make his distinctive contribution to the life of his community. It is emphatically not to fill the learner with a stock of facts which it is hoped he will be able to regurgitate on suitable or even unsuitable occasions. A proper education seeks to sharpen the critical faculties of those who experience the educational process; to fill them with a sense of awe at the wonder of the universe so that they constantly ask the question, "But, why?" A proper education produces people who can recognize a proper authority while being determined

to resist all authoritarianism—it is a process in which the learner is taught *how* to think and not *what* to think; a process which seeks to make him shun a false peace bought by a docile conformism and a toeing of whatever line it is decreed must be toed. Only thus are original thinkers nurtured, and democracy, freedom and a just society assured; because persons so educated are ready to defend what must be for them of supreme value. They are ever vigilant against any inroads against personal and civil liberties because the monster of unfreedom is insatiable. This kind of education, need it be said, is the right of every citizen; and citizenship belongs to all those whose permanent home is where they work and live and love; where they are born; where they marry; and where at last they die.

Since man is made for freedom, as a citizen he must participate in the *process of lawmaking*. He cannot reasonably be expected to regard laws which are arbitrarily imposed on him by others in the same light as those in whose making he had played some part. The former can easily be arbitrary and unjust and he is unlikely to have adequate means of redress; whereas those in the second category are made by legislators who are accountable to him and who must thus be sensitive to his opinion. As long as they are not responsible for their words and deeds to him, so long will they continue to exacerbate sectional feeling by outrageous statements and actions.

We could go on in this vein about *freedom of association* (that a person has the right to choose those who will be his friends); that no undue and unreasonable restriction should be placed on his ability to move from place to place so that he may be able to live wherever he so desires and not have to live in some ghetto which has been artificially set up; about freedom of worship (that he should be free to worship or not to worship without undue disabilities attending the one option and disproportionate advantages attending the other); about the *freedom of expression* (we would need much convincing that censorship is likely to achieve the goals that its advocates have set for it; because man since the days of Adam and Eve has seemed to find an irresistible fascination in forbidden fruit);—that man should be free to think and say as he conscientiously believes, and that a healthy society would endorse Voltaire's words that "I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it";—all these are seen as necessary concomitants of the Christian doctrine of man. But enough has been said to show that we set a high premium on personal freedom.

#### **personal freedom in context of society**

It would soon become clear that if each person did his own thing through exercising his inalienable personal freedom, we would soon have no freedom because we would all be stuck in a morass of chaos and anarchy. Personal freedom, to be meaningful, can be exercised only within a specific framework in which it is shown to be not an absolute but a relative freedom. But how can

we insure that personal freedom and liberty are not unduly curtailed? I think that there are certain guidelines and criteria:

- Personal freedom must be modified in order to facilitate a greater good for society as a whole—e.g. if I drove on the righthand side of the road or weaved from right to left, then ordered traffic would be impossible, communication would be hampered and perhaps there would very soon be no "I" to drive as I chose, because I would be killed in the chaos I had created. This is an example of that tension between the freedom of the individual person and the claims of society which we mentioned earlier. It is imperative in this delicate area that the individual is not submerged entirely in favor of society. After all, the majority are not always right as we know from history where people like Athanasius had to stand up to the entire world.

- In moments of national crisis, it may be necessary to suspend ordinary civil and personal liberties to combat a threat to national life—usually an emergency situation that has to be sanctioned by the legislature and for limited periods only—to avoid government by decree. Legislators in this case are those accountable to the entire society and not only to a section of that society. The community must remain ever vigilant against possible abuse of these emergency powers.

- The personal freedom of any one individual ought to be modified if its exercise interferes unduly with the enjoyment of a right by another. My right to enjoy music should not encroach upon my neighbor's right to his sleep.

- Any other curtailment which perhaps does not fall under the first three should not be arbitrary and unreasonable and the victim should normally have opportunity of testing the right of the state to impose such a curtailment before competent legal authorities.

Freedom like life is of a piece; it is indivisible. Its erosion in one sector usually leads to its erosion in another. The freedom of the white man is bound up with that of the black man. So long as the black man is dehumanized and unfree, so long too will the white man remain dehumanized the unfree because he will be plagued by fear and anxiety. For all these reasons, therefore, those who care about freedom must ask themselves whether they care enough. \*

# LIVING FREE—BIBLE STUDIES 3

W.C.C. Bible Studies for fifth assembly—July 1975.

## Introduction

### I. Slavery behind us

*Romans 8.1-17*

### II. Sonship before us

*Romans 8.18-30*

### III. God on our side

*Romans 8.31-39*



## Introduction

Animals live free within the law of their natures. But man is born with a nature not yet formed. He has still to become truly human. This process does not follow the gradual development of the acorn into the oak, or the cub into the lion. It entails response to the intervention of God, acceptance of God's grace, which alone can lead him to full humanity.

When Paul thinks of man in relation to God, what he sees is a captive slave, whose real history only begins when he finds liberation and begins to live free, in a human way. He sets this down in his letter to the church in Rome. This was necessary, since he was planning to make Rome his base for new work in the western Mediterranean, having already established many churches in what are now Turkey and Greece. The usual practice in such circumstances was to send letters of commendation. Not Paul (see I Cor. 3.1-3). He wants his 'message' to commend him, so he sets it out 'somewhat boldly at times' (Rom. 15.15) for them all to read. He mentions his plans in 15.17-29. The collection he has been making (v. 26), and which he intends to deliver in person to Jerusalem, may have a special meaning. These funds, from Galatia (Gal. 2.10), Corinth (I Cor. 16.1-4; II Cor. 8-9) and other Gentile (non-Jewish) churches, were a kind of advance notice of the fulfilment of the promise that God would gather all nations to the holy city to worship (Isa. 60).

That climax reminds us of the long march of the human race towards the liberation prepared by God. We have already seen in the Old Testament something of God's strategy for this struggle, and the pattern can be traced again and again in human experience. Paul's thought on these things is difficult for us, not only because it bears the

traces of its own period just as our thought does, but also for another reason. The churches were always in danger of being thought politically subversive, and therefore much Christian communication was 'coded'—drawing on the words of Jesus (shared among Christians) and symbolism drawn from the Old Testament. So one way of trying to unravel the thought of Rom. 8 is to link it with the Old Testament experiences we have been considering. It is the same God, with the same strategy for liberation!

Israel's experience can be seen in at least three stages, and ch. 8 goes the same way:

I. Slavery, God's call of Moses, and the people's liberation into the promised land.

Compare vv. 1-17: We were in slavery, but Christ freed us. Baptized in the Spirit, we live in liberty as the sons and heirs of God.

II. Israel's life as a free, sovereign people—in a risky position surrounded by foreign enemies.

Compare vv. 18-30. Our position as Christians is not yet a final one, and our full sonship has yet to come. So we have our problems, though we also have the help of the Spirit.

III. The people's disloyalty and the fall of Jerusalem to its enemies, in spite of all the warnings of the prophets. The worship of the temple stops, though one day God will bring restoration.

*Contrast* vv. 31-39: Threatening forces could exile us from our inheritance, but God's love is stronger than them all, so we do not suffer exile from God, our worship goes on in spite of all that tries to interrupt it, and we live free.

So let us 'zoom in' on this pattern of liberation.

I. **Romans 8.1-17**

*Slavery behind us*

What could it mean that we are slaves? Think out together what kinds of slaves we are, and what kind of masters we have. Paul identifies three hard masters, thinking of them as three tyrant enemies of the human race. Their names are Death, Sin and Law. Paul prepares detailed identity-kits to help us recognize them: Death in ch. 5, Sin in 6 and Law in 7. How can we follow his thought?

Think of a tree uprooted from its soil;

of human relationships so poisoned that the poison pollutes the atmosphere on which life depends;

of the 'mortal body' (8.11) with no future beyond

the grave, and of the tomb of Jesus full and not empty.

Lump it all together and call it Death.

What else might we include?

Think of some people oppressing others by denying their humanity;

of cat-like pride and self-sufficiency, and dog-like subservience;

of life lived only in terms of appetites (as though we were no different from other animals—Paul's word in 'flesh' or 'lower nature' as in 8.3) or the cold domination of others (as though we were gods);

of all that defiles human dignity and single-minded love.

Lump it all together, and call it Sin.

What else might we include?

Think (and let your thoughts weigh you down a little)

of all those commandments about worship and social justice, about what we should do and what we should not do, that keep the moral person forever looking over his shoulder and into himself (Have I trespassed—crossed forbidden territory? Have I failed to pay my debts to God and man? And how do I purify my feelings?).

Lump it all together, and call it Law.

What else might we include?

Some slavery! The group should now look through vv. 1-13, and identify these familiar enemies. Then read it again, and list the statements that speak of our liberation. How was this carried out?

God frees us (v. 2). Then surely that puts us under a perpetual debt to God. But Paul does not say this. Our liberation does not consist in moving from one harsh obligation to another, from the oppressive domination of slave-masters to a new domination by Christ. So-called liberators profit from the debt owed them by the liberated; but the cost of our liberation is borne by God himself (v. 3). So ... read v. 15. It is the work of the Spirit (that is, God himself powerfully at work in us). Trace through vv. 1-17 the actions attributed to the Spirit.

We become sons and heirs (vv. 16-17), crying Abba. The word is the Aramaic word a son uses to talk to his father, showing that in the church's worship the word used by Jesus lived on. It sounds a note of intimacy and confidence. Sonship is not a matter of how you feel, but of your legal position as a mature son. Galatians 3.26-4.7 spells this out in some detail. You are expected to have a say in the way the household is run—what impli-

cations are there here for our stewardship in the world and the church? And this involves prayer ('Abba' and vv. 26-28), in which the liberated man or woman assumes the privilege of participating in the affairs of God. Think about this idea of prayer together. Our solidarity is with our liberator Christ, who is also our fellow-heir (v. 17). But that does not mean an immediate end of sufferings. To live free is to share in his. How, do you think?

## II. Romans 8.18-30

### *Sonship before us*

The passage begins and ends with splendour. These notes make no attempt to follow in detail the tremendous movement of thought in between. There is so much splendour here, we need some limits. So we shall simply go on looking for those things that contribute to the pattern of liberation we traced in the Introduction.

Paul seems to be saying: Yes, you are sons and heirs. But not fully so. There is still a lot to be revealed about the sons of God. And this secret will only come out as the purposes of God proceed for the whole of creation (v. 19). Paul links the idea of our not yet being sons with a Jewish tradition that spoke of world-shattering events that would usher in the beginning-time. In the meantime, the whole of creation—because of Adam's sin—is ... (what shall we say, we can only use pictures) ... marking time (as of an army eager to be off), or holding fire (longing to get it over with) or in neutral gear (as a parked motor-car with the engine running). The word Paul actually uses is translated 'frustration'. Things happen, but what is the point? Events come and go, but with no apparent reason. Pause here, to share any knowledge we have of what is being said in our day about the lack of meaning in things. Try making a military banner out of it! How should we reply to the comment that the whole business of living is absurd, and the only adult way to live is to know that it is so? What qualities of human living in face of economic and technological dilemmas should Section 6 at Jakarta emphasize?

The universe, says Paul, is waiting for the grown-up sons of God. The parked car is waiting for the heir to appear and drive away! And the universe itself is going to be liberated from the 'shackles of mortality' and share the liberty and splendour of the children of God. Think of some of the present agonies of the world we belong to—how might they be the pangs of child-birth? (v. 22) Out of it all, writes Paul, a new, breathing, kicking, yelling child is to be delivered—the splendid age, born with the blood of its delivery upon it.

We agonize, too, while we wait for God to set our whole body free (v. 23). This is liberation *of* the body, not *from* the body. The word includes everything that a person makes and does through the body—including gestures, talk, acts, culture. And it is 'this body of death' (see 7.24) that is to be liberated, just as it is this earth which is to be reborn. What might the street you live in look like, the other side of a rebirth?

And because the fullness is still future, the appropriate word is 'hope' (vv. 24-25). We have our freedom and our sonship in the form of hope—not in contrast to a 'hopeless' present state of things (it is not), but in contrast to the splendour to come. All that the Spirit has done for us is still only the beginning—the taste of the celebration meal ahead, the first bag of wheat from the fields being harvested (v. 23). What the Spirit can do for us *now* is to help us pray with confidence (vv. 26-28), as God's strategy is being worked out (vv. 29-30).

And the long march of God's people leads to splendour. Paul elsewhere (II Cor. 3.7-18) writes of the splendour that attended the 'old covenant', and contrasts this with the new covenant of the Spirit—'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty'. And he draws a direct connection between Christ's transfiguration splendour (Mark 9) and the splendour we reflect as we are transfigured. Compare Romans 8.29. What would it mean for a person—or a group—or an economic system to 'be shaped to the likeness of his Son'?

## III. Romans 8.31-39

### *God on our side*

These verses do not require an interpreter—just a singer. Bach put them to music, and they are to be lived to the praise of God. Jerusalem, centred on the worship of the temple, was silent for much of the sixth century BC. The people were in exile, asking themselves how they could sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. Was that exile necessary? The prophets said that it happened because God's warning went unheeded. Now Paul is saying that we have the victory over all the forces which we might fear could separate us from God. Our worship never need be interrupted!

He knows in his own personal history what those forces are like. Read II Cor. 11.23-33. But he has found that God is on his side (Rom. 8.31). These words have a terrible sound to modern ears, for they have been used by nations at war (by both sides), and by Christians confounding other Christians with arguments and worse. The real meaning is nearer to the educationalist who said it was important that children should feel that the teacher was 'on their side'. What could it mean, in our day, to be on the side of the 'poor' in our society and in the world? God being on our side ensures the victory (v. 39). Among those hoping for revolution in Latin America, there is a ritual greeting: 'Unto victory: We will win.' In that confidence, the Christian who touches death daily (v. 36) has his own liturgy of praise that nothing in all creation can interrupt: 'The Lord is risen: he is risen indeed' (v. 34).

When three disciplined members of a black-power group once marched into a cathedral during united intercessions for peace, and briefly explained their point of view, some took it as an interruption. But it could also be seen as an aid to worship that is in 'truth'. God himself has been known to interrupt worship! See Amos 5.21-24. True worship is communion with God in truth (see

the next Bible study)—the God from whom nothing in creation can separate us.

No questions. Paul in this passage asks the questions necessary, and gives the answers. Take the passage as a meditation. Find poetry and music to express the theme

together. Better still, make a song about it. Gather it up in a worship of life and lung (11.33-12.2) that goes forward unbroken. Live free. \*

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN A SCEPTIC AND A RADICAL CHRISTIAN

S. I am familiar with a number of different Christian positions, but you seem to be different again. How do you relate yourself to traditional positions?

R. I don't have much quarrel with the beautiful affirmation of the Christian tradition, though don't expect me to defend the institutionalised churches.

S. Do you do believe in God?

R. I believe in the Christ who came preaching good news to the poor and liberty to the captives; I believe in the God who puts down the mighty from their seats and who sends the rich empty away; I believe in the kingdom of God in which the whole of creation will find fulfilment. What burns me up is that the churches talk about these things, but seem not to notice how distant we are from such love, truth and joy.

S. How can you believe in a power that seems to lie beyond any possible human experience?

R. What do you want, metaphysical proofs, historical arguments, or personal confession?

S. I am totally confused by talk about God, and I don't see what God can add to your own very challenging concern for the have-nots of our world.

R. You want metaphysics then. I am interested in reality, not simply in my own aspirations and ideals. I believe that truth and love will ultimately, objectively triumph; this is one aspect of belief in God. The experience of people struggling against various forms of evil and oppression is the history to which I would relate faith in the God of the Bible. Speaking personally, I find that belief in God provides an objective basis for critical solidarity with all people, particularly with the powerless, the poor and the oppressed.

S. I still don't understand why you believe in some sort of God?

R. Are you satisfied with the present state of our society? Do you consider yourself a good sort of chap?

S. I want some reforms in society, of course. I don't see what my opinion of myself has to do with it.

R. I don't suppose you have been tortured, or starved, so it is not very urgent for you that these things happen to masses of other people.

S. There you go getting all emotional on me; I don't see what all this has to do with God.

R. Don't you? Yet Jesus was beaten up and he died thirsty on a cross. What sort of solidarity do you have with political prisoners in a hundred countries or with millions of people literally starving to death?

S. We are all human beings, of course.

R. A fine metaphysical unity in a concept; we are all children of God! But don't you find it agonising to know that our abundance here in Australia is because there has been too much theft—theft of food, other resources, the labour and dignity and health of millions of people—to say nothing of the crime of institutionalized waste when we destroy crops to stabilise market prices, or build costly churches that are used by a handful of people on Sunday.

S. I am used to pointing to the existence of evil as an argument against the existence of an all-loving and all-powerful God.

R. I dare say you can dispose of a Santa Claus God that way. If you touch reality through suffering, and do not withdraw from this reality out of love, the God of the Bible may start to make sense. The Bible speaks a revolutionary language when read from the perspective of the poor. All your fine academic criticisms of Christianity simply feed on the inadequacies of the spiritualised rationalisation of the status quo that we have inherited as Christianity. Various forms of evil do demonstrate the injustice of the status quo and the unreality of the God who legitimates this status quo. Your trouble is that you use this to defend a comfortable materialistic status quo.

S. No, I don't think I want to do that.

R. Well, don't you need to join me in doing something (particular some hard thinking) about our Australian solidarity with oppressed and suffering people?

S. I see that you are really a new kind of evangelical telling me what I need to do to be saved.

R. Right on, brother; now, what are you going to do about it?

—A.S.C.M. Newsletter, Dec. '74

# THE 'COLOURED'

bruckner de villiers

*Dr Bruckner de Villiers is a former Ned. Geref. Kerk minister and for the past three years, until his resignation at the end of 1974, he was in the fulltime service of the Progressive Party.*

It is with some sense of shock that one realises, when pondering a definition, that the so-called Coloured People of South Africa can apparently only be described in negative terms according to the present political system.

The progeny of forebears as rich in diversity as the constituent peoples and races of this remarkably variegated country, they belong everywhere, and nowhere.

No wonder that all definitions of this strange non-people, even the most erudite, have thusfar failed to satisfy, either scientifically, politically or morally.

It is far easier to say of the Coloureds what they are *not* than what they are.

They are obviously neither White nor Black. Officially, they are not Asian nor, for that matter, "Other Coloured" either. They are not geographically determinate nor ethnically identifiable in any satisfactory sense. They are neither a nation nor a people, but rather a non-people with no common origin or background, with no territory they can call their own, with no real "identity" except a frankly negative one, with no discernible destiny as a population group.

They are a "nation-in-emergence", i.e. a nation in limbo, a people in ethnic purgatory, a community of waifs and strays that never asked or strove to become one.

To anthropologists, ethnologists, sociologists and politicians they constitute an intractable "problem"; a problem, in fact, to White South Africans in general—a problem of group conscience, a problem of economic, social and political morality.

And so one can go on, piling one negative definition upon another *ad nauseam* ... Generalisations come all too cheaply. An objective assessment appears almost impossible of achievement.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that the Coloureds—all two million of them—constitute living and increasingly irrefutable proof of a disastrous flaw in our whole national argument.

All along, and for more generations than one would care to remember, this argument has been conducted on two different levels, both of them essentially negative in context.

Stated in terms of a logical syllogism, the one goes roughly as follows:

- The "Coloureds" are patently non-White;
- As a population group, they cannot be geographically localised, i.e. conveniently insulated in a clearly definable "Homeland";
- Therefore this rapidly swelling body of non-people can neither be ignored or wished away nor assimilated into the body politic of White South Africa. The Whites consequently have to resign themselves with as good a grace as possible to living with this indigestible "stone in the stomach" and attempting to defer the inevitable major operation it necessitates for as long as possible. As things stand now, it would seem as if the operation can no longer be delayed.

On the other level, we have had the argument put forward ever since 1948 by the ruling National Party:

- The peoples of South Africa are inherently different and unequal;
- When different peoples are forced to live in close contact with each other there is bound to be friction between them;
- The only solution, therefore, is to prevent the possibility of contact by strictly separating the different peoples from each other. Hence the policy and practice of Apartheid, Separate Development, Separate Freedoms, call it what you will ....

It must be obvious to even the most laggard student of logic that both these arguments are highly unsatisfactory and certainly quite unconstructive. And closer scrutiny soon reveals that this is essentially due to two reasons:

1. Both arguments are basically negative and defeatist, taking no account whatsoever of the positive elements of the situation, of the credit side of our national balance sheet, as it were.
2. Both arguments are based on premises which are not only debatable in the extreme but are in fact manifestly erroneous. So, for example, the one basic premise—so unprovable as to border on the ludicrous—is that "WHITE IS RIGHT": that the whiteness of one's skin, or at least proven parentage, is the ultimate norm of acceptability and respectability as a citizen of South Africa. The other demonstrably false premise alleges that friction as such is unhealthy and therefore dangerous and to be avoided at all costs—when both evolutionary



science and human history itself offer numerous proofs to the contrary.

Thus, on the basis of questionable argumentation and spurious logic, we have for many generations been tragically successful in bedevilling the destiny of our potentially great country.

### Whom are we really talking about?

Surely, at this critical stage of our history, it must start occurring to at least some concerned and intelligent people that there are other alternatives: that the present "solution" to our problems, based as it is on entirely negative and arguable premises, is *not* the only solution, but that there could be another solution founded upon some constructively *positive* premises. To mention but a few and, grasping the nettle firmly, to start off with the Coloureds themselves:

- Despite all the things they may *not* be, there are certainly a few very positive statements that can confidently be made of this, the most "problematical" of our country's population groups, the Coloureds:
  - a) They, like most of us, *are* South Africans—in a very real sense and more so than many;
  - b) They, like all of us who have nowhere else to go, no fur-lined funkholes to dive into, *are* Africans—and no less so than the inhabitants of any other African country beyond our own borders;
  - c) They, like all of us, *are* undeniably human beings—entitled, as such, to all the rights and subject to all the responsibilities of this privileged and persecuted creature called man.
- The South African nation, to which the Coloured people inextricably belong—together with the Afrikaners, the English, the Zulus, the Xhosas, the Venda, the Indians etc., etc.—is not a grey, faceless, amorphous mass of humanity, but an assembly of stimulatingly diverse peoples and races.
- The diversity of the peoples of this exhilarating country is not a fate to be bemoaned but a gift to be cherished, a challenge to be accepted, the promise of a vast potential to be realised.
- If thus positively accepted, the undeniable differences between the peoples of South Africa need neither be glossed over in a futile attempt at establishing some form of hopelessly idealistic egalitarian utopia nor ceremonially enshrined and rigidly perpetuated by the erection of unscalable walls of apartheid between people of different races.
- In the very differences between us and the healthy frictions they occasion lie the true riches of South Africa and its tremendous potential for the future. The electric amity between the various peoples of this country that can be conceived through the twin stimuli of internal dissension and external hazard could be of far more lasting worth than the rigid enforcement of unnatural physical separateness or

of grey social uniformity.

All of which brings one right back to where one started: to those "problem"-children of South Africa, the Coloureds.

For, come to think of it, when seen in the light of the somewhat more positive premises outlined above, is not the "problem" of the Coloureds in fact the problem of the whole of South Africa in a nutshell? Is the confusing diversity of constituent elements that go to make up the Coloured people not a reflection in microcosm of the diversity of peoples that constitute the body politic of South Africa as a whole. Must not the key to the solution of all the problems facing South Africa itself somehow be found in a solution to its most intractable problem, the "Coloured problem". And is the final determination of the lot of the Coloured people—which now has become a matter of the utmost urgency—not going to be decisive in the determination of the lot of *all* the people of South Africa?

When all is said and done, a few *caveats* are becoming very obvious indeed.

Such as, for one thing, that the various population groups of South Africa will have to start refraining from indulging in the almost Colonialist luxury of regarding each other as "problems": as long as we keep on regarding each other as problems and not as stimuli and challenges, our whole approach to our communal present hazard and future welfare is bound to be a negative and defeatist one.

And, for another, that we must desist from indulging in the utterly self-defeating exercise of staring ourselves blind upon the negative qualities and characteristics of our fellow-South Africans disparagingly measured in terms of the whiteness of *our* own skins, the racial purity of *our* own family backgrounds, *our* standards of civilization and sophistication and the self-assured smugness of *our* "Christian" morality.

More than ever before, it needs to be shouted from the roof-tops: we are all in the same boat, whatever our differences, diversities and dissensions, and we are going to swim together or sink together. Or to put it more graphically, in the words of that brave but foolhardy Coloured gentleman who recently disrupted the even tenor of debate, normally unruffled by reality, in that ivory tower of White democracy, the House of Assembly, by shouting from its Visitors' Gallery: "We are not Coloureds, man; we are South Africans!"

# ACADEMIC FREEDOM

robert birley

*Over a period of more than 10 years Sir Robert Birley has often visited South Africa. Every time he brings hope and sanity into our situation. And in England he has befriended many South African students. This lecture on Academic Freedom was given at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1974.*

I hope you will allow me to begin by taking a short stroll in what is for me familiar territory, the history of my own country. I shall look back more than two hundred years. In 1745 the Young Pretender, acting in the name of his father, Prince James Stuart, made his romantic but hopeless attempt to overthrow the Hanoverian dynasty. It is generally assumed that this marked the end of an epoch in British history. But that is not quite true. For a short time Stuart supporters or Jacobites continued to state their views very loudly at Oxford University, an institution which for years had been notorious for the violence with which the students expressed their political opinions, especially against the government. Three years after the Young Pretender's invasion, seven students, (all of them, I may add from my own college of Balliol,) disturbed the peace of the town one night by chanting through the streets, "God bless King James". There they met a clergyman called the Reverend Mr Blacow, who tried to arrest them. There was a fight. Mr Blacow complained to the Vice-Chancellor, but he got no help from him. "Nothing", he was told, "can prevent young fellows getting into liquor". He then took the matter up with the Government, with more success. Three of the students were arrested and tried, and two were convicted and sentenced to a heavy fine. There was a good deal of talk about revising the Statutes of the University, which might well have brought to an end its Academic Freedom. Eventually, however, the story has a happy ending. Shortly afterwards Mr Blacow was promoted to be a Canon of Windsor.

Now this incident certainly marked a new era in University history in England. For nearly two hundred years after it there is practically no evidence of any real interest taken in politics by the students of Oxford or Cambridge, certainly no interest publicly expressed. And yet two years after the affair, when absolute quiet reigned in the world of students, a well-known journalist of the time wrote these remarkable words: "Every old man complains of the growing depravity of the world, of the petulance and insolence of the rising generation. He recounts the decency and regularity of the former times and celebrates the discipline and sobriety of the age in which his youth was passed: a happy age, which is now no more to be expected, since confusion has broken in

upon the world, and thrown down all the boundaries of civility and reverence".

The writer, I may say, was an Oxford man. No doubt he had often heard his seniors talk like this.

Evidence in support of this view of his seniors was to come twenty-eight years later, by which time the English Universities were sunk in a deep political slumber. James Boswell was dining with a Mr Scott at his Chambers in the Temple in London. With them was the journalist whom I have quoted, by now a very well-known figure, Doctor Samuel Johnson. Doctor Johnson, Boswell tells us, was silent for a while and then, "at last he burst forth, 'Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. No man, now, has the same authority which his father had—except a gaoler. No master has it over his servants; it is diminished in our colleges; nay, in our grammar-schools'".

Of course anyone can see what had really happened. What was actually going on in the Universities is irrelevant. It is simply that Doctor Johnson was twenty-eight years older. Now I refer to this incident because I feel that I should point out to you that I am myself one year older than Doctor Johnson was when he had dinner with Mr Boswell and Mr Scott. You will understand then that I feel that I have the right to claim to be a thoroughly respectable person, with ideas which some of you will no doubt consider to be old-fashioned, and undoubtedly a member of what is often called "the establishment". In fact I think I can produce evidence that I am very respectable and therefore that listening to what I have to say, while it may do you no good, cannot do you any harm. I turn to the field of established sport for there surely the Establishment feels most at home. After all, I once played in a game of cricket which was reported in "The Times" newspaper, and there my name remains for ever, immortalised—"R. Birley—did not bat". And what is more I was once mistaken for the captain of that very great football team, the Bolton Wanderers—on the platform of Turin station—by an American Bishop. However, there are still times, I must admit, when I feel it is right to detach oneself from the Establishment. One day, four years ago, I was walking to my University in London and I passed a public house nearby, called *The Crown and Woolpack*. It was here that Lenin used to go during his days of exile in London. It was the exact centenary of his birth, April 22nd, and as I passed I saw into the bar which was crowded. All the members of the Marx-Leninist Establishment were there and one heard the clink of glasses as they drank the appropriate toasts. But some remnant of revolutionary

feeling in my nature made it impossible for me to go in and join them. I walked on some thirty yards down the street and went into the next public house where I drank a solitary half pint. It was called the *Empress of Russia*.

I think there are greater similarities than one might imagine between the different Establishments of the world. I found evidence of this not long ago when I read two passages almost on successive days. The first was from a South African newspaper, and I learned from it how a very prominent figure in the educational administration of this country had said that Pop music was an invention of the Communist world and was being deliberately infiltrated in other countries by the Communists in order to undermine the morals of the young people. The second was from a book, written by someone who had been travelling in Eastern Europe. Again and again he had been told that Pop music was an invention of Monopoly-Capitalism and was being deliberately introduced into Communist countries in order to undermine the morals of the young people. Now, as I happen to have no love at all for Pop music, being thoroughly old-fashioned and preferring the music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, I was delighted to feel that I could safely be a member of the Establishment wherever I was. In fact I think one can go further. I might put it this way. If I had Aladdin's lamp and used it to transfer from this country to Russia, its Establishment, I have no doubt where I should find them—in the Kremlin. And if I gave the lamp another rub with my sleeve I know where I should find the Russian Establishment when it arrived here.

And where, you may well ask, is this getting us? My answer is that I hope to show you that the problems of academic freedom, or of freedom generally, are not a matter of one country only or for one country only. They are essentially the same in different countries where the Establishment have very different points of view. We live in an era of history when governments have power such as only a few of them had not very many years ago. Of course there have been such eras before. To take two examples at random, one might think of the Roman Empire under the Emperor Diocletian or France under King Louis XIV. But we are concerned with today. And the result of this is to breed a state of mind which comes to think that all criticism is a betrayal. And then any attempt to discuss an accepted dogma, to see if it will stand up to rational argument, is considered a betrayal.

The Russians have a phrase I have seen sometimes, "bourgeois objectivity. All one has to do with a great many countries in the world is to discover the correct alternative epithet for "bourgeois".

#### **first duty 'to preserve white civilization'**

It is possible to find in this country the appropriate term which sums up a distrust, in fact a dislike, of free discussion because, it is thought, it may well become dangerous? Not, I should say myself, in some simple

word or phrase. But not long ago I came across something which seemed to me to show very clearly what was involved. It was in an account of a discussion which took place in 1956 between the Prime Minister of the time and Dr Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs, on the one side and representatives of the Christian Council of South Africa on the other. The subject was Migrant Labour. Dr Verwoerd, as one might expect, dealt with the issue very skilfully. The Prime Minister does not appear to have spoken until the end of the discussion and then he said a few words and he ended with these, "The Government shares with the churches a concern for a stable life, but it must always be remembered that it is the first duty of South African government to preserve white civilization".

There surely we reach the heart of the matter. The policy not only of the South African government, but of the majority of the whites which supports it, seems to us from the outside world to be a completely defensive one. And it is when a society is on the defensive that criticism and, therefore inevitably academic freedom also, seem to be so dangerous.

There are, however, certain aspects of the principle of Academic Freedom which we ought to consider before we allow ourselves to get into the very dangerous position of taking its value for granted. First, Academic Freedom can very easily become something very isolated. This is the doctrine of the Ivory Tower, that within the well constructed defences of a University, freedom to criticise and freedom to discuss may be allowed and that in return for this privilege the University itself will take care never to move outside these defences. This was precisely the mistake made by the German Universities before the days of Hitler. In fact, it was held that by moving outside its defences a University inevitably compromised itself. This point of view was brilliantly expressed by a very great German writer on Education, Friedrich Paulsen. "Scholars cannot and should not engage in politics. They cannot do so if they have developed their capacities in accordance with the demands of their calling. Their business is scientific research, and scientific research calls for constant examination of thoughts and theories in order to harmonize them with the facts. Hence they are bound to develop a habit of theoretical indifference towards opposing sides, a readiness to take any path in case it promises to lead to a theory more in accordance with the facts. Now, every form of political activity, and practical politics particularly, demands above everything else a determination to follow *one* path that one has chosen. Political activity ... produces a habit of mind that would prove fatal to the theorist, the habit of opportunism".

And the result of this doctrine? It was clear enough in Germany. It led to an attitude which can only be styled one of complete irresponsibility. It meant that the Universities felt no obligation whatever to criticise political views which they knew to be false, and, which was even more disastrous, which they knew to be morally wrong. In the end it meant that Academic Freedom itself

seemed to make it appear to be wrong to oppose a political party which was openly bent on destroying it.

But should a University spend its whole time—or much of its time—arguing about political issues? Certainly not. A University—and this is surely a commonplace—has two main functions. One is to increase Man's knowledge of his Universe and, which is just as important, his understanding of it. But this is not quite as straightforward a task as one might think. If I had to choose one moment for the beginning of our Western European civilization, of which South Africa is a part, it would be the publication in 1637 of Descartes *Discourse on Method* because of this statement in it, "I perceived it to be possible to arrive at a knowledge highly useful in life; and in room of the speculative philosophy usually taught in the schools (he meant, of course, what we would call the Universities), to discover a practical, by means of which, knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans, we might also apply them in the same way to all the uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the lords and possessors of nature." I need hardly expatiate at the University of the Witwatersrand on this union of pure Science and Technology.

And surely we are becoming more and more aware that Descartes' splendid claim has a way of standing on its head as it were, and the problems of pollution and the environment show us that Nature may end up by becoming the lord and possessor of us. It is surely the duty of a University to deal with such a problem as this.

The second function is this: We must remember that most of the members of a University are not professors and lecturers but students. A few of them will continue in Universities, but almost all will go into life outside them. The University, then, is inevitably a preparation for life, and this means that it must teach its students to think clearly, to understand what a problem really is—and surely something more as well. There is much to be said, I feel, (especially, perhaps, I feel it when I have been reading some recent work of Sociology), for the opinion once expressed to me that Analysis is usually much the same thing as Paralysis. It is especially the task of a University to teach men and women to think constructively and I believe that all the time they should be encouraged to apply such constructive thought to the problems of the society in which they live.

I remember once having a conversation at this University with a journalist from one of the best known Afrikaner Nationalist newspapers. He asked me what I thought of his own people, by which he meant the Afrikaner Nationalists. I said that I divided most of them, though not quite all, into two classes. The first, a rather small one, I called "the thousand years Reich" men. It is true that Hitler's Reich, (he invented the phrase of course), only lasted for twelve years, but that was neither here nor there. They felt they had a lasting solution to

the problems of their society, as long as they stuck to it. But the main body, I said, I called the "après nous le déluge" men. "I see", he said. "You mean that we are being very selfish towards our own grandchildren". "Well", I said, "you have put it much better than I did, but I suppose that is what it comes to". "In our hearts of hearts", he said, "we all know that".

The task of the University—and at the moment I am thinking especially of its students—must seem, then, peculiarly difficult at this moment, to foster constructive and positive thinking in a society which has come to take up so negative an attitude. And this gives me the opportunity to say how very much I admire the work of the students in some of the Universities of this country in setting up their Wage Commissions to help the African workers. I must say that when I have read about them I have been proud of having been a member—and, in fact, I can say of still being a member—of this University. This work will have a place in the history of Universities.

### 'victorious hope' in despair

I can well understand that it must often seem an impossibly uphill task. You are working in a Society which is wholly opposed to your aims and one which is prepared to show an opposition which is ruthless and tenacious and it is in a commanding position. I can very well see that at times you must feel, those of you who take the position of which I am speaking—that you must feel hopeless. To you may I repeat a few words which have moved me more than almost anything I have read in recent times. They come in one of the last letters written from prison before his execution by one of those involved in the opposition to Hitler and the Nazi regime, Father Delp, a Jesuit priest, in January 1945. "This is a time of sowing, not of harvest. God sows, some day he will also reap again. I want to strive for one thing—to fall into the earth at least as a fruitful and healthy seed". In South Africa this is a time of sowing, and future history looks back on such periods with a particular admiration for those who were the seed. They at least had hope, Saint Paul wrote of the three great virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. And any believer will look on Faith as a virtue and all men, or almost all, will think the same of Charity. But in an age which accepted progress as something almost automatic Hope seemed to dwindle in importance. It was taken for granted; it was no longer regarded as a virtue at all. We need to recover the idea of Hope as a true virtue. Perhaps these two quotations will show you what is meant by that. They could hardly be more different.

The first was written very soon after the end of the last war by someone who had survived a Nazi Concentration camp in a letter to a friend of mine, who showed it to me. In it he spoke of how strange it was that he had been able to endure the "horror and squalor" of that camp. "How can I explain it?" he wrote. "In that monotonous flat, mauve country near Breslau, with eagerness I used to watch the sunrise. On clear nights I would wait for

Orion. Every bush and every tree were something rare for me.

Once I came across a rabbit-hole and I used to stand by it for long periods at a time and I was happy when at least for a moment I could catch sight of the rabbit's family. I clutched at living realities to convince myself that I myself was still alive. In that there was some kind of urge to hold on to something, to snatch at some support. I cannot say that religious certainty gave me support of that kind, though it comforted me by representing my situation as a state that was not abnormal for a Christian. I had a little Missal with me; I used to read it to my comrades, especially to one with whom I shared my paliasse. A strange thing; in the service of almost every day it spoke of persecution, and in every one despair was overcome by hope. I was myself astonished at that. That victorious hope! On the day that I was released, I had read in the service, "contra spem speravit", and in that hope, in spite of everything, was a truly comforting thing." "Contra spem speravit". "Who against hope, believed in hope".

The other quotation, as I have said, could not be more different. These are the final lines from Shelley's great dramatic poem, *Prometheus Unbound*. Shelley, of course, was not a Christian. You will see here what seems to me to be the essential qualities in the kind of struggle you—or many of you—are engaged in in this country. Hope, Resolution and a readiness to forgive, for that must always be part of the final constructive solution. "To forgive wrongs," he wrote, "darker than death or night. Shelley did not advocate violence.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Hate which seems omnipotent;  
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck, the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

"To hope till Hope creates from its own wreck, the thing it contemplates."

Do not think that you are alone. You are taking part in a struggle, as I have said, which in a variety of forms is going on all over the world.

Let me give you two examples, which do not seem to have hit the headlines. When the Russian tanks entered Czechoslovakia in 1968 and brought to an end what is called the Prague Spring—a time I may say when Alexander Dubcek, the leader of the movement, called on the Universities, including the students, to be ready to be critical of government policies—when the massive conservative forces of the Soviet Union marched in, there were demonstrations against them by a few students in the Humboldt University in East Berlin. They included, I may add, the son of the Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, who was sentenced to twenty-seven months' imprison-

ment, the daughter of the Director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, aged seventeen, who had a suspended prison sentence, was expelled from school and will never be allowed to go to a University, and the niece of Helene Weigerl, a famous actress and the widow of the dramatist Berth Brecht—she was a leading communist—who had a sentence of two years. I know well a young man who with a friend went over by car to Prague shortly before the invasion, which they knew to be imminent, and collected leaflets from the students there. These they distributed in this University in East Berlin. He had two years in prison and was expelled from the University. He was studying to be an architect; his career was ruined. My second example is very different. The only demonstrations against General Amin when he seized power in Uganda were those of the students' Union of the University of Makerere in that country. As a result the President of the Union is dead and the Union has been abolished.

But there is one thing more to be said. In every country where Academic Freedom has been destroyed or is in peril, the actual situation, of course, is different. The "first duty of the South African government," namely, "to preserve white civilization", depends on the end of the structure of a bureaucracy which cannot afford to regard human beings as individuals. They must be thought of as counters to be moved inexorably, when necessary, from place to place, even if this may entail, as it sometimes does, the destruction of a family or the displacement of a whole community. The whole migrant labour system of this country depends on it. That well over half a million Africans a year are tried for pass law offences must be something unique in History.

And I suppose that for Africans the pass is the symbol of such a system. But changes which will in the end destroy this bureaucracy are inevitable, as most Europeans in South Africa are aware. (I look back for a moment at the Afrikaner journalist of whom I spoke). That they will come peaceably is something which all must long and work for. This will only happen if there is genuinely constructive thinking by men and women with a deep sense of personal responsibility for the *whole* of their society. For a country to have such people it needs free Universities, producing people who look forward and not backward. So I shall end by quoting a poem written by a South African, and not by an English poet but an Afrikaner, Ingrid Jonker, a poem which indeed looks forward. It is a translation of the poem into English and it may be well known to some of you in Afrikaans. I think the last three words, placed as they are, show what all South Africa should be aiming at. The title is "The child who was shot dead by soldiers at Nyanga".

The child is not dead  
The child lifts his fists against his mother  
Who shouts Afrika! Shouts the breath  
of freedom and the veld  
in the locations of the cordoned heart

The child lifts his fists against his father  
in the march of the generations  
who shout Afrika! Shout the breath  
of righteousness and blood  
in the streets of his embattled pride

The child is not dead  
not at Langa nor at Nyanga  
not at Orlando nor at Sharpeville  
nor at the police station at Philippi  
where he lies with a bullet through his brain

The child is the dark shadow of the soldiers  
on guard with rifles saracens and batons  
the child is present at all assemblies and law-  
givings

the child peers through the windows of houses and  
into

the hearts of mothers

this child who first wanted to play in the sun at  
Nyanga is everywhere

The child grown to a man treks through all Africa  
the child grown into a giant journeys through the  
whole world

Without a pass -\*

## POETRY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

richard rive

*Richard Rive has published a novel as well as various plays, short-stories, essays and poems. He obtained his M.A. degree from the University of Columbia and a B.Ed. from the University of Cape Town. He has recently been awarded a D.Phil. degree by Oxford University for his thesis on Olive Schreiner.*

Poetry ought to reflect not only permanent truths but also temporary reality. It must be universal and at the same time come to terms, among other things, with its milieu and surroundings. It stems from a particular time and surrounding and also exists in that time and surrounding. Thus poetry written in the Republic belongs to the world and to South Africa, to all times and to the present. The period after the Second World War saw major changes including the decline of old forms of colonialism and exploitation, the emergence of African nation states, and an almost global repugnance and abhorrence of racial discrimination. But in South Africa the trend was in the opposite direction. It saw the intensification of racial legislation, the acceleration of the pace towards authoritarianism, and the sharpening of racial attitudes. 1948 saw the appearance of South African literature in the world market with the publica-

tion of Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*.

In many cases literature in the Republic deals with socio-political themes, especially Black-White confrontation. Poetry is no exception although these trends are more manifest in the short story and novel. Poetry may be seen against three broad areas of inter-group relationships and attitudes. There is the poetry written by Whites essentially for Whites on their politico-moral responsibility towards Blacks. This may broadly be called *Liberal poetry*. There is the poetry written by the Blacks themselves for Whites in order to articulate their discontent and rebellion at their treatment. This may broadly be called *Protest poetry*. And there is the most recent development, the poetry by Blacks for Blacks, the aggrandizement and celebration of their colour, which may be called *Black Consciousness poetry*. Admittedly these divisions are extremely simple and arbitrary, but they are used mainly as a means for defining socio-political areas against which much South African poetry may be assessed.

Most of the poetry written, published and read in South Africa falls into the first group, the poetry written by Whites for Whites. There are no Black publishing houses in the Republic, and very few Blacks have the

means and background to read and buy poetical works. Thus the Blacks, because of their restricted education, because they are prevented from serious participation in the mass media, and because they are denied participation in the broad stream of South African culture, have hardly any access to serious literature. The White poet's audience is therefore White with the exception of very few interested and educated Blacks. Liberal poetry by Whites has the longest tradition in South African literature, stretching back to the early nineteenth century; starting with Thomas Pringle's depiction of a South African Eden peopled by noble savages, and including Francis Carey Slater's forced political symbolism. As poetry moved ever closer to political comment it became introspective and soul-searching, so that Peter Horn, a contemporary poet, can write in his 'Letter to a Friend Overseas':

Wherever I move I  
 Stumble over wires which I have laid  
 To save myself from fear. Truncheons.  
 Police. Broederbond. I move through the dark  
 Of my conscience, carrying a knife in my hand.

The 'dark of my conscience' is a reflection of the fear and moral guilt found in so much of this type of poetry. In this respect Peter Horn is echoing the preoccupation of much South African writing in English, whether Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* or Gerald Gordon's *Let the Day Perish*. The Liberal type of poetry is critical of the political situation, gropes towards a moral solution to a political problem, and cannot avoid at times showing an element of paternalism, an understanding of the problem from a height. A strong didactic streak is also evident in much of the work, moral indignation at the plight of the Black recipient of injustice. And this indeed tends to be the poetry about the victim. The Black is rarely seen as an activist in search of his own freedom. What is done to him is of greater consequence than a positive reaction on his part. He remains a passive spectator.

These particular trends, when they do manifest themselves, need not be sufficient to invalidate all of this type of poetry. Some of it, especially some written by the younger poets, reveals that poets are fighting to free themselves from this obsession with moral guilt, and doing so successfully. There are also overlaps; and Blacks on occasion are known to write poetry indistinguishable from the Liberal type. They too see the Black as a passive recipient and indicate a moral guilt as agonising as their White counterparts.

### protest poetry

Protest poetry, the poetry written by Blacks largely for Whites in order to draw attention to the injustices under which they suffer, saw its beginnings after the publication of Paton's novel, although there are early echoes in the works of poets such as Mqhayi and Vilikazi. The quantity up to the present remains a limited one, because the Black writers found that prose, especially the

short story, could serve as a more effective means to articulate their grievances. What remains in poetry, may be seen, as in the works of Bloke Modisani, as amateurish and dismal. More sophisticated craftsmen such as Ezekiel Mphahlele and Dennis Brutus are able to fuse content, message and form into a meaningful, artistic form. More recently Arthur Nortje and Oswald Mtshali have been able to add an even greater maturity and sophistication. But the readership remains essentially White South Africans or others outside of the Republic. Because the poetry is not directed at a Black South African audience, for reasons often beyond the control of the poets, it tends to strike an artificial and limited pose, and tends also to describe and explain rather than define. Protest poetry, by its very nature, is critical of the socio-political situation, addressed as it is by those who do not share in political and economic power to those who do. An important difference between Liberal and Protest poetry is the emphasis of the former on the victim and the latter on victimisation. There is the danger of defining Protest poetry too rigidly within these limits. When Nortje, one of the clearest voices to emerge from this group writes:

All one attempts is talk in the absence  
 of others who spoke and vanished  
 without so much as an echo  
 I have seen men with haunting voices  
 turned into ghosts by a piece of white paper  
 as if their eloquence had been black magic

he is not only addressing White South Africans, or the outside world, but is adding a further introspective dimension, a re-evaluation of himself and his own attitudes as a poet and person.

### black celebration

The most recent development in South Africa is the poetry of Black Consciousness, that by Black poets for Blacks. There are any number of extra-South African precedents for this type of writing, ranging from the period of Marcus Garvey's 'Back to Africa Movement' to the present Black Power movements in the United States. More than forty years ago some of the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance movement was extolling Black exclusiveness, 'soul poetry', and this was especially observable in the works of Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Arna Bontemps. More recently this has remanifested itself in the poetry of Leroi Jones and his contemporaries. In Africa the cult of Negritude produced poets of the calibre of Césaire, David and Birago Diop, Rabearivelo and Senghor.

I thank you God for creating me Black,  
 For making of me  
 Porter of all sorrows,  
 Setting on my head  
 The World  
 I wear the Centaur's hide  
 And I have carried the World since the first  
 morning.

Black Consciousness poetry in South Africa is still very new, and is mediocre and insignificant. It has a limited production because of the paucity of publishing houses prepared to bring out the poets, and because the message is not sufficiently convincing to attract a body of readers. The writing is of a highly polemical nature, hysterical, screaming and declamatory. With the possible exception of Mongane Wally Serote, the remaining poets expose themselves to the criticism that what they are producing is not poetry. And this is not an unjustifiable criticism. When Serote is not beating his chest or drum, or writing to a prescribed ethnic formula, he is capable of lines as meaningful as

my heart bleeds through my eyes  
for indeed my eyes are a bloody memory.

or an image as powerful as

My thick footsteps pulsate on black shadows  
They rumble, rumble like a journey with a destination  
Aaahu the blackmanchild.

**the root of the matter**

**'DO YOU HEAR ME?'**

**brian brown**

To admit within the Christian Institute staff executive to never having attended a Sensitivity Training session is rather like Billy Graham confessing to non-attendance at Church, but as the truth has to 'out' some time, I bare my soul and do admit it! This lack in my education probably accounts for my strong resistance to the conditioned response of sensitivity-types who declare: "If what I think I hear you saying is what you are actually wanting to say, then I think I hear you saying what you are not..." Or something like that. As everybody is aware of my gift for accuracy of definition, clarity of thought, conciseness and precision with words, I do resent people declaring that they have to interpret the

James Matthews and the remaining poets of Black Consciousness must be reminded that correctness and nobility of intention in no way allows them to produce the polemical verse they do, nor does it validate their inability or refusal to fuse form and content.

Whether the writers in South Africa feel they must protest or the protesters feel they must write is not relevant in the South African context. It is sufficient to realise that poetry that hammers away too hard at the message defeats its own purpose; and, as in the case of the Black Consciousness poets, becomes a mere listing of grievances interspersed with shrieks for revenge. This type of poetry, obsessed as it is with its message, impairs literary excellence. If poetry is to last and be meaningful, it must go deeper and beyond any special pleading at any particular time. And there are poets in South Africa, very fortunately, who are making this type of contribution. The enduring poems will emerge, whatever the situation, and make their claim on time. \*

obvious, and I am not being sensitive to sensitivity either!

Seriously, despite my lack of insight regarding sensitivity training I am beginning to ask: "Do people hear me?" Two recent episodes with the press have occasioned this doubt.

The first was a telephone call from a reporter whose newspaper has a habit of increasing circulation by discovering revolutions being hatched in the C.I. before we have even had time to plan them. So with undue sensitivity (the word suddenly haunts me) I asked this reporter if he would treat the sought-after and controversial statement just prepared with fairness, seeking both to understand and interpret that which had motivated this C.I. declaration. He made the required response, the sincerity of which I still have no reason to doubt, and then came the moment of truth: "I shall send 'our boy' around to collect the statement immediately", he suggested.

The 'boy' duly arrived, all 200 lbs. and 55 years of him and old enough to be my father—in fact, a full-grown African. He took the statement to his "baas" as I sadly contemplated the C.I.'s chances of the reporter being remotely able to 'hear' what we were saying—a concern confirmed with the next day's press report!

The other occasion was at a recent press conference. We were doing battle on the question of passport withdrawals from C.I. staff when a reporter seriously suggested that it was his privilege to have a driver's licence and if he abused that privilege as a road-user then he should not complain on his driver's licence being confiscated. His assumption was that the illustration served to show that we had no right to complain about our passport withdrawals—a devastating response since the reporter was so convinced it was irrefutable.



I pointed out to him that if his driver's licence had been taken away from him by the Chief Traffic Officer's underling, with no reasons given, no prosecution and resultant conviction, and no personal awareness of the violation of any law, then he might justifiably be excused a moment of indignation—and by the same token I would be open to censure if I failed to become wildly indignant on behalf of my reporter—neighbour thus abused!

Of course he 'heard' me. But having been reared in a

tradition which has long flouted the rule of law and progressively eroded civil liberties it was inevitable that he should at the same time *not* have heard me. Certainly there was no crusade in his paper the following day for the restoration of either passports or the rule of law.

Perhaps the reader doesn't get my point. Do you hear me? Do you think that you hear what I am trying to say or do you hear me saying what I only think I am trying to say ...? Help, I need a sensitivity course! \*

**book review**

**james moulder**

## **NOTHING CAN HINDER A STAR SHINING**

*Myrtle Wright Norwegian Diary : 1940-45 (London, Friends Peace and International Relations Committee, 1974) 248 pages.*

This is a remarkable book. But that is not surprising—Myrtle Wright (now Myrtle Radley) is a remarkable person. She arrived in Oslo three days before the Germans attacked Norway on April 9, 1940, and remained until January, 1944, when she and her friends were forced to escape to Sweden because the Gestapo wanted to arrest them. The Diary and the four chapters which precede it record the civilian non-resistance to the Nazis and to the Quisling administration which they established. More specifically, it records the involvement of the author and her friends—especially, Diderich and Sigrid Lund who adopted her into their wide family circle—in the resistance and in the work of helping Jews escape to neutral Sweden. In fact, the Lund family, of whom several suffered imprisonment and two died in captivity, were near the centre of the non-violent resistance.

The Diary begins on June 13, 1942:

I will really begin to write a diary; at least some items of the days' happenings can be recorded to refresh memory later. It begins unexcitingly with a morning trying to distinguish the small parsnip seedlings from the weeds ...

These words have a Biblical ring; but they are also symbolic of the daily decisions and actions which individuals of all kinds had to make in an attempt to distinguish between good and evil; between what was true and what was false; between what gave life and what brought death. And although it took only two months for the Nazis to complete the military occupation of Norway, Norwegians struggled for five years against the attempt to impose a National Socialist form of government on the nation. They had no arms; therefore the fight had to

be a non-violent one and against ideas and values which were totally unacceptable.

The Nazi attack on the total political and cultural structure of Norwegian society did not merely meet resistance; it often met total defeat—but not everywhere and not all the time. The teachers' successful saga, for example, contrasts with the uncertain and fragmented opposition to the pressures on students and to the call-up for compulsory labour, both of which came in 1943-44. But it is not the failure and the weakness which stands out of the record; it is the resourcefulness and courage of countless men, women and children. This was the basic stuff of the opposition and the despair of German and Norwegian Nazi alike.

### **Children resisted!**

Myrtle Wright has a good eye for a story; some humorous, some deeply moving. One of the stories I enjoyed most concerns the resistance of the children:

A party of primary school children, remembering as they passed in front of the palace how in happier days they would greet the King here on the National Day, 17th May, broke into a spontaneous cheer, "Leeve Kongen, leve Kongen" (Long live the King) shouting as they went by. Police had been quickly on the scene and bundled these small and excited little folk into "Black Marias". The story went round that a small boy came running up to one of the vans calling "take me too!"

The Diary for August 15-17, 1943, records the visit of a German Quaker, Hans Albrecht, to Oslo. It was not the easiest moment to deal with a visit from a German civilian—loyal Norwegians even refused to sit next to Germans on the trains. The fact that the Lunds were prepared to open their home to him was remarkable evidence of their trust in Myrtle Wright—who knew him—and in Quakers in general. Although the situation

was both delicate and dangerous for all of them, his visit proved to be a rewarding experience:

I explained that it was only a German who understood that no German could come into a Norwegian home who, in fact, could come!

But *Norwegian Diary* is very much more than a collection of humorous and deeply moving anecdotes. It also records some of the questions with which convinced pacifists, like herself, struggled. For example, on January 10, 1944, there is this comment on a suggestion that it would have been better if some 400 students had signed any declaration the Germans wanted rather than to be put out of action by being sent to Germany:

I maintain that to undersign a declaration which one has no intention of keeping cannot be justified. It may be clear that their signature is a deliberate lie, and that a case could be made out for not being too exact in giving promises to people who themselves have absolutely no moral standards which would regard it as binding. But it is just against this immorality that we are fighting, and we can only do this by a strict adherence to that moral standard which we set up as our ideal. To go over to "the end

justifies the means" is to be conquered by the Nazi spirit. The question is, are we struggling for something more than to get the Germans out of Norway—and occupied Europe?

It is passages like this which make this an important and inspiring book; and not least of all for us in South Africa. We too are faced with questions about ends and means; we too have to decide about the legitimacy or otherwise of using war as a means towards political ends; and we too are tempted to believe that our cause exempts us from having to tell the truth and from having to love our enemies.

One way in which we can obtain valuable and useful insights into these problems of ours is to read and to ponder Myrtle Wright's *Norwegian Diary*. And because of her four years in Africa—and mainly in South Africa—she will be the first to admit that her Norwegian experiences do not provide any easy answers to our questions. But it is good to know that we are not the first to grapple with these questions. And it is even better to discover that some who have wrestled with these questions have at least discovered the beginnings of an answer. \*

## DETENTE MUST COME AT HOME

### South African Catholic Bishops' Conference Statement on Detentions and Bannings

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Southern Africa in Plenary Session on February 9th, 1975, while recognising that countries may at times need security measures outside normal legal procedures, voicing a common concern, wishes to protest against the present excessive use of banning, restriction and withdrawal of passports and residential permits, for undeclared reasons which may in many cases be only legitimate difference of political attitude.

Recently our Government leaders have made promises of detente to the outside world which should be made effective at home. We wish to urge the repeal or drastic revision of laws permitting such action, and also of laws by which people may be detained incommunicado indefinitely and without recourse to courts, or, when it is intended to bring them to court, to be so held without opportunity of bail. This amounts in some cases to long and serious punishment imposed on people whose guilt remains unproved and where in some cases no crime is subsequently proved.

The sense of need to use so many procedures outside ordinary law courts emphasises again the evil and danger of discriminatory legislation to which we, as other religious bodies, have frequently drawn attention and the unbearable sense of frustration and deprivation of normal human rights under which so many people in the country live. Countries with just laws based on the consent of citizens do not need to use such means.

We wish to add a special appeal that as long as the present legislation is in force, it should be required that those held in special forms of detention independent of courts should be periodically visited by a judge. It appears to us to put too much burden upon magistrates as officials of their department to expect them to feel wholly free to criticise its policy and manner of acting.

We note with regret the reports of young men who are fleeing the country. Speaking of the phenomenon of political refugees in the large numbers in which they are now to be found, Pope John XXIII voiced a universal Christian conviction when he wrote:

"Such expatriates show that there are some political regimes which do not guarantee citizens a sufficient sphere of freedom within which their souls may breathe humanly; in fact under such regimes the lawful existence of such a sphere of freedom is either called in question or denied. This is undoubtedly a radical inversion of the order of human society, since the reason for the existence of the public authority is to promote the common good, a fundamental element of which is the recognition of this sphere of freedom and the safeguarding of it."  
(From "Peace on Earth").

We wish to appeal in the name of Christ to all our people, and to others in sympathy according to their beliefs and convictions, to do all they can to alleviate the sufferings caused in all the situations mentioned and to assist the families which suffer so much economically and emotionally.

**Advertisements:**

**S.A.C.C. NEEDS STAFF**

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the following vacancies in the South African Council of Churches. Hand-written applications should be lodged with the General Secretary not later than March 31, 1975, giving details of education qualifications, experience, age, etc. There is no restriction on who should apply for these posts.

1. Shorthand Typist/Secretary required by Director of Inter Church Aid. The person should be able to initiate her own correspondence, take minutes, run the office in the absence of the Director and be able to use a dictaphone.
2. Personal Secretary to the General Secretary. A suitably qualified shorthand/dictaphone typist required to act in this responsible position. Experience, accuracy and speed are of utmost importance.
3. Bookkeeper required for senior position. Must be experienced. Good prospects. Person to work under supervision of Financial Director. Salary in region of R350 per month. Contact Mr T. Pengelly, SACC. Starting Date: May 1.
4. Publications Officer-Division of Justice and Reconciliation. Applications are invited from persons able to undertake and initiate publishing work, research and analysis, preparation of dossiers, documents, pamphlets and the running of a monthly journal for the Division. Previous experience in layout and editing essential.

Salaries of abovementioned posts with experience. Benefits include staff Pension. Conditions of service will be provided on application. In respect of typing posts please contact Administrative Officer.

South African Council of Churches, P.O. Box 31190, Braamfontein, Tvl. 2017. Phone: 724-4458/9.

**VACANCY**

The South African Council of Churches has a vacancy in its Division of Mission and Evangelism for an associate director.

Applications must reach the offices of the S.A. Council of Churches not later than 12 noon on 30th June, 1975

Applications to:

The Secretary,  
Division of Mission and Evangelism,  
S.A. Council of Churches,  
P.O. Box 31190,  
Braamfontein  
2017.

**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
SCHOLARSHIPS**

Applications for WCC Scholarships are invited for the academic year September 1976-1977.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR 1 YEAR**

For Laymen—Theological Study

For Ministers—Clinical Pastoral Training, Urban Industrial Administration, etc., as well as Theological Study.

Non-Theological Scholarships—Agriculture, Teaching, Secretarial, church administration, intermediate skills, etc.

WHERE? Through the English Medium in England, North America, Bangalore, Singapore, Manila, Uganda and Ghana. There are many places for Theological Study in Germany. Also, through the French Medium in Europe and Cameroon. Preliminary courses in language study can be arranged.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES—Bossey, Switzerland. A rare ecumenical experience! In the last few years the following courses have been run—as an example:

“How can God be said to act in a World planned by Man”?

“Dialogue on Salvation with people of Living Faiths”

“Participation in Change”

In the case of African applicants, a diploma is accepted in place of a degree. Applicants should note that this is post-graduate study. There is an age limit as follows: Whites 35, Africans 40.

Applicants are urged to submit their applications at the latest on May 31, 1975 to:

The General Secretary (WCC Scholarships)  
South African Council of Churches  
P.O. Box 31190  
Braamfontein  
2017.

**EASTER 1940-1975**

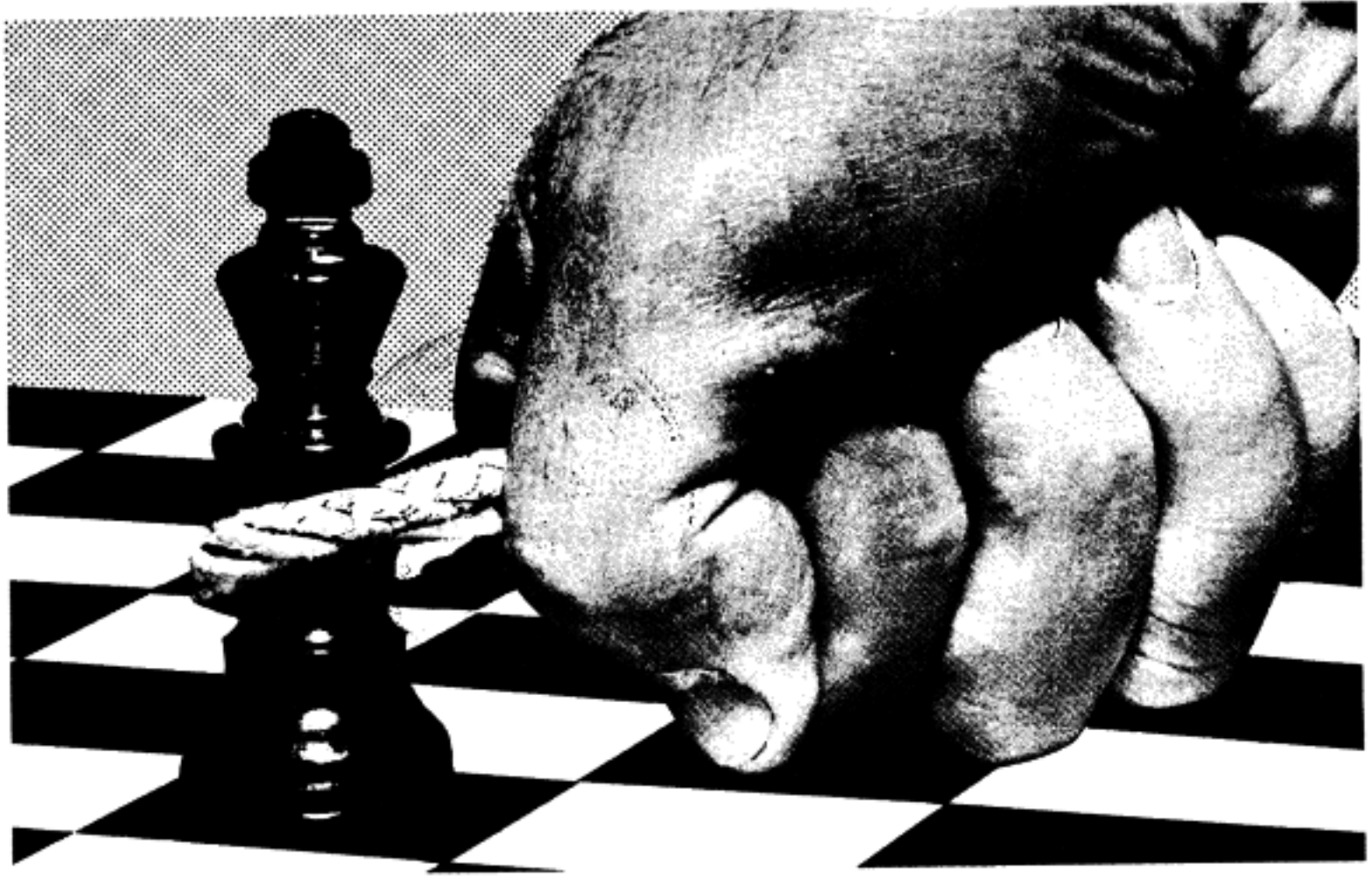
Joop and Lyda de Bruijn wish to announce that they hope shortly to celebrate a very happy occasion—their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary. For health reasons there will be no reception.

**Congratulations:**

29 de Wet Street,  
Henneman,  
O.F.S.  
9445.

**Previous address:**

10 Alida Street,  
Northcliff,  
Johannesburg.



**DÉTENTE:  
SECURITAS OR  
CERTITUDO ?**