AFSAAP ADDRESSES

President: Dr David Dorward
African Research Institute
La Trobe University
Bundoora Vic 3083

Secretary - Treasurer: To June 1991: Ms Anne Benson
From June: Ms Liz Dimmock
African Research Institute
La Trobe University
Bundoora Vic 3083

1991 Annual Meeting Co-Conveners:
Professor N. Etherington &
Mrs. Pen Hetherington
Department of History
University of WA
Nedlands WA 6009

Editor, Newsletter
Dr Cherry Geretz
The Flinders University of
South Australia
School of Social Sciences
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001

AFSAAP ADDRESS

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in AFSAAP is open to anyone interested in the development of African studies in the Australia and Pacific region.

Current rates: Regular member in region A$20
Regular member outside region A$12
Student member A$ 5

Cheques should be made to 'African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific' and posted to:
The Treasurer
African Research Institute
La Trobe University
Bundoora Vic 3083

The African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) wish to acknowledge the gracious permission of Professor Frank Willett, Director, Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, for copyright use of the drawing of the Benin head which has long served as the logo of AFSAAP and on our Newsletter.
Note from the Editor

I draw your attention especially to one of the last items in the News and Notes section of this issue of the Newsletter, on the combined Australian Agency Appeal for Africa, to be launched this July (p. 52). It should remind us, if that is necessary, of the enormity of the disasters that have continued to plague so much of Africa. Just the other day Mariano Ngor, of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association, who is based in Adelaide, brought me some of the latest facsimile reports on the Sudanese refugee fleeing back into Sudan as a result of the recent changes in Ethiopia, which brought home the continuing tragedy of that country. In so many parts of the continent the story seems one of disaster of a magnitude that Australians certainly find it difficult to comprehend.

Just because of the enormity of the crises that undoubtedly face contemporary Africa it seems to me important to acknowledge also the extent to which there is so much positive taking place. Helen Pitt’s very short note on Botswana, which she produced on her short visit home this month, demonstrates so clearly this positive note. It reinforces Roy Pateman’s report on Eritrea in the last issue. So do the impressions of South Africa from Colin Collins and Bruce Haigh. Yes, there is violence, but also great positive change.

So this is why I have placed Deryck Schreuder’s review article on the UNESCO History of Africa with its stirring title first in the issue. ‘Who ever doubted Africa makes her own history? Certainly not Africans. And, as Deryck points out, there is a sense in which we are all Africans. It seems presumptuous even to raise the question. I hope the various contributions to this issue will make this clear, not least the reviews of African writers themselves, and how they have viewed and recorded change.

And so, once again, I must thank contributors who have shared their own experiences in parts of Africa as distant from each other as Cape Town and Addis.

I draw your attention also to the short note on the recent AIDAB review of Australia’s Special Assistance Programme to South Africa. Not least because it is positive, but also because it highlights the very real limits of Australian involvement. It seems to me it is time members of the Association joined much more strongly with those fourteen agencies that are to launch the appeal to demand much more of Australian assistance, not just to South Africa but to the continent as a whole. In this respect it is important to watch what happens at the forthcoming CHOGM meeting in Harare in October. And I am very pleased to say that Deryck Schreuder, who will be there as an observer, has promised us a report for the December issue of the Newsletter.

Again, my apologies to contributors whose items have been held over to the next issue. I am nonetheless grateful to have them in hand.

See you at the Annual Meeting in Perth.

Cherry Gertzel
June 1991
AFSAAP CONFERENCE 1991
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
CALL FOR PAPERS

This year’s conference will be held at the University of Western Australia on 1st-4th December. Offers of papers on any African topic are welcome. Send proposals, including a one paragraph summary, to

Professor Norman Etherington
History Department
University of Western Australia
NEDLANDS WA 6009
Australia

Among the distinguished speakers at the conference will be

Professor Shula Marks, Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, talking on the roots of ethnic violence in South Africa; and

Professor Hermann Gilliomee of the University of Cape Town who is well known for his studies of Afrikaaner Political Thought and Constitutional Change in South Africa.

"AFRICA HAS A HISTORY"
Reviewing the UNESCO General History of Africa

Deryck M. Schreuder

With that simple assertion the magisterial project of a multi-volume general history of Africa is begun by its editor, J. Ki-Zerbo of Burkina Faso. The aim is to provide a comprehensive account of the whole span of the great continent's history, from its earliest human cultures to the modern nation-state: 'Africa by Africans' (as far as possible), and available to Africans, and the wider world, in some African and other languages - all accommodated in 8 large volumes, each with its own Editor. That African experience is to be divided roughly as follows:

* Volume I looks at both approaches to the writing of African history and then moves on to discuss the latest finds in pre-history.

* Volume II is concerned with the 'ancient civilizations of Africa', by which is essentially meant the cultures which flourished from the end of the Neolithic period to a time about 1000 years later (eg. in Western terms from 8th millennium B.C. to the 7th century in Europe).

* Volume III takes up about the next 500 years of African history, down to the 11th century A.D.

* Volume IV span another 500 years to the end of the 16th century of the great West African civilizations.

* Volume V looks at a shorter span - 16th to 18th century and the major beginnings of slavery as well as the decline of the classic West African and South-Central African empires.

* Volume VI is very much about that busy century, the 19th, stopping just about at the start of the 'scramble' for the continent in the 1880s.

* Volume VII, entitled 'Africa under foreign domination 1880-1935', is therefore about both the European Partition and the high age of imperial systems of rule, and the indigenous African challenge to these invaders of Africa.

* Volume VIII, the last volume, provides an assessment of Africa since 1935 and is intended to bring the narrative and analysis into our troubled era.

The volumes are the product not only of a cluster of publishers based in Africa, Europe and America - notably UNESCO itself, and also James Currey (London) and UCLA (California) - but the end result of an elaborate cultural programme developed within UNESCO as part of the work of its International Scientific Committee dating back as far as the 16th session of the General Conference in 1971. Active committee work began the next year, with a definition of objectives. Four principles were adopted in designing and developing the work: it was to be 'scientific', in reflecting the latest research, but open to authorial interpretation and ready to admit debates of interpretation, a basis then for further work; Africa was to be treated constantly as a whole and connections to outside agencies and histories related to this African experience of change; it was to be history open to all varieties of African evidence, from the archaeological to the oral and documentary; finally and most importantly, it was to be a history 'viewed essentially from the inside' - pre-eminently 'a faithful reflection of the way in which African authors view
their own civilizations. A strong revisionist approach was thus to be connected to a political function within international history. 'This effort to view things from within is the novel feature of this project ...' with the hope it 'should also be a vitally important element in the recognition of the African heritage and should bring out the factors making for unity in the continent'.

Covering some 3 million years in the history of a continent clearly required either the effort of one compehensive mind, or a great team. This is the team approach, history by committee rather than by Toybbee. Each designated volume editor was to lead about 30 authors (plus their collaborators and assistants), and who in turn would submit the draft sections to the editors and a Reading Committee to consider both 'substance and form'. The final revised text requires the approval of a 39 member board, a majority of 2/5ths Africans. We now have before us about half of the project, some 20 years after it began, and we await with interest the remaining volumes.

What can be said about this vast intellectual scheme at this stage (1991)? The first point remains the fundamental one, of welcoming the assertion, in all its complex detail and data, of the reality of an African history to be digested and debated. It should not be necessary to say this in our modern world. But, alas, the longevity of the image of the so-called 'Dark Continent' persists in a variety of ways. The very rise of the western scientific tradition of historical enquiry, with its emphasis on documentary archives and a concept of 'progress', placed the history of Africa at a discount. Hegel's famed Philosophy of History, at the turn of the 19th century, happily claimed that Africa is 'not a historical continent'; it is 'in the process of development', a view which carried even into our century, with an Oxford Regius Professor charging that perhaps one day 'there will be some African history to teach' but that 'at present there is none'; there is the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness ...'. As to the indigenous history of African peoples, their cultures and political communities, that was not a subject for study: 'We cannot ... afford to amuse ourselves with the unwarranted gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe'. (Quoted in UNESCO General History, vol. i, p.12).

These UNESCO volumes challenge those kinds of assumptions both by showing that there is, of course, a fascinating and extremely complex African history to study, and also by properly raising the more methodological questions concerning philosophical approach to African history with modern historiographies and the matter of sources: the UNESCO volumes make an excellent case for demonstrating the need to broaden and enrich our approach to the past generally by tapping vital oral traditions, artifactual evidence and other disciplinary data generated by the social sciences, notably anthropology.

It is particularly fortunate that two of the three volumes of the UNESCO General History, now issued by James Currey in abridged and inexpensive paperback editions, in fact concentrate on both these essential points. 'Methodology and Prehistory' is closely paired with 'Ancient Civilizations' - which is one of the great historians of our century) and on areas of African cultural sources closest to most of us: linguistics, artifacts, pre-history. The whole builds up to a most satisfying basis for their reading about the ancient history of the continent - notably Mediterranean Africa in the Pharaonic and Roman eras, but also highlighting the centrality of Nubia and Kush (including very early Christianity in Nubia) in the whole span of Africa's cultural emergence as a major world civilization.

The iron age is also finely treated with a notably interesting set of chapters on the techniques which shaped the expanding societies associated with the famed 'Chibumbwe complex' of cultures, leading to the Bantu - speaking settlement of central and southern Africa well before the arrival of even the first white explorers in the age of Dziez. Readers who enjoy volume ii as much as I did, will hope for an early paperback edition of the next set of chapters which will cover, among other things, the empire of Monomotapher down to the 11th century.

The third volume available in paperback, (and actually number VII in the series) has a unique focus, the coming of European colonisation to the continent in the vital and painful period of intense change 1880-1935. The cover illustration, taken from painted West African wood relief, shows a white invader about to fire an old European rifle into the face of an African warrior with bow in hand. The symbolism is right for the value: the fire-power technique of the Western World predominated over a traditional African resistance. And the volume then attempts to describe, by theme and region, how African initiatives and resistance countered or at least challenged the imposition of Western rule - the notion of a passive history, of collapse and acquiescence, is well and truly destroyed. African resistance is shown to be not only 'heroic' but tactical, and often effective, until the sheer scale of the European assault finally destroyed the independence of the chieftains. The volume then also examines the impact of colonialism on African social and cultural life, emphasizing the synchronic nature of that profound experience. The conclusion to the admirable chapter on colonial resistances perhaps best captures this complex theme:

'The period of colonial rule in Africa from 1880 to 1935 saw not only the destruction but rather the confirmation of religious pluralism in Africa. Orthodox Christianity and Islam gained much ground at the expense of traditional religion during the period through to some of the activities of the colonial administrators. However, traditional religion, or the host religion, formed the foundation upon which many of the new sects that emerged from the new religions were settled. The face of religious pluralism created rivalries, competition and even conflict in many parts of Africa, but at the same time the opportunity for inter-religious dialogue was created'. (vol vii pp. 227-8).

The best of the UNESCO values lies in this capacity to evoke an Africanist perspective on the inner history of the continent and its complex range of cutters. It surely destroys the image of a 'dark continent' and it equally surely asserts African volition in the processes of change which have marked its interaction with modern world history.

A project on this scale necessarily prompts issues of debate and critique. Individual chapters might be challenged in part or in detail. More useful here, perhaps, are some of the broader conceptual and interpretative issues which stand out from a reading of these texts. Four such issues worried this student of African history.

First, I was ultimately struck by the traditionalism of the theoretical position adopted for the whole series by the General Editors, "the best possible guarantee of the scientific objectivity of the General History of Africa". It is highly empirical, if not actually positivist, and we are promised a 'true history of Africa', which is all very well in challenging the old Eurocentric approach to the continent and its cultures. But, in truth, the historical discipline has moved on to embrace more subtle approaches to historical knowledge, not least in locating "history" within the discourse of human consciousness.

Africa's past is suffused with a dynamic pattern of oral traditions, and complex mythologies, which suggest a great range of possibilities in constructing that inner
history of African narratives. Here may lie the ‘true history’ of Africa, rather than in a modern Rankeanscientific approach. Equally, there is the closely related issue of how best to assert an African heritage in pointing to the unity of the continent. But such a proposition and theoretical position ultimately evokes a Romantic stance in the face of Africa’s modern history of human dislocation through agencies of exploitation and disruption, impacting unevenly over the vast span of African regional environments. It is rather in the interests of African people that their history should carefully delineate the global forces which have so painfully damaged its unity, and obstructed its recovery from colonialism. Bill Freund’s materialist approach, in his own remarkable single volume modern general history, The Shaping of Contemporary African Society, is more likely to evoke the ‘unity’ of the African experience in its analytic emphasis than pressing for a ‘unity’ based on generalised cultural presumptions.

Finally, and perhaps most problematic of all, in the one modern volume we have to hand - that covering 1880-1935 - much is made of African resistance movements as heroic defenders of African autonomy and culture. The deep difficulty here lies in the rather limited and conservative conception of ‘African initiative’. As Roland Oliver has elsewhere remarked, Africa also had its “heroes of modernization” - those individuals, and social classes, who mediated change and disruption, who first really articulated African interests and a forward-looking sense of autonomy; indeed who often formed the associations and political units that ultimately shaped the dynamics of decolonization. Many of those ‘heroes’ were moreover ‘heroines’ - the women of Africa, the major traditional cultivators, sometimes marketers of produce, often crucial figures in disrupted village families and, more recently were important agents of religious and political independency. They get far too little treatment, and ‘gender’ is not a major issue of analysis (it is notable that the volumes throughout refer to historical actors as ‘he’: it is as if the old male patriarchy of the chieftains has transferred itself to the histories, and as if gender language is not now sensitive to feminist critique of history as ‘history’).

The overall project is so worthy, the cause so good, that it seems charitable to raise such issues. But, of course, the very vitality of African history will only be advanced by debate and discussion. We are increasingly fortunate in being able to read a creative and sophisticated set of African histories, some regional, some thematic: John Iliffe’s volume on The African Poor (Cambridge, 1987) is a wonderful exemplar of that new historiography - a book that should be read by all students of Africa and the human condition in today’s divided world. We also now possess not only the UNESCO General History - which can indeed be read in ‘train, plane and bed’ - but there is the Cambridge multi-volume History of Africa, with largely different writers, and with some very different perspectives. Such diversity gives life and status to African history as a crucial modern historiography in the general cannon of discussion about the human past.

African history is clearly important for Africans, their sense of self, their perspective on their past, and their encounters with the wider world. It is also vitally important to the world at large. Human society began in Africa. There is a sense in which ‘we are all Africans’. What happens to Africa, how it has fared in modern history, how it survives the current crises, - environmental, political, economic, medical - will tell us much about its rich set of cultures and social organizations, as well as much about the human prospect for the 21st century. In that sense, Africa remains crucially important for us all. In the felicitous phrasing of Professor B.A. Ogot, initial

---

A good example of how this can be accomplished can be seen in Richard Hodder Williams contemporary history, An introduction to the politics of tropical Africa, which uses a liberal - pluralist approach to reclaim Africa’s complex, heroic era.
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CHANGES IN ETHIOPIA BY AN
AUSTRALIAN AID WORKER WITH REST

Helen Pitt*

I have been in Khartoum off and on for the past six years, for the last two years
working permanently with the Relief Society of Tigray (REST). Latterly I have also
been involved with the E.R.O., the humanitarian wing of the Ethiopian People's
Democratic Movement (E.P.D.M.) in Gondar, Gojar and Wollo. I have seen
enormous changes over that time, culminating in the events of recent months,
the sweeping away of the Mengstu regime, and the assumption of responsibility for an
interim government in Addis Ababa by the E.P.R.D.F. (the Ethiopian People's
Revolutionary Democratic Front) in which the Tigraian movement has played such
a central role.

This victory has come only after great suffering and long years of hard work in the
past of the liberation movement, but for myself the greatest achievement has been
the extent to which they have made a reality of the empowerment of ordinary
Tigraens, and more recently others, and their involvement in the whole decision-
making process. As I watch events, the most important change in my view has been
the direct participation of the people of Tigray in what are democratically elected
Baitos or Shengos, People's local Councils. Today any person considered
appropriate by the community - by which is meant having a commitment to the
people - can be elected to these Councils. Similar people's Councils have also been
established more recently in other liberated areas, like Wollo. This was not the case
in the past. This is part of a process of empowerment which will be an important
influence upon the kind of structures that the forthcoming conference to determine
a new constitution will decide upon. These people's Councils undoubtedly
constitute the potential basis for a truly democratic system. In this respect it is
important to understand that there is an essential difference between this Council
structure set up by the E.P.R.D.F. and the Committee system instituted by the
Dergue. The latter was concerned also with participation but those committees
were dominated by the party. This is the essential difference. The E.P.R.D.F.
system is completely open so far as membership is concerned. This means that
anyone can be elected as a member of the Council, and thus many people, including
women, peasant farmers, who in the past had no possibility of involvement in the
decision-making process for their community, can now participate.

The primary aim of the E.P.R.D.F. has been to safeguard and guarantee the
democratic rights of the people, and certainly in my experience they have tried to
put this into practice. This applies not only to Tigre. In Gojar, Gondo, Wollo, once
the Ethiopian forces had been defeated and pushed out, People's Committees were
formed as quickly as possible to involve the people in all aspects of local life. Two
weeks ago, in Addis Ababa, already the EPRDF had formed Peace and Stability
Committees, composed of people from all over Addis. With the primary
responsibility of assisting with the reestablishment and maintenance of law and
order in their respective districts.

So one of the most exciting things has been to see people's power actually working.

* Helen Pitt has been funded through Community Aid Abroad and the
International Women's Development Agency. She was a Member of
the Order of Australia, in June 1991 Queen's Birthday Honours, for service
to international relations particularly through Community Aid Abroad.
AFRICA: THE ENIGMA OF TRANSITION

Colin B. Collins* 

[Colin Collins went back to South Africa last January, after a ten year absence. He stayed three months, through March of this year. This is an account of that return. Ed. note.]

As Perth came into view after the long flight over the Indian Ocean, one was immediately struck by the visual differences between the landscapes of Australia and South Africa. After a stay of almost three months in a South Africa that varied from deserts and dusty mountains to the verdant metro-high grass of the High Veld and the lushness of the coastal areas, Western Australia looked arid, dry and sparse by comparison. But, some hours later a taxi driver in Sydney asked the TV image of South Africa: "What about the violence; there were thirteen people killed yesterday?" The verdant green, splashed with red blood of thousands of people! During the week after Easter, the only TV reporting on South Africa was on the violence taking place. That constant image is a skewed one and belies the many positive things that have happened in South Africa, particularly during the past year. What follows does not purport to be a sophisticated analysis of what is taking place. The theorists of social change have been unusually reticent since the collapse of the Eastern bloc countries and of the breakup of the USSR. And although many crystal-ball gazers are rushing into South Africa to predict the future of that country, their voices are as confused as the number of variables in the constantly changing South African condition.

This piece is simply a description of the feel of the country during the last few months.

For an ex South African accustomed to operating in a society overarching by the heavy hand of highly repressive legislation, extremely pervasive morality, constant harassment for anyone daring to speak out against oppression, the first feeling - after a temporary hiccup while one's legitimate visa was carefully scrutinized by security for an hour - was one of elation. The dark cloud has disappeared and one actually feels free. Free to see anyone, to say what one thinks, to negotiate with whomever one pleases. The constant sight of Mandela and de Klerk talking together and the rumours of the rapport that they have with each other is repeated at many levels of society. In parks, schools, buses, hotels, blacks and whites mix freely. Not so strange to someone unaccustomed to apartheid but very exciting for someone who is.

A closely related impression to me, having left South Africa some 20 years before, was the so-called blackening of South African society. Twenty years ago, whites constituted some 20% of the population and white cities were really white. All that has changed. Blacks are present, living in large sections of towns such as Johannesburg, a trend that will accelerate now that the 'Bantu Areas Act' has been officially dropped. Since the Pass Laws were removed from the law books, blacks are allowed to move around at will and are doing so. Perhaps most significant of all, they have become a supermarket, a shop, a factory and even smart boutique that is not almost exclusively served by black personnel. Even in the more integrated schools, whites constitute a small minority; on the English speaking universities, previously all white, blacks appear to be in the majority (they constitute about one third of these campuses). Even my conservative home town, King Williams Town was sliced into two sections, the one largely white and the other black. And with the black population growing at 3% and the whites at only half that, the white group is growing less and less demographically significant. While I was in South Africa, a controversial census was being conducted. Because of opposition by the African National Congress, it was not likely to be a success. But census statistics are frightening for whites and for the current government. A recent World Bank report put the population of South Africa at 37 million. 5 million of these are white and has been estimated that even without emigration, whites will be down to 12% of the population by the end of this decade.

Although I did not have extensive contact with black people and their organisations - I had to sign a statement at the airport stipulating that I was only there to visit family and friends - remnants of the old paranoia - there does seem to be a great sense of restlessness among the black peoples of South Africa, a sense of a people on the move. Taking the lid off the pot, the whites can now see that the water is boiling!

By far the highest profile organisation among the blacks in South Africa is, of course, the African National Congress with whom the government is having constitutional and other negotiations. With Mandela as its de facto leader, it dominates the headlines. In effect the most powerful umbrella Trade Union organisation, COSATU, has swung in behind the ANC. And the main organisation, the United Democratic Front, now disbanded, has also given support. This latter movement, representing almost a 1000 community organisations has now disbanded, partially because all the previous "movements" are now considered as political parties and the UDF does not want to become one in opposition to the ANC and partially because its leaders realised the importance of building up a new civic society and has requested its previous members to do this by joining local community groups of an incredible range and variety.

There are other groups among the white people and the one that receives much importance, largely because of its aggressive and militant stance is the Inkatha movement headed by the Zulu Prime Minister, Chief Buthelezi. The number of deaths incurred in fights between members of this movement and the ANC receive disproportionate attention on the part of the local and international press. Billed as a struggle between the Xhosa and Zulu people, it claimed the lives of over 2000 black people during 1990. Most of those killed during that time were in Natal Province and the fights were between the more urbanised ANC Zulu followers and the more conservative rural Inkatha Zulu members. And although there have been faults on both sides, it is very obvious that the wly Buthelezi is really fighting for a place at the constitutional negotiating table. It is equally obvious that elements within the Police Force and Defence Force are aiding Inkatha. It is in the interests of the whites and, indeed of the government, that their violence is on their own community rather than on the whites. The general impression that one gains from all this is that there is some very shady footwork going on in the background, an opinion substantiated by the recent disclosures of the activities of the CCB, a unit within the Defence Force trained to kill and main leaders of the ANC.

The other black groups are relatively small. The Pan African Congress which seems be gaining strength in the Johannesburg area, AZAPO, a remnant of the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970's and the Black Consciousness Movement itself. Until recently, no-one had any idea of the relative strength of these movements. Two surveys recently reported in the Weekly Mail*, the most informative South African newspapers, indicated that the ANC would receive around 60% of the votes of all South Africans. The current government of the National Party would get 20% and all the other parties, including Inkatha and the Conservative Parties (whites only) would draw percentages in the single digits.


Colin Collins teachers in education at the University of Queensland.
So, among blacks, the pot boils. An estimated 40,000 ANC returnees are trickling back into the country, some of them with much needed skills to run the future South Africa and others of them poor peasants who need land on which to settle. The Communist Party, to the horror of most whites, continues to exert an influence. The black Trade Unions are impressively active and wield much influence. Among black people, there is a sense of exuberance and expectation. Negotiation is in the air and everything seems possible. Despite the violence, there seems to be a general sense of optimism in that at last freedom seems to be, if not present, at least around the corner.

Turning to the white population, there is no way that one can categorise or universalise what their feelings are concerning the changes of the last year or so. Many seem to go along with what the National Party government is doing. This attitude is either characterised by a mild liberal sentiment that, after all, everyone should be treated fairly if not equally. Others sigh and pronounce on the pragmatism of the measures being taken. But within the mass of the white community that go along with the de Klerk changes, the proviso implicit in the attitudes of most is that de Klerk and his government will somehow or other - and certainly through the police and army, keep matters under control. They will be the bosses, especially if things should get out of hand. This feeling is enhanced by the handling of the recent troubles in the black community by the defence institutions.

Almost 40% of white voters vote for the conservative parties. This group certainly fear the black majority, but their reaction also varies from the extreme form of the AWB who are prepared to fight for their Homeland to a more generalised attitude that the National Party has sold out on the Afrikaners people. Which is partially true in that 40 years ago the National Party represented a working and lower middle class Afrikaner whereas today it speaks for an upper and middle class Afrikaner who knows that even in an apartheidless society, his class will still keep him in the box seats, one way or the other. Thus the less educated and poorer of the white people in South Africa feel very threatened by change. And they have reason to be as their colour will no longer protect them in a capitalist economy.

But the extreme Right Wing among the whites is not viewed as being all that significant within the country. They are seen as clowns, albeit somewhat dangerous ones. The real problem will be if a significant number of these clowns are joined by members of the police and defence force. Which problem already exists in the form of a mysterious Third Force which seems to be fomenting an unknown size of the interblack violence by shooting protagonists, especially if they are ANC.

This Third Force certainly seems to be much larger than the previously mentioned CCB who are currently spending their efforts now that they have been disbanded, on endeavouring to procure fat pensions!

But, what of the ruling elite among the whites? Why have they so suddenly lifted so much of the repressive legislation, unbanned all the enemy organisations and seem to be prepared to negotiate and bargain away their positions of privilege? An eminent sociologist who has written much on South Africa, Pierre van den Berghe, stated recently that the government has lost its direction and will to rule. But I tend to believe that the government is being eminently pragmatic. For them, apartheid has always been a moveable feast and legislation has become progressively liberal over the last ten years.

---


Many reasons are advanced for why the government has moved in a more liberal direction. Chief among them would be the disastrous state of the South African economy. With growth being zero, inflation running at about 15%, a balance of payments on foreign debt, the static price of gold, the great cost in maintaining apartheid and continuing economic sanctions, the politicians knew that they had to make changes not only to climb back into the world community, but also to stay afloat economically.

Within South Africa itself, the uncontrollability of the black townships has produced great problems for government, seemingly intransigent despite violent repression. With the rise of COSATU and then the UDF and then the Mass Democratic Movement, the pragmatics in the government saw, as did many leaders in the business world, that unless peace was made with a black organisation that had large popular black support, they could go nowhere, except perhaps via genocidal, a solution that would earn no friends.

Other reasons could be added to these and analysts vary considerably in prioritising them in order of importance. But another impression is more worthy of mention. It is the way in which changes are being made, the process by which South Africa is being transformed into a post-apartheid society. At the surface level, negotiations, especially about the constitution and conditions under which negotiations will proceed, seem to be carried on in a fairly amiable fashion usually with the press fanfare and largely because of the interpersonal dynamic between Mandela and de Klerk. But one does get the impression that it is all going very slowly, that many of the changes are not being translated to the middle and lower levels of many of the bureaucracies, especially the police and, above all, that the ruling elite are, in the main, in control of the process and its pace.

In this regard, it is very interesting to note that the government has in its collective head that it is not going to lose control under the new constitution. This is clearly spelt out in a leaked Broedersbond (the secret society that really runs South Africa) document the title above being significant namely, "Basic Constitutional Conditions for Survival of the Afrikaner" (September 1980). This document is a curious amalgam of liberal individual rights and the necessity to preserve different ethnic groups. In a recent issue of Australia Society (December, 1990) Alister Sparks speaks out exactly what this means at a parliamentary level. The Lower House will be elected on a one person, one vote system. In the light of the recent surveys, the ANC will control this House. The Upper House which will have the right to veto any legislation will be constituted by representatives from groups that wish to be represented on an ethnic basis. These will probably be elected in roughly the same way as the Senate in Australia and be constituted by representatives from the various ethnic groups that have, relatively, little relationship to their size. In this way, the white group can block legislation that is inimical to its interests that has originated in the Lower House. This solution looks acceptable to the outside world ... individual rights with protection of minority interests. The reality would be the appearance of democracy but with white control.

The end result may well turn out differently, but the point being made is that the government representing the whites still has its hand very firmly on the process and levers of control. It has the repressive apparatuses that it can and does use at any time and, with much more discretion than in the past. The ANC, only recently allowed to function, has few resources, either financial or in personnel. The too few experts are performing many jobs under very adverse circumstances and with minimal resources. For example, in the educational field, the ANC has made one appointment whereas the government has about 300 bureaucrats working in 13 commissions to work out the details of the future of education in a new South Africa.
Besides this quite understandable desire of the white ruling elite to preserve its predominance in terms of political power, they are also indisputably powerful in the economy of South Africa. Leftist analysts have always maintained that the disappearance of apartheid would not bring about any softening of class distinctions. The removal of the Group Areas Act has already resulted in some wealthy and professional blacks moving into the upper class white areas. But the vast majority of blacks will still live in the townships. Instead of townships, they will be called "high density suburbs". Understandably, the ANC has pulled back from some of its more radical aims such as the nationalisation of industry but one can only wonder at how much the average black person is to gain by the new dispensation.

This is nowhere more obvious than in the plight of the Lost Generation. It is estimated that almost 3 million young blacks between the ages of 15 and 30 have received very little education during the last 15 years because of disturbances. This group is 80% unemployed. While some eke out an existence in the alternative market and others stay at home, they really are the rootless ones. Today they support the ANC but already there are signs that they are unhappy with the slow pace of change. Not exclusively from this group have come not only a tremendous increase in crime against property and person in South Africa, but also the rise of gangs in the townships, the inability of the part of any civic authority to control the black townships and the real danger that chaos or massive civil unrest may come to pass.

In short, the culture of violence is becoming much more in evidence in South Africa. Certainly not nearly as bad as many other parts of the world such as, say, Bolivia or Peru or the Lebanon and Iraq, but very volatile and pervasive nonetheless. In the cities, the great masses of the unemployed are going to have to be rescued. The government probably expects this to become a problem that will fall into the lap of an ANC controlled government. In the country, if peace is not made soon, (and) Buthelezi and Mandela have got together recently - local warlords will take over and govern small territories. In short, central government will have little control and anarchy will persist.

There is no doubt about the fact that South Africa is going through the most significant period of its history. It is extremely stimulating but also highly volatile. Everyone predicts a rough ride for the next 5 to 10 years. And although the country seems to be full of crystal-ball gazers, both local and imported, who are making predictions of what is likely to emerge no-one really speaks with any great certainty. Perhaps one of the most curious scenarios is that put forward in a recent Newsweek* in explaining the breakup of Iraq in the post war era. It was called a "return to the womb" theory and went something like this. After a long period of very rigid control in a country, the country will revert to its ethnic parts if this rigid control is removed. With Hussein weakened, the Shiite Muslims and the Kurds came to life. Pierre van den Bergha has in essence the same kind of theory of what is likely to happen in South Africa. He maintains that South Africa has and really still is a country of many different nationalities or ethnic groups and that neither a common economic life or strong political control have destroyed this. He seems to assert that South Africa will end up like the Lebanon, a fragmented and warring group of people fighting endless battles in which no-one can possibly win.

I cannot really subscribe to such a pessimistic view. The tribal and racial and ethnic differences are going to play a part, with this I agree. The ruling elite will see to that and the ANC will be hard put to have a strong central government when there will be so much strength given to ethnic regionalisation. But some optimists, especially...

* Newsweek, April 1, 1991.

in the integrated schools, believe that some new overarching culture will be born, over time, in South Africa.

Much more significant are the expectations of the great masses of the dispossessed and the willingness of the elites, both black and white to take them seriously. In the last budget, recently passed, both the educational and welfare budget were increased to the detriment of the military. These were good moves in the right direction.

South Africa has the disadvantage of having the rich/poor, First/Third World dichotomy in its midst. Most of us can distance ourselves from it and satisfy ourselves by occasionally shelling out a few dollars for some catastrophe in one or other Third World country. South Africa has to solve the First/Third World discrepancies or end up in total chaos and destruction. A tough destiny for mere mortals! And that is why I believe that those who are trying to find realistic solutions in South Africa need every assistance from the outside. South Africa has suffered a brain drain over the last 40 years. Inside the country, those who have the power resources suffer from the tunnel vision endemic to an isolated society while those who are more progressive are not only thin on the ground but are sometimes out of contact with the harsher realities of what is needed to act at this particular moment in South Africa's history.

On the way out of Southern Africa I had a brief stop in Zimbabwe, now more than ten years independent. While not wishing to pretend that the economic or ethnic problems are by any means solved in that country, it was, by contrast, a country which felt peaceful and happy and one in which blacks and whites seem to live together harmoniously and, most importantly in which some attempts were being made to at least partially redistribute meagre resources. It can be done!

Brisbane,
April 1991
SOUTH AFRICA REVISITED

Bruce Haigh*

I served in South Africa with the Australian Embassy from mid 1976 until almost the end of 1979. Amongst other duties at the Embassy I covered events in the black community. It was at the time by and large a self-appointed task, in which I followed the lead of my predecessor Diane Johnstone. I made contact with the leading black activists by reading the daily court lists and also reports of those banned and detained. I instituted a program of visiting black detainees in prison and elicited the support of my Canadian and Swedish colleagues in making prison visits.

I returned to South Africa in the middle of 1990 and again in May of this year, in connection with my work as Executive Director of the Australia/South Africa Trust.**

In some respects South Africa has changed a lot since 1979 and in others not at all. Even after all the basic legislation relating to apartheid has been repealed the effect of forty years of black repression will be with the country for several generations to come.

The black population is estimated to be around 32 million. The total population at around 40 million of whom 5 million are white. The annual rate of growth of the black section of the population is 2.5% p.a., which is far higher than for any other group. The lack of basic facilities such as housing, education and health facilities will ensure that the gap between have and have not will remain for a long time to come.

Different impressions of my last visit remain. Once again I was struck by the number of swimming pools in the yards of homes in white areas as I flew into Johannesburg. The marked disparity of wealth between black and white remains a feature of South Africa.

Blacks predominate on the streets of Johannesburg during the day and Johannesburg to all intents and purposes is now a black city. Theft and violent crime are a feature of life in Johannesburg in both black and white suburbs. Crime with violence is at an even higher level in black townships than in white areas. Violence in and around Johannesburg is a way of life. By far the majority of the perpetrators of these crimes seem to be young black men, usually armed with pistols or knives and often both. I sense a strong current of anti-white feeling underlying all black criminal activity in white areas.

Black private enterprise flourishes particularly in the form of mini-buses transporting blacks to and from Johannesburg and surrounding townships. The city streets are full of these mini-buses, competition for customers is fierce and driving standards suffer as a result. Black business is moving into Johannesburg. The ANC now has offices in the central business district. Black lawyers and accountants have shifted in from the townships and the fringes of the city are occupied by shops leased by blacks.

Hillbrow, the King's Cross of Johannesburg, now has over 200,000 blacks occupying flats, houses and home units and middle class blacks are increasingly moving into "poor white" suburbs and new housing estates for blacks and whites between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Cape Town has been free of the type of violent crime endemic around Johannesburg. Live and let live seems to be the prevailing ethos of Cape Town at the moment, a haven from the madness and tension prevailing in and around Johannesburg. The liberalism of the Cape has survived. Greater tolerance than that experienced further north is the order of the day. Integrated church services are held at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, where the singing is overpowering and the high church rituals of Europe strangely odd and out of place in this African environment; perhaps they are a concession to the large gay community who add style and flair to the restaurants and antique shops of Cape Town and certainly help underpin and reinforce the liberal traditions of the Cape. The Church of South Africa in the Cape recently decided to admit women for ordination as priests.

Cape Town remains one of the most attractive cities in the world as a climb to the top of Table Mountain will confirm. That it has charm and grandeur is perhaps underlined by the fact that a former Swedish Ambassador to South Africa elected to live there after his retirement and many overseas investors are snatching up what remains by western standards cheap property! Even so at the back of the city not far from the University of Cape Town the sprawling black townships spread across sandy flats with ever increasing numbers of squatters' shacks.

Australians would die of shame when confronted with the South African road system which compares favourably with that of western Germany. Defence and public works dollars have been combined to provide a road infrastructure that will serve the country well into the next century. The same can be said of the South African rail system, harbours and airports. . . . .

By and large trade sanctions do not appear to have hurt the South African economy as much as previously supposed; on the other hand financial sanctions have had a major impact along with the sporting and cultural boycott. Australia will have no doubt act on the advice of respected black leaders when considering the lifting of sanctions and do so in consultation with other members of the Commonwealth.

As Senator Gareth Evans noted during his recent visit to South Africa the problem of violence in the black townships is standing in the way of the reform process. He also expressed concern at the number of political prisoners still in detention.

On all counts the South African Government has still to put its money where its mouth is. It's one thing to get rid of the laws of apartheid, it's another to overcome the effects of apartheid. So far President de Klerk has gained approval overseas for his reform programme rather cheaply. It took a hunger strike on the part of political prisoners to alert the world to the fact that the South African Government had not honoured undertakings to release all political prisoners. Some were released, many more remain in detention.

Since announcing his intention to institute reform of the political system by scrapping all apartheid legislation little effort has been made to begin the process of redistributing resources in favour of the black majority in areas of housing, new schools, hospitals, clinics, day care centres and sporting facilities. It has been fourteen years since the South African Government last undertook a housing project for blacks.

---

* Bruce Haigh is on leave of absence from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to establish the South Africa/Australia Training Trust of which he is at present Executive Director

** See below, p. 45 of this issue.
Apartheid legislation was the wooden scaffolding around the concrete structure of apartheid. Without a fundamental redistribution of resources that structure will remain despite the removal of the formwork of apartheid legislation.

It is simply not good enough that concerned countries should, through aid allocations, seek to do the job of the South African Government and by so doing allow existing high levels of expenditure to be maintained on white infrastructure development and maintenance, defence and sanctions evasion. Nor should any view should the ANC be the sole or the major recipient of these overseas aid funds. For as long as they continue they should be spread across all community organizations which can be shown to have popular local support. Such a policy would help promote the development of a soundly based pluralist democracy in South Africa.

The problem of violence in the black townships around Johannesburg and in Natal, can be squarely heeded home to the South African Government. Whilst I was in South Africa recently and in the company of Rob Raschke, the ABC correspondent, we witnessed the extent to which the police appear to be backing Inkatha supporting hostel dwellers in their attacks against township residents. Two township youths were murdered by several hostel dwellers who crawled through long grass and fired a number of shots into a group of residents in full view of police. The gunmen came from a group of hostel dwellers in Nancefield, an area of Soweto, who had been gathering on a stretch of open veld throughout the day. The police were present but made no attempt to disperse the group who by the time of the shooting numbered about 200 and were armed with spears and lehalo looking pangas (a weapon which resembles an executioner's sword). The police made no attempt to disarm the group. Township residents alarmed at the build-up had come out of their homes to watch the hostel dwellers in order to be better prepared to defend their property should an attack occur. None of the township residents seemed to anticipate that the hostel dwellers might possess firearms.

After the shooting the bodies were whisked away. The police were present in large numbers. It was as if they had prior information concerning the shootings. No attempt was made to take a statement from those present at the scene of the murders and no attempt was made to search the group of hostel dwellers still gathered in a group and presumably sheltering the murderers. No attempt was made to order their dispersal, to disarm them or to search the hostel. The township residents were angry and intimidated.

By comparison, a simple case to tall car accident that I witnessed in Cape Town saw the police taking down full details as well as statements from witnesses.

The animosity between hostel dwellers and township residents goes back at least as far as the Soweto riots of 1976. At that time in order to bring pressure on the South African Government to comply with demands to reform black education and to stop the shooting and detention of black students, black student organizations and other black groups called on township residents to stay away from work. The majority of residents complied. Those who did not were intimidated into doing so. Although those who did not want to stay away were the hostel dwellers who come to Johannesburg from rural areas, mainly the Zulu tribal areas of Natal, in order to earn the wages they cannot get at home. They are there in order to support wives, children and other relatives in distant rural areas. They had then and still retain little sympathy with the dynamics of urban township politics. They received the support of the South African Government and the establishment and protection of the police in getting through hostile pickets to and from work. At that time the police saw all township residents as ANC or PAC sympathisers and they still do. The ANC has taken it upon itself to speak on behalf of township residents and whilst most would generally support the ANC and Mandela it is somewhat of a

disturbation to present township violence as a fight between Inkatha and the ANC or between Zulus and Xhosas.

However other complicating factors intervene. Chief Gunsha Buthelezi and his small Inkatha organization was given substantial South African Government assistance in 1978 at a time when all other black organizations in South Africa were banned and their leaders dead or in detention. Why wasn’t Inkatha banned or Buthelezi banned? Buthelezi professed himself against sanctions and anti-communist. (The ANC was then in support and sanctions evasion was ANC policy view should the ANC be the sole or the major recipient of these overseas aid funds. For as long as they continue they should be spread across all community organizations which can be shown to have popular local support. Such a policy would help promote the development of a soundly based pluralist democracy in South Africa.)

The South African Government (and some other western governments) portrayed him as a conservative and moderate black leader whom they could use as an ally to stay in power if the pressure for black majority rule became too much (to resist). He has been set up and his ambition used in much the same way as the white regime in Rhodesia set up and used Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Inkatha has received assistance of the South African Government including the support of the South African police. The hope was I suppose, to swing the majority of 6 million Zulus behind Buthelezi. These measures have been partially successful in Natal.

Inkatha has also established itself as a political organization in the townships around Johannesburg where a number of Zulus live, particularly in the hostels. Inkatha representatives moved into the hostels and killed, intimidated or forced out those who would not join forces in Inkatha activities, which included intimidation through violence of the local residents. The aim of Inkatha organizers seeming to be to demonstrate the weakness of the ANC and other community organizations in defending the interest of township residents and of forcing support for Inkatha through fear and intimidation.

The ANC for its part has been holding talks with the PAC and Azapo (the small and ragged offshoot of the defunct Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970’s) and believes that as the major partner in such a coalition it could win power through free and fair elections. At the moment this seems the more likely scenario. But who would police elections in such a way as to ensure that they would be carried out freely and fairly?

The ANC as I have commented before is becoming the party of the black middle class. There is as yet no party other than the South African Communist Party that can truly claim to represent the interest of black South African workers. But its base of support is small.

Inter-tribal violence is not however a feature of South Africa. There are quite major tribal groupings in the country with little recent history of violence until the emergence of Inkatha. Whilst it is true that a number of senior members of the ANC are Xhosas (a group which is linguistically close to the Zulus) outside of official South African sources of information there is little evidence that township violence is tribally based or in any way a result of Zulu/Xhosa rivalry (or of Zulu/Ndebele rivalry or of any of the other possible permutations).

Sydney
April 1991

Readers who want to follow up the Inkatha story should consult the following excellent studies of the Movement and its politics.
ABOUT BOOKS, RESEARCH MATERIALS AND RESEARCH


When Bessie Head died in 1986, African and world literature lost a distinctive voice partly because she avoided classification and any sense of writing for a specific audience. Head dealt as evocatively and sometimes as terrifyingly with feminine experience as any writer has but she resisted being described as a feminist writer. Brecht was one of the most important writers to her, particularly during the period she called his didactic Marxist phase but whilst acknowledging a debt to Brecht, she rejected political affiliation with any belief or cause. She wrote about the life and times of the area where she lived in Botswana but she always wrote for a world audience and repudiated the idea of anything smaller.

Adeola James had been looking forward to meeting Bessie Head in order to interview her for In Their Own Voices: African Women Writers Talk when she learned of Head’s death, James’ book includes meetings with Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta, Ellen-Kurwayo, Micere Mugo, Flora Nwapa (the first internationally published African woman novelist), dramatist Zulu Sofola and nine other women writers.

In Their Own Voices contains valuable information about the social and historical contexts of the writers’ work and represents a useful introduction to lesser known women writers and information which is not widely current. Tanzanian-born Penina Muhando, for instance, talks interestingly about the popular roots of drama she writes and Micere Mugo points out the important role of women in Mau Mau. I enjoyed some of the personal anecdotes and was surprised to discover, for instance, that whenever Buchi Emecheta is going to write a new chapter of a book, she commits it to God and asks his help to make responsible use of it.

The problem with the book is that for a significant part of it, James is using the interviews to promote her perception of the predicament of women writers in Africa. I do not doubt that her subjects face unique challenges as writers and women in Africa - the Introduction establishes specific feminist contexts in relation to this - but interviews are more interesting and educational if they involve enquiry rather than polemic.

Moreover, this leads In Their Own Voices to adopt a position which is insulting to the writers being interviewed and, quite simply, wrong. "Why is it," James asks repeatedly, "that we have no female writers to compare with an Achebe, an Ngugi, A soyinka?" In terms of narrative originality and quality of social criticism, we do have female writers to compare with them: Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta and Bessie Head spring to mind in Angiohphone Africa, as well as Mariama Ba, who wrote in French. This particular question turned into a dreary refrain in the course of the book and it elicited no illuminating answer because there isn’t one.
In an interview that serves as an introduction to the collection One Never Knows: An Anthology of Black South African Women Writers in Exile, the editor Lindiwe Mabuza acknowledges the black woman's "triple exploitation as a woman, a worker, and an African", though like Bessie Head Mabuza rejects being called a feminist. Many of the authors of this book left South Africa in 1976, the year of Soweto uprisings, and have involved themselves with women's issues and organizations abroad, including the African National Congress. These writers aim to maintain contact with South Africa through writing about it and producing committed fiction for a local South African audience.

The stories are protest fiction. They generate powerful feelings of anger and repulsion at the shocking personal consequences of apartheid, but they are not bitter. In terms of length and imaginative scope, they are modest, ranging from just under seven pages in length up to twenty-five pages for Mabuza's contribution, a story called 'Wake'. Wake uses a mixture of written narrative and transparent oral material to commemorate the children who died in Soweto and to promote a Marxist view of the 'struggle'. It generates real emotional impact and makes innovative use of narrative form.

Sipho Sepamla has also written exclusively about Soweto and the events of '76 in novels like A Ride on the Whirlwind and the 1977 volume of poetry The Soweto Love and, recently, a novel called A Scattered Survival, published in 1989.

A Scattered Survival turns around the life of Rie-Moleka, his son Eli, and the other family members in their house in Watville. The first chapter opens with the funeral of Rie-Moleka's wife. Rie-Moleka is a weak man, ill-equipped to give Eli guidance and support, and, forced by apartheid and social injustice to live outside the law, his son becomes a hustler and petty criminal. Moving from one job to another and working a succession of scams, Eli makes and loses money, has many love affairs including one from a white girl from Hillbrow, and is eventually caught and sent for jail for five years.

As the novel makes clear, Eli and Rie-Moleka are a paradigm for what happened as the Soweto generation grew up. In 1976, it was the children, rather than their parents, who led the rebellion, and this has led to tension and dislocation in later years. When Eli is released from jail, near the end of the novel, the tension between him and Rie-Moleka's second wife, Ma Diamanti, becomes intolerable, and the members of the older generation move out of the house. Father and son will both survive, but it is apparent that the fabric of the family and of individual feeling has been irreparably damaged.

Sepamla once said that if, from a social and political point of view, "the situation requires broken or 'murdered' English, then for God's sake one must do just that." Like the Soweto school children, township writers like Sepamla decide to reject or abandon Afrikaans and, at the same time, to subvert and modify the English language to turn it into their own medium of expression. The language used in No One Knows and A Scattered Survival is transitional, diversified and unorthodox. South African idioms in English appear alongside IsiZulu phrases, Setswana names and colloquialisms in Afrikaans, an appropriate reflection of the society they describe.

Authentic settings, realistic detail, and brisk, episodic narrative make A Scattered Survival a vigorous and eloquent statement upon the heritage of apartheid. No One Knows is a good example of popular literary culture responding to social crisis.

Emmanuel Ngar's Ideology & Form in African Poetry: Implications for Communication is another politically committed piece of writing. Its aim is to establish connections between Marxist analysis of colonial and post-colonial societies and developments in poetic form under these conditions. It is an approach which promotes broad patterns, of reaching towards the "big picture".

Part of this "big picture" involves discussing less-known and written about poetry and there are really useful chapters on Zimbabwean poets (Musarumurhunu, Chenjerai Hove, Freedom T.V.N, Nyahch Aboy) and poets in South Africa (township poets like Oswald Mthali, Sepamla and Mongane Wally Serote, and more recent Black Consciousness writers, Keorapetse Kgositsile, Christopher Van Wyk and Scarlet Whitman). Chapters on Jack Mapanje (Malawi), Kofi Anyidoho (Ghana) and Niyi Osundare (Nigeria) ensure a contemporaneity and relevance about the choice of material.

There is also a chapter on Nobel prize winner Wole Soyinka. This concentrates on Ogun Abibiyan (1976) and is not concerned with the earlier volumes, Ifanre and A Shuttle in the Crypt. The reason for omitting these earlier volumes is indicative of Ngara's methodology in Ideology & Form. If a poet employs indigenous mythology in the authentic quest to promote African identity, Ngara gives attention to the text. "Authenticity" involves meeting the criterion of being ideologically sound: in this case, this involves poetry that is written so as to be accessible to a wide local readership. If the poet has been subject to the influence of European modernism (as the early Soyinka was), Ngara sees it as work being ill-suited to the needs of an African audience and tends to dismiss it.

Though African writers unquestionably have special responsibilities to their own national audiences, like many non-African readers I see their work as comprising some of the most dynamic and exciting anywhere in the world precisely because of its eclecticism and readiness to engage in interplay of form and tradition from a great variety of sources. So I have basic reservations about the way Ngara structures his analysis. And attempting to cover more than a dozen major poets in two hundred pages whilst at the same time putting forward a detailed socio-political thesis severely limits the scope of discussion of the poetry itself. This is particularly unfortunate in view of the fact that poetry is perhaps the most demanding of the literary genres as far as analysis and exegesis are concerned.

The aesthetic and literary purist will probably have reservations about all the books reviewed but I found they contained useful new material about women's writing, modern African poetry and recent prose fiction from South Africa. I began by suggesting that Bessie Head's rejection of any specific ideology or political alignment made her imaginative vision richer and sharper and, where James' and Ngara's books fail to realise their potential, I believe it is because their ideological approaches have limited or closed down modes of intellectual scrutiny.

Dr Andrew Peak
University of Tasmania
What made Sol Plaatje so useful to posterity was that he always seemed to be there, writing materials close at hand, when major things were happening in South African history. The Man's scalp and the spot close to the ground where the black man was displaced from white-owned farms in the Orange Free State as a result of the notorious Natives' Land Act of 1913. Indeed, he had toured the area on a bicycle and had slept out with those who faced the grim options of eviction or servitude. His account of this time, *Native Life in South Africa*, is a polemic which cradles with outrage at the harsh fate meted out to so many black people whose fortunes were tied to the land.

The writing from Mafeking is by a younger Plaatje, and was evidently not meant for publication. The diary was the chance find of anthropologist John Comaroff, and allows us to view a central episode of the Anglo-Boer war, the siege of Mafeking, from a very different perspective to that given by white observers or commentators. Many black people suffered the rigours of the 217 day siege and Plaatje's account, as the Preface to the volume states, 'explodes the myth, maintained by belligerents, and long perpetuated by both historians and the popular imagination, that this was a white man's affair'.

Colonel R.S.S. Baden-Powell included in the invested area the Tsidi-Barolog town or district. This decision inevitably drew the black people of the area into both the consequences and the consequences of the war. Plaatje takes up the task to reproduce in its entirety a letter from Baden-Powell to General Smuts, the commander of the Boer forces, which in large part dealt with the so-called 'Native Question'. It shows how acutely conscious the white combatants were of the latent power of the black population:

> "Regarding your complaint as to your being attacked by Natives I beg to refer you to my letter dated 14th November, addressed to your predecessor, General Cronje. In this letter I went out of my way, as one white man to another, to warn you that the Natives are becoming extremely incensed at your stealing their cattle, and the wanton burning of their kraals; they argued that the war was only between our two nations, and that the quarrel had nothing to do with themselves, and they had remained neutral in consequence, excepting in the case of the Mafeking Barologs, who had to defend their homes in consequence of your unjustifiable invasion. Nevertheless, you thought fit to carry on cattle thefts and raids against them, and you are now beginning to feel the consequences; and, as I told you, I could not be responsible (Plaatje 1980: 51)."

Plaatje had no doubts that the 'Native Question' was the central issue in South African history, and he had no doubts as to the capacity of black people to stake their claims to a place in the developing society. Indeed, Plaatje describes the cattle-raisers in the besieged Tsidi in an heroic vein. In these episodes black men break free from the confines of the siege to best the hated Boers and bring back cattle. They have the courage, and the wit and the gumption to outclass their clocked opponents. These skirmishes could be bloody and Plaatje's detailed accounts leave no doubt: as to the practical and symbolic importance of these victories to the black besieged:

> "After this our fellows had a brief but very hot battle. The Boers ran away leaving six dead men and five horses on the field. Two horses were taken alive, with their saddles, bridles, etc; by our fellows; also two rifles and bandoliers belonging to the dead Boers (Plaatje 1990: 117)."

Plaatje, though part of a mission educated elite which believed that black advancement would come through diligence and learning, was obviously not insensible to the meaning of such black prowess. Nor, although his observations were often couched in a sort of gallows humour, was he unaware of the privations black people were forced to endure under siege conditions:

> "I heard something very extraordinary today. The administrators of martial law have authorized the municipality to levy dog tax as they want to get rid of as many dogs as possible. Some unlicensed dogs were found, destroyed and buried by the town ranger."

We learn a great deal about white insensitivity to black needs from Plaatje. Young white officers did not understand the meaning of 'kaffir beer', looking upon it as a luxury and a waste and wished to put a stop to its sale. Plaatje, in a miniature essay reminiscent of Cobbett, is quick to put them right:

> "They do not know that kaffir beer to a common Morolong is 'meat vegetables and tea' rolled into one, and they can subsist entirely on it for a long time. If ever you wish to see the sense of the word economy, observe the kaffer boy by the amount of water poured into the corn to what is yielded. If prohibited, I wonder what is to become of the bachelor, who is a fighting man and soldier and can therefore not brew it for himself..." (Plaatje 1990: 90)."

The strains of the siege told on Plaatje and his comments on imperial rule could be bitter:

> "It is difficult to describe one's feeling hearing that even now after four months Kimberley has not yet been relieved. The Imperial Government may be as good as we are told it is, but one thing certain is that it does not care a hang over the lives of its distant subjects (Plaatje 1990: 103-4)."

Clearly then, for those who are interested in the formation of attitudes and opinions among the intellectual elite of Plaatje's era, the diary is invaluable. After all, Plaatje went on to become, among other things, the first secretary of the South African Native National Congress. But Plaatje's pages need not only be turned with scholarly solemnity. He writes with wit and style. His is a mind still tuned to the countryside and the weather and, because he was often hungry, he loved to see the rain fall as a kind season meant a good harvest. It is impossible not to like Plaatje; he is gallant and a gentleman and his story makes one curse apartheid for having stifled the talents of so many like him.

**References**


John Perry

The editors of this volume use the introduction to advance some large claims:

The authors represented here reflect the coming of age of a new and vigorous strand of scholarship, drawn from the small ranks of black intellectuals, professionals and social scientists (1990: 1).

They have moved away from the ‘generational squabbles’ between ‘liberals and ‘Marxists’, indeed, are said to have ‘made a break with received intellectual traditions’ (1990: 2). Further, it is stated that in contrast to white scholars

...it should be possible for black scholars to enter the world of the subjects more freely, to draw out subjective perceptions and anecdotal evidence by deploying, for example, established social scientific methods...The ideal we are aiming for is a combination of the insight derived from closeness to the points of resistance amongst the black population with the detached judgement derived from distance (1990: 5).

The reviewer, a white anthropologist, born and brought up in South Africa, finds such statements interesting. For, of course, they contradict flatly the anthropological precept that ‘participant observation’ allows one to understand ‘other cultures’. Indeed the editors are quite adamant on this point:

We would, however, contend that there are distinctions between ‘knowing’ and ‘being’, and between ‘observing and ‘experiencing’. With the best will in the world white scholars will have to recognize that there are considerable gulfs between their own lived experiences and those of the subjects of their study - gulfs of race, language, sometimes religion, places of residence, class, life styles and cultural and social attitudes (1990: 5).

The contributors to the book cover a wide range of topics, from an analysis of the Native Affairs Department in the 1940s and 1950s, to an essay on women, labour and liberation. It is not the intention of this review to make commentary on them all. Instead, one text will be examined closely in search for this new voice in studies on South Africa.

In Class Conflict, Mine Hostels and the Reproduction of a Labour Force in the 1980s, the author, Wilmot G. James, takes us into the heart of the skirmishing between capital and labour in South Africa. He uses data from two hostels on the Rand and one in the Orange Free State. They are not named for fear of compromising informants. James, in essence, constructs an ethnography of the conflict. Through the voices of his informants we learn of a chaotophobic political arena where victories and losses are measured by who has mastery over the mundane facts of everyday life. In the enclosed world of the mines battle lines are drawn over the control of doors, the command of kitchens, or access to a toilet.

The hostels, in effect, are like islands that mirror the wider South African struggle. Consider, for example, the skirmishing to control the flow of information:

Once worker solidarity began to weaken, however, and some of the workers began to doubt the wisdom of their action, the divisive tactics of management took on a new meaning and urgency. Yesterday’s innocuous propaganda became today’s poison; again, it is common to blame an outside party or agency for declining solidarity, particularly when the behaviour of that party is in any case the cause of the protest. Thus, as the strike wore on the mine PA system became a battleground between management and the union, and access to the facility a major goal of both parties. During the second week of the strike at the West Rand mine the hostel manager reported that when he sent someone to broadcast over the PA system he was grabbed by members of the NUM. The manager sent a number of mine security to rescue the person (1990: 154).

The tactics of divide and rule, the war of words, the violence that relentlessly accompanies political action in contemporary South Africa are all there. So is the stink of fear. James describes what he calls the tactics of mass mobilization:

Firstly, if the crowd were meant to intimidate management and remind it of worker power beyond that of the bargaining table, it certainly succeeded in its aim by bringing to the fore some very powerful racial anxieties. One such anxiety was the fear of the black mob. In one episode at the West Rand mine, a group of black workers flying the NUM flag began to move from one hostel to another in an attempt to promote solidarity among striking employees and to intimidate management. Management sources always referred to the workers as a ‘mob’; ‘mob moving to block’, ‘mob moves again’, and so on. Mine security was alerted, a helicopter was brought out to circle overhead, extra security personnel was brought in from other hostels and Casualties were alerted (1990: 157).

James has written a powerful depiction of an industrial universe. His style is blunt and straightforward. There is little doubt about where his sympathies lie. He has, quite obviously, contacts who trust him and who are prepared to give him detailed reports on the balance of power on the mines. James does not debate or quibble about abstract theoretical points. His is not a style that is concerned with how many angels can fit on the head of a pin. Rather, he is interested, I think, in the deadly serious question of what part the conflict he is describing will play in the making of a better South Africa.

This quality of straightforward concern and a commitment to the coming into being of a new society is a feature of the volume. It would be a good book to use for teaching as I think students would respond to the directness of tone, and the obvious belief that the products of the academy should feed back into the debate on what form the new South Africa will take.

Whether such concerns, and such a perspective result in an absolutely distinctive voice solely in the keeping of black scholars is another matter entirely, and one which is likely to be a subject of some controversy. I most certainly would not like to be a lone white anthropologist in a black mine hostel in a time of trouble, but I would not see it as impossible to be able to make contacts and interpret insider information from such a source. The future South Africa needs people who are committed to interpreting the position of others, no matter what their skin colour. It certainly does not need a sort of apartheid of scholarship.

I am not convinced that academic ‘schools’ or ‘voices’ that are linked to pigmentation need be encouraged in South Africa. Accurate cultural translation is always difficult. The contributors to the volume, who are already part of an educated elite, may find in time that their status will distance them from the world of the disadvantaged. Then they too, like white scholars, will have to try to find ways of bridging a gulf.

Deakin University
Geelong

Peter Linh

Any work claiming to be a "major new history of the making of the black working class in South Africa" deserves close scrutiny, doubly so if the author himself was involved in some of the events. Baruch Hirson, at one time a leading figure in the Trotskyist Workers International League of South Africa, and later gazoled by the apartheid regime, has written extensively on themes ranging from rural revolt and black trade unions to the role of education in the Soweto Revolt. His *magnum opus*, if I may call it thus, is based on his 1986 doctorate: "The Making of the African Working Class on the Witwatersrand", a title rather more accurate than the current one that suggests a nation-wide coverage.

Several recent reviewers of *Yours for the Union* have taken issue with Hirson's "lack of balance" (Martin Murray, *Journal of Southern African Studies* Dec. 1990) in his approach to the role of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), an outlook that has "too much of the hostility and rancour of an activist from an opposing tendency" (Kirk, *Southern African Review of Books* Feb. 1990). Their criticism is generally valid for the reason that the dogmatic errors of this party need to be matched with its contribution and endurance, but for the purpose of this review other issues raised by Hirson will be analysed.

Advances in South African historiography, such as use of oral sources to deconstruct the "moral economy" of black workers' history and a general re-focusing onto black lives have been well integrated into Hirson's text. He concentrates on the southern Transvaal from 1930-47 and ranges across themes of domestic, factory and mine workers, the revival of their unions and the role political groups played in nourishing or retarding this growth. Simultaneously the community struggles of blacks, in bus boycotts or housing and beer protests come to life as Hirson takes us deftly through major events of the period. The working classes are thus seen in both their productive and social arenas. At times this can induce a certain confusion over the author's use of class, which he does not precisely define. Whose consciousness are we dealing with - a class, a section of a class, a nation? Ideology can fail to reveal political subject character, and politics itself can produce consciousness observed Stedman Jones in *Language of Class*

Hirson ingeniously uncovers some of the lesser known lights of the South African labour movement, such as Daniel Kosa, but there is a contradiction in his thirr for "people's history" and the fact that most of his personalities are "leaders", and male ones at that. This is partly due to the paucity of the sources: black unions left few newspapers, and oral history has only blossomed in the last decade, meaning that many ordinary black workers simply vanished from history along with the shadows. Black women are treated, and there is a useful survey of their role in boycotts and plights as domestics, but nowhere do real, living black women emerge as full personalities - and this despite the quite well known role of Lilian Ngoy (a factory workers in the Transvaal), Dora Tamaana, Josie Palmer and others. From history, the black working class, especially in the Cape, appears only fleetingly, in CPSA garb. Even in the chapters on the short-lived Domestic Servants' League is more about its male officials than women.

There are few accounts by black unionists, true, and Hirson does well to bring back to life complex personalities such as Kosa, but by restricting himself to the Rand he excludes the valuable testimony of black workers elsewhere, such as those in the African food and clothing workers (largely in the Cape, but it also spread to the Rand), the dock workers of Durban, and the interesting worker-nationalists such as Walter Sisulu, Ben Baartman (whose account of his life on the mines was not published until 1988) and Frances Baard. Scattered interviews and articles in *Figure Talk* and newspapers, and the growing body of oral history can provide a somewhat wider range of primary sources than Hirson details, but perhaps a Baruch Hirson back in his native South Africa, with full access to oral and documentary
sources would make an even more significant contribution. *Yours for the Union* is a reasonably accurate slice of life in a much neglected period of South African history, capturing the oppressive mood of black working and community life on the Rand, and re-living ideological skirmishes of the time. Too little of this genre has been written for this not to be a useful addition to the body of knowledge, although its argument does not add to the theoretical clarification of the links between nationalist and labour movements, or between spontaneity and organization. Hirson concludes his exposition on black workers that "this was not yet a revolutionary crowd" and cautions that "more militant" leaders may have produced more. Perhaps, but such questions cannot be resolved merely by reference to what leaders said. The world of the black worker is thus in a sense as remote as ever, and the great task still beckoning historians is to recreate not the history of leaders and groups (and in this sphere Hirson is unlikely to dislodge the texts of Roux and the Simons) but of ordinary workers. Neither does he explain the remarkable resilience of the ANC and CPSA, in contrast to the ephemeral fate of his own political tendency.

University of Western Australia  
Reid Library  
 Nedlands, W.A.

Recent Reference Works and Serials from Africa


Peter Limb

The launch of an African-based indexing journal is a significant event as the continent is poorly served by locally-based reference and indexing services, particularly in the social sciences, so this Index fills a gap and is welcome. The Council for the Development of Economics & Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and its Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE), based in Dakar, Senegal, states that "the purpose of this Index is to bring to light the significant volume of material published in African social journals, which does not often receive Africa-wide, let alone worldwide attention because of the obscurity of the journals..." They add a germane point that "African scholars have often remarked (bitterly) that their scholarship does not always get full credit and proper attribution by visiting scholars who obviously find and read local publications. Part of [the] poor attribution stems from the cultural hangup that sustains the view that David Livingstone discovered the Mosi-oa-Tunya. In part it stems from inaccessibility of African publications" (p. v). The Index does go down the road towards some sort of solution to these problems. It is to be hoped that its frequency can be maintained (the bane of most African serials) and that African-based scholars continue to send the editors abstracts and details of their articles (this task would be regarded as effortless by Australians, but in Africa, where lack of photocopyers and paper is chronic, this is not a simple, or inexpensive matter).

The first issue of the annual indexes journal articles in a wide range of African social science journals, with a good geographic range. The entire publication is bilingual, English and French, with abstracts of French articles naturally in French. The layout is clear and easy to use. A glance at the country-base of the 24 indexed serials shows that Zimbabwe (4), Nigeria (3) and Senegal/Algeria (2) are the best represented, with one serial each from Tanzania, Liberia, Tunisia, Congo, Morocco, Zaire, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya and Ethiopia. 10 are in French, 13 in English and one is multilingual. The subject strengths are mainly in development studies and economics, politics and sociology, with also some coverage of psychology, health, education, industrial relations, women's studies and history.

Of course the list of periodicals indexed is the crux of any evaluation of an indexing service. Although SADCC countries did not feature well, with Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia (and Namibia) not represented, and with the added omission of the African island-states and Portuguese-speaking countries, the Index does succeed in providing easy access to some of the best social science research on the continent (South Africa is another omission, but is reasonably well interfaced with Western databases). The scope of volume one is from 1985-88. There is a useful subject index and a list of indexed periodicals together with their addresses to facilitate acquisition (if readers of this newsletter undertook to either personally subscribe or recommend library purchase/exchange of just one of these serials they do not hold, it would go a long way to improving Australian access to these works).

The arrangement is a little random, rather than thematic or regional, and the editors might like to consider such changes in future issues. Each article from a journal seems to have been indexed in turn, rather than group them thematically. On the other hand the subject index (also bilingual) is quite adequate for the purpose of regional or thematic searching. There are also author and title indices. It would be useful to state the years indexed of journals covered. There are a few minor typing
errors ("the use of the Afrikander petit bourgeois to political power" - p. 62). The reader can quickly trace an article on the exploitation of Namibian uranium, and find data on "clan politics" in Uganda from Mawazo. An extremely useful tool to libraries catering for development studies, sociology and contemporary history and politics of Africa. I look forward to the next issue!

Some African Journals

It is perhaps the place to mention a few of the journals indexed in the above work:

Africa Development - Afrique et development (bilingual)/CODESRIA, B.P. 3304 Rue F angle Leon Dumas, Fann-Residence, Dakar, Senegal.
African Journal of Political Economy/African Association of Political Science / Box MP 111 Mount Pleasant Harare Zimbabwe (highly recommended, and it appears that a 1989 volume is now out).
Mawazo / Makerere University, PO Box 7062 Kampala Uganda.
Southern African Political and Economic Monthly (SAPES)/SAPEM, PO Box MP 111 Mount Pleasant Harare Zimbabwe (a lively glossy to rival the London African magazines).
Uafifi/Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, University of Dar-Es-Salam, Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania.

To these I would like to add a few others that have come my way:

Tso Tso/Harare. A new literary journal.
Mowambwe/PO Box 61884 Marshalltown Johannesburg 2170 South Africa ($20 a year, monthly; appears to replace "ANC Weekly News Briefings" which has lapsed, and "Sechaba"). Attractive and informative. Recommended.
Akal/PO Box 418 Athlone 7764 South Africa (Congress of South African Writers (Western Cape) - literary. R12 for 4 issues.
Kuziku: a journal of South African Cultural Workers (see "Mowambwe" address).
Work in Progress/PO Box 32176 Braamfontein 2017 South Africa (an old favourite, $30 for 8 issues, about social relations mainly).
Motorama Press PO Box 779 Gweru Zimbabwe $30, 12 issues (Christian sponsored, a lively forum on Zimbabwe and the region).
Africa South/PO Box 7020, 611 Fanum House, 57 Samora Machel Ave.
Harare Zimbabwe US$32 for 12 issues (another lively, glossy magazine).
Spark: a progressive arts project pub. / PO Box 59092 Kengray 2100 South Africa.


A good general, splendidly illustrated encyclopedia of Zimbabwe, this is a must for all libraries worth their salt. Well bound with maps and occasional gems of value to the Africanist researcher, (there are lengthy articles on topics such as "nationalism and liberation" and tobacco - reflecting the sponsors, Tabaws Tobacco Co. - as well as non-partisan biographies). The coverage of place names, the economy and history is pretty good. Turn to the entry on say, Jairus Jiri, the "Good Samaritan" of Zimbabwe, for a concise biography, or read about Lake McIlwaine (although the entry doesn't mention the serious algal problems of the lake). A comprehensive index makes up for a lack of cross-references. There is an interesting three-page coverage of women's rights, which agrees that whilst some reforms have been made much still remains to be done. Some entries, such as that on one, have quite extensive reading lists, others do not. This is much bigger and more detailed than the Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe (Gweru: Mambo Press 1988 - but still worth buying, and a good buy at only Z$27), and has an extensive list of contributors, including Africans. Some well known writers, such as the historian David Beach are not listed which seems a little strange, but this does not detract from the generally authoritative entries. The colour photographs are breathtaking - Mosi-oa-Tunya (Victoria Falls), Chinhoyi Caves, and, pleasingly, a whole feature on Great Zimbabwe. There are also good photos and line drawings of fauna and flora. Zimbabwe seems to have a particular ability to combine the talents of capital and liberation, and there are few other books that combine so easily contradictory social philosophies. Highly recommended.

University of Western Australia
Reid Library
 Nedlands W.A.
Over a period of years, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library has assiduously maintained and added to its collection of political ephemera emanating from most of the countries of the British Commonwealth. The various tracts, pamphlets, posters, memoranda and other documents in the archive are issued by active political groups of all persuasions. Material ranges from printed to typescript items, from press-cuttings to cyclostyled sheets.

Altair Publishing is issuing this unique and ever-growing archive on microfiche, in phases, over the next two years. The first phase of the project centres on African countries: Angola, Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Southern Cameroons, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe. Of these, South Africa has produced a particularly large quantity of political publications of an ephemeral nature and it is these that constitute the first instalment of Phase I of this microfiche series.

The documents included in this instalment are those issued by 29 political parties, 70 pressure groups and 29 trade unions in South Africa. They will be filmed, within each of these 3 categories, by specific organisation in order of library acquisition. A Guide comprising full bibliographic details of all items filmed is to be provided in booklet form to accompany the microfiches, which will be published in Autumn 1989.

Two more instalments of African material will be made available in late 1989/early 1990, the first of which will cover documents from the remaining southern and central African countries, and the second of which will cover east and west African countries.

Further phases of this microfiche series will include material from the West Indies, Bahamas and Caribbean; the Indian sub-continental; Australasia, and the Mediterranean. Printed Guides will accompany each instalment of fiches published and, as the archive expands, updates will be issued on a regular basis for each geographical area.

Phase I, Part I South Africa
Estimated 106 (16mm) fiches, plus printed Guide, price £450.00 per set.
Individual fiches available at £5.00 each.
Printed Guide when purchased separately £10.00.

Please write to the address below indicating your particular area of interest and details of the series will be sent to you as they become available.

Telephone: 0422-843214 Fax: 0422-844295

World Vision of Australia Information and Research

Information Centre
World Vision of Australia's Information Centre in Melbourne is the largest non-government resource centre in Australia specifically covering the developing world.

Its collection contains over 750 serials and more than 10,000 books together with other non-periodical items such as press clippings, videos, software, posters and kits. Emphasis is on poverty, grassroots development and aid. Issues covered in some depth include social justice, food and hunger, refugees, children and women in the developing world, health and nutrition, appropriate technology, NGO's, and urban and environmental issues. Information on 80 countries where World Vision has projects (including over 50 African countries) is also held. Recently-published resources are a particular strength. Periodicals in the collection have been analysed and listed in The Periodicals Access Network: A directory of overseas periodicals held by environmentally and socially concerned organisations and individuals in Melbourne.

An online catalogue provides ready access to the Centre's collections. To visit the Information Centre or arrange to use its study facilities, phone (03) 287 2299. A sheet describing its resources and services is available on request.

Research and writing
Country profiles and several series of topic sheets are available. Sheets are currently being produced on AIDS, child exploitation, and appropriate technology. A 29 page paper "African continent in crisis" was completed in April 1991 analysing underlying causes of the famine in Africa. Annotated bibliographies on AIDS, and third world debt were prepared in 1990.

World Vision Bookshop
World Vision has recently established a bookshop which provides mail-order and over-the-counter sales of books and videos. Resources sold include popular books on development, children's books, videos on appropriate technology and significant titles on community development. The Bookshop has recently become the Australian and New Zealand agent for Kumarian Press, a major publisher of people-centred development resources. Kumarian titles include David Korten's 'Getting to the 21st century: voluntary action and the global agenda', the award-winning 'Change in an African village' and 'Gender roles in development projects'.

Videos of the documentary 'The Valley' on a large community development programme in Omorheleko, Ethiopia, which was shown on ABC TV in April, will also be available through the Australian Film Institute and the shop soon.

Call (03) 2872297 to request books available or ask for more information.
Studies of Area Specialisation in African Studies in Australian University Libraries

Peter Limb of the University of Western Australia and G.E. Gorman of Charles Sturt University have been engaged in a joint study on the topic "Subject specialists and Area Specialization in African Studies: an Australian Future?", to be presented at the Australian National Seminar on Subject Librarianship at SACAÉ in June 1991. The purpose of their paper is to develop ideas related to the need for African subject specialists in Australian academic libraries.

They circulated a survey which asked respondents to evaluate their library service in relation to African studies. While the survey is not reproduced here, they would be very pleased to hear from any AFSAAP Newsletter readers who have views/suggestions on the question of African materials in Australian libraries.

Write to:

Peter Limb
University of Western Australian
Reid Library
NEDLANDS WA 6009

Women and World Development Series

In Spring 1991, Zed Books and the UN/NGO Group on Women and Development launched a new series - Women and World Development. It is the outcome of more than a decade of research on world development issues and their impact on women. The series will make the work of this unique forum of UN agencies and non-governmental organisations available to everyone interested in national and international questions of social and economic justice, and in the improvement of development programmes and policies.

The books suggest ways in which action can be taken to bring women's concerns more directly and effectively into the development process, and to bring about an improvement in women's status in our rapidly changing world. Each volume is fully illustrated, and contains a resource guide and a separate section which gives guidance for the book's use in workshops and seminars. They suggest schedules and discussion topics, and propose a development education and action programme.

The series will provide a valuable resource for women's groups, universities, schools, research and training institutes, government ministries and action-oriented organisations concerned with women and development issues.

Some of the titles listed are:

- Women and Literacy (Marcela Ballara)
- Women and Health (Patricia Smyke)
- Women and the World Economic Crisis (Jeanne Vickers)

Write to:

Zed Books
57 Caledonian Road
London N1 9BU,
UK

New Development Journal

Development in Practice. An Oxfam Journal, is a new journal that aims to stimulate development from the perspective of non-governmental organisations. It will offer objective assessments of Oxfam's own practical experience and that of similar agencies. It is primarily intended to reflect the original research and experience of NGO agencies in development and relief work, and will also act as a forum for the exchange of information about new resources. The editor is Brian Fratt, Research and Evaluation Department, Oxfam. The journal will be published three times a year, subscription rates 1991, Europe £30/$60, add 25% elsewhere.

Write to:

The Journal Circulation Manager
Oxfam Publications
274 Banbury Road
OXFORD OX2 7D2
UK

Research Collections on Microfiche

IDC Microform Publishers have announced the 4th cumulative catalogue of microform editions on Africa, which is available free on request.

This is the fourth cumulative catalogue of newspapers, periodicals, monographs, and archival material concerning Africa that IDC issued in microform. Since the third cumulative catalogue was published in 1977, many new titles have been added to the already impressive collection. Collections of particular interest include:

- Missionary Archives
- Human Rights
- Travel Accounts
- Social and Economic Development Plans
- Statistics

Write to:

Inter Documentation Company AG
Industriestrasse 7,
6300 Zug,
Switzerland

Africa Country Report Series

This is a series produced by Political Risk Services, which describes itself as having developed "the world's largest private-sector network of country analysts". Its series of African Country Reports offers "in-depth coverage of political and economic factors affecting business conditions", obviously directed at the business community.

Write to:

407 University Avenue
Suite 210
Syracuse, NY 13210
USA
Special Issue on Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s

The Winter 1991 issue of the Fletcher Forum of World Affairs includes a special feature on Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, Continent in Transition. Contributors to this study of Africa include Carol Lancaster, Millard W. Arnold, Gibson Kamua Kuria, Mark Gallagher, Patrick O'Meara and N. Brian Winchester, Merle L. Bowen and Tom Mshindi.

Write to:
Fletcher Forum of World Affairs
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Tufts University
Medford MA 02155
USA

News and Notes


The South Africa/Australia Training Trust.

Review of AIDAB's Special Assistance Program for South Africans and Namibians.

Centre for the Study of the South African Economy and International Finance

First International Conference on Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: Bridges across Activism and the Academy.

International Conference on Benin Studies, March 1992

New Plant Protection Law for Tanzania

NGOs prepare for UN Review of Africa Program

NGOs agree to combined appeal for Africa

Visitors
Mozambique has recently joined the list of African nations which have decided to implement a multi-party system of government with competitive elections. The Maputo Seminar represented an attempt on the part of the Commonwealth (which of course had previously expressed its commitment to supporting the country by establishing the Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique) to assist those facing the task of arranging multi-party elections to come to terms with the details of what will have to be done.

The aim of the Seminar was to bring Commonwealth "resource persons" with experience in electoral administration into contact with the officials of the Mozambican government who will be directly involved with the conduct of the elections. Around 60 Mozambicans participated, and around half came from the provinces rather than Maputo City. The lawyers involved in drafting Mozambique's electoral and related legislation were also prominent participants. The Commonwealth resource persons apart from myself were:

- Mr. Carl Dudas of the Commonwealth Secretariat, a former Director of Elections in Jamaica;
- Mr John Syson of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Co-ordinator of the Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique;
- Professor Reg Austin, Dean of Law at the University of Zimbabwe, and former Chairman of the Delimitation Commission in that country;
- Data Harun Din, Chairman of the Malaysian Election Commission;
- Mrs Barulaganye Machacha, District Commissioner and Returning Officer, Molepolole, Botswana; and
- Mr Rod Tuck, President of the United Kingdom Association of Electoral Administrators.

The team has been chosen with the aim of providing a mixture of experience from long established and more recently established functioning democracies in both developed and developing countries. In addition, Professor Austin was able to draw on his detailed knowledge of the Southern Rhodesian independence elections of 1980, while Mr Tuck and I had similar knowledge of the Namibian independence elections of 1989, since we had both served as electoral consultants to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group.

The Seminar covered the legal framework for the conduct of multi-party elections, and all phases of the election process. Detailed attention was given to delimitation of constituency boundaries, the registration of voters, advance preparations for the polling, the nomination of candidates, the role of electoral administrators in the campaign, the maintenance of law and order, the role of the media, voter education, the training of polling officials, the role of party agents, and the importance of accurate costing, particularly where heavy demands might be placed on foreign exchange.

The aim of the exercise was to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. A heavy responsibility lay on the Mozambicans to make the Seminar work by asking questions and leading discussion, and after a slow start (no doubt partly caused by the fact that simultaneous translation to and from Portuguese and English was being employed) the responsibility was met well. A high point of the Seminar was a mock election undertaken by all participants, which saw the winning candidate defeat his nearest rival (in a first-past-the-post ballot) by only one vote.

Clearly the difficulties associated with the conduct of the coming elections in Mozambique will be enormous, because the major transition being made is not really that from a single-party system to a multi-party system, but that from a restricted franchise system to a universal franchise system. There is little doubt that the elections will be the single largest logistical exercise ever undertaken in Mozambique. The Seminar held in February will certainly not have solved all the problems, but that was not its aim; it at least served to alert the government and its officials, in advance, to what the problems will be.

Michael Maley
Director
Research, Legislative Projects & FOI
Australian Electoral Commission
Canberra
The fourth edition of *The Director of Africanists in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* is now available. It contains over seventy pages listing more than 190 specialists with diverse expertise on various regions of Africa. Each individual entry includes a contact address, and information on geographical and disciplinary specialization, experience, research and publications. The latest edition also includes indices of individuals by regional and disciplinary expertise, as well as state and country of residence.

The Directory is intended as a handy reference volume for those in the media, corporate sector, trade unions, non-government agencies and other organizations seeking information and advice, as well as a guide for students and academics interested in Africa.

Available for $10.00, plus $5.00 shipping and handling - (Special to AFSAAP Members of $7.00 including p. & h.) Orders now from:

The African Studies Association of Australia,  
C/O the African Research Institute  
La Trobe University  
Bundoora, Victoria 3083

Cheques should be made payable to "The African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific"

Also available the Annual Conference Papers of the African Studies Association of Australia and the Pacific (AFSAAP), on microfiche:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>AFSAAP Conference Papers, 1 fiche</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>AFSAAP Conference Papers, 2 fiche</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>AFSAAP Conference Papers, 3 fiche</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>AFSAAP Conference Papers, 4 fiche</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>AFSAAP Conference Papers</td>
<td>(in preparation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plus $5.00 postage and handling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The South Africa/Australia Training Trust

The June 1989 AFSAAP Newsletter (Vol XI No 1) included a short note on the Commonwealth Initiative for Advanced Training for Black South Africans. At that time ACFPA was exploring the possibility of establishing a broadly based Trust, to sponsor on-the-job training for black South Africans in Australia, and commissioned a feasibility study to explore the possibilities. In August 1990 Mr Bruce Haigh who has been a diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade since 1972, served in South Africa 1976-79, was at the time the South African desk in Canberra was granted leave from the Department to establish the South Africa Australia Training Trust which forms part of the Skills Network set up by the Commonwealth members in 1989.

Writing recently about his work as Executive Director of the Trust, and his responsibility for bringing black South Africans to Australia for work experience, Mr Haigh said:

Lack of funding has severely curtailed the activities of the Australia/South Africa Training Trust although a number of Australian organizations including Qantas, Amert, TNT, Lend Lease, Telecom, Olex Cables, Dulux, the ABC and Greenpeace have all indicated that they are prepared to make training places available in their organizations.

In addition the Australian of the Year, Professor Fred Hollows has made a fellowship available for a year for a black South African doctor to study ophthalmitology under him. The Holmes a'Court Foundation has said it would consider requests and the Western Australia Research Institute for Child Health under Professor Fiona Stanley has also offered assistance. No doubt more offers would be forthcoming if other organizations were pursued. However whilst these offers are very generous they do not extend to cash which at the moment is in very short supply. Time, work placements and energy have been offered but money for airfares and living allowances is required if the scheme is to get off the ground and humanitarian objectives and long term relationships are to be forged between Australia and the new South Africa. A proposal for funding is before the Government and has been so for some time. Following the recent decision to give a further $2m to South Africa the prospect of funding for ASATT looks very bleak. AIDAB say that none of this money will go to ASATT.

There are now at least thirty black South Africans waiting to come to Australia for periods of work experience including doctors, nurses, lawyers, accountants, journalists, a black South African environmentalist and a black artist.
Review of AIDAB’s Special Assistance Program for South Africans and Namibians

The Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) carried out a review of its special assistance programme for South Africans and Namibians late last year, the report of which has now been published as Review 1991 No. 1. SAPSAN was established in 1986, with the objectives of giving substance to Australia’s condemnation of apartheid and providing a means for increasing Australian awareness and involvement, particularly through the work of Australian NGOs. It has also met humanitarian needs, and prepared South Africans and Namibians, both in exile and at home, with education and training to prepare them for the post-apartheid years. The Review concluded that SAPSAN has achieved “practical and constructive results,” but that the “significant changes within Southern Africa” offer the opportunity to adjust the purpose and operational procedures of SAPSAN. Following its independence last year, the organisation now has its own secretariat and will operate with Australia to which existing SAPSAN commitments should be transferred. The programme should be renamed the Special Assistance Program for South Africans (SAPSA) to which a new objective should be added:

“to assist in the accelerated economic and social development of black South Africans in the movement to a free and democratic society, with particular emphasis on those sectors and communities especially disadvantaged by apartheid”.

It is proposed that SAPSA should shift to a more developmentally focused programme. The major emphasis should continue to be in education and training (including training in Australia). There should be improved access to scholarships from nominees within South Africa, and the education and training programmes within South Africa should be significantly expanded. It is expected that South African organisations and Australian NGOs will play a more active role in submitting proposals for funding. Priorities will be education and training; health and rehabilitation; employment creation and job training; assistance to women; institutional development and support; program planners and management.

The review includes short reports on a cross-section of projects in South Africa and the Frontline States which are useful not only for the information about the assistance but also for the insights into South African refugee settlement life in recent years.

Centre For The Study Of The South African Economy And International Finance

The Centre for the Study of the South African Economy and International Finance was established at the London School of Economics in February 1990. This new independent research centre is an initiative of the Commonwealth, agreed by the Heads of Government at Kuala Lumpur in October 1989. The proposal was originally advanced by Senator Gareth Evans, Foreign Minister of Australia, and the Australian government has undertaken the financing of the Centre. The Canadian government has subsequently also contributed.

The purpose of the Centre is to study the South African economy with particular reference to the financial system and international capital flows. The Centre’s research is intended to expand on two earlier studies commissioned by the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on South Africa - Banking on Apartheid (prepared by an intergovernmental group led by Tony Cole) and Apartheid and International Finance by Keith Ovenden and Tony Cole - and to examine financial aspects of the post-apartheid South African economy with an emphasis on the prospects for an international effort to mobilise resources to post-apartheid South Africa.

The Centre brings together researchers with backgrounds in economics and finance. The research programme has three components. One is the role of international capital flows into and out of South Africa, including external borrowing and foreign portfolio and direct investment. The second is the balance of payments situation with particular reference to the role of exchange controls and to the implications for the macroeconomy. The third area is the financial system. While documenting and analysing the current situation - particularly the underlying structural aspects - in all three areas is the starting point for the research programme, primary emphasis is being given to the issues and prospects for the post-apartheid economy.

The Director of the Centre is Dr. Jonathan Leape, Lecturer in Economics at the London School of Economics, and editor of Business in the Shadow of Apartheid: US Firms in South Africa. Mr. Jonathan Garner is the Research Officer and Ms. Maria Ramos, Lecturer in Economics at the University of South Africa and adviser to the ANC Department of Economic Policy, is a Research Associate of the Centre. The Administrative Secretary of the Centre is Ms. Judith Pama. The Centre employs several part-time research assistants. It is also drawing on the expertise of individuals in the banking community and in research institutions inside and outside South Africa. All additional objective of the Centre is to facilitate communication among the various groups working in the areas described above.

The findings of research at the Centre are published in a series of Research papers. The first Research paper, “South Africa’s Foreign Debt and the Standstill, 1985-1990” by Jonathan Leape, begins by analysing the origins of the debt standstill in 1985. The paper goes on to analyse the provision of the three “Interim Arrangements” that have set out the provisions of the Standstill and to analyse the changes in the level and composition of South Africa’s foreign debt since 1985 (including recent refinancing experience). The second Research paper, “The Trend in Trade Credits for South Africa” by Jonathan Garner, assesses South Africa’s access to trade finance since 1985. The paper identifies a major shift in the supply of trade credits from banks to non-bank sources and, decomposing the published figure into the underlying currencies, finds that the real supply of trade credits has been essentially static since 1985. The third Research paper (forthcoming), by Maria...
Ramos, examines the forward exchange market in South Africa. The paper begins by noting that the losses sustained by the Reserve Bank as a result of its policy of subsidizing the cost of forward cover to South African importers reached an unprecedented R15 billion in 1990. The paper identifies structural aspects of the market that led to these large losses and discusses the prospects for reform.

The Centre is also circulating a series of Discussion papers written by individuals not affiliated with the Centre. The first two Discussion papers, "The Challenge of Sanctions" by Merle Lipton and "Successes and Future Prospects of Sanctions against South Africa" by Joe Hailton, offer two different perspectives on the impact of sanctions. The third Discussion paper (forthcoming), "Capital Flight and Exchange Controls in South Africa" by Brian Kahn, estimates the magnitude of capital flight from South Africa and assesses the effectiveness of exchange controls.

International Conference on Benin Studies, March 1992
Benin-City, Nigeria

The University of Benin is organizing a centenary conference on Benin Studies in March 1992, on the hundredth anniversary of the treaty which formally brought Benin under British colonial sovereignty. The conference, which is planned to last a week, will bring together local and international scholars who have worked and/or are working in the area of Benin studies. In addition, there is a proposal for an international exhibition of Benin art and various other cultural activities.

A number of scholarly addresses have been commissioned and there is a call for papers on the themes of:

- Benin Studies: The State of the Art
- Pre-Colonial Benin
- Benin and Colonialism (including the slave trade)
- Benin, its neighbours and the Edo diaspora
- Benin Archaeology, Art and Aesthetics
- Politics and Government
- The Economy and Political Economy
- Social Formations
- Law, Philosophy, Religion and World View
- Science and Technology
- Benin Linguistics and Literature
- Contemporary Benin

It is proposed to publish selected conference papers.

For additional information, contact:

Dr Eghosa E. Osaghae
Conference Secretary
International Conference on Benin Studies 1992
Department of Political Science
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria

First International Conference on Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: Bridges Across Activism and the Academy

The first international conference on Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: Bridges Across Activism and the Academy, will be held in Nigeria from July 12-22, 1992. It is proposed that papers and activities will reflect every discipline in the academy as well as the contributions of practitioners and activists outside the academy. The conference is intended as an opportunity for practitioners and activists inside and outside Africa to discuss mutual/collective interests and plan collaborative work. The organizers tell me that response so far to the conference has been enthusiastic. For further information contact:

Organizing Committee, Women in Africa and the African Diaspora, 1992
c/o Professor Obioma Nnaemeka
Department of French
The College of Wooster
Wooster, Ohio, 44691 U.S.A.
New Plant Protection Law for Tanzania

Tanzania is undertaking a major overhaul of its plant quarantine system. In the last decade Tanzania has been invaded by the cassava mealybug, the larger grain borers which attacks maize, and black Sigatoka, disease of bananas, causing serious losses in these basic food crops. The great increase in air transport and travel over recent years, and the general use of cargo containers for bulk transport, are among the factors which present new challenges to plant protection.

To assist the Government's long-term plan to strengthen plant protection, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization sent Australian legal consultant Jim Fingleton, and Patrick Dule, a New Zealand plant quarantine expert, to Tanzania in May this year, to advise the Government and draft a new plant protection law.

The proposed new law will not only control the introduction of plants by road, rail, sea and air, but it will also deal with such recent plant technology innovations as tissue culture propagation, and pest control by 'beneficial organisms' - i.e., the natural enemies of weeds and plant pests. The law will replace colonial legislation dating from the 1950s, and will be the most comprehensive reform of plant protection law in East Africa since the break-up of the East African Community in 1978.

NGOs agree to combined appeal for Africa

Fourteen Australian NGOs have agreed to launch a combined agency Appeal for Africa. It is planned to launch the Appeal in early July. Twenty-seven million people across Africa are facing severe food shortages and the participating agencies have agreed to focus assistance in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and Mozambique.

The Appeal is being organised by the International Disaster Emergencies Committee. Secretary for IDEC, Russell Rollason, commented, "We normally only conduct Appeals in the wake of major disasters or emergencies when there is considerable media interest and public knowledge of the situation. But on this occasion we are alarmed by the extent of the crisis in Africa and have decided we must generate media interest rather than wait for the media to discover the disaster in Africa."

NGOs prepare for UN Review of Africa Program

The UN Program of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAERD) has failed. The crisis facing Africa today is worse than it was in 1986, when in response to the tragedy facing millions of African people, the Program of Action was agreed to by the world community at the UN Special Session on Africa.

In September this year, the Final Review of the Program will be held in Senegal and NGOs around the world are organising to gain renewed international commitment to assist Africa.

ACFOA has joined the international campaign and has written to Senator Evans and met with senior AIDAB officials to discuss Australian preparations for the UNPAERD Review.

NGOs are calling on the UN and the international community to undertake the following measures:

- implementation of the recommendations of the African Charter for Popular Participation;
- urgent measures to cancel Africa's outstanding debt;
- economic adjustment programs for Africa to be designed in Africa;
- assistance to African countries to diversify their economies;
- an end to war and conflict.

ACFOA also hopes to send an NGO representative to the UNPAERD review meeting in Senegal.

Visitors

Cyril Ramaphose of the South African Mineworkers Union, visited Australia in March, as a guest of the government under Canberra's Senior Visitor Programme. He visited Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, attended the Major Mineworkers Union Conference in Wollongong, talked with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and other officials in the mining and union field.

Muleki George (rugby and soccer) and Kris Mackerthuij (cricket), two South African sports officials, in Rugby and Soccer and cricket, visited Australia in February, meeting and talking with government and sports officials in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra.

Mrs Phoebe Asivo, a former member of the Kenyan Parliament, and the first Goodwill Ambassador for United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) made a week-long tour of Australia-March. She addressed an invited audience at AIDAB's Canberra headquarters on International Women's Day, 8 March.

Professor Geoffrey Hutchings, Professor of English at the University of Zululand, visited the English Department at the University of Adelaide in February. He gave a paper to the departmental seminar comparing settler colonial poetry in South Africa and Australia. From Adelaide he went on to visit Canberra and Sydney. Professor Hutchings is co-author of a well-known and much used study of the South African novel.
Dr. John Ballard was a UNDP consultant in February-March on a World Bank/World Health Organisation Mission to the Government of Uganda to advise on the establishment of a National AIDS Commission. He was particularly concerned with NGOs, and community groups.

Dr. Caroline Ifeka, of the ANU, has been awarded a Rockefeller grant for research in Africa over a two year period.

Professor Donald Dengo and Mr. Ian Hancock, both ANU, have introduced a new course on Southern Africa which this past semester drew more than a hundred students. It is the first time a full course on Africa has been offered for some years. Title: The Black and White Tribes of Southern Africa: 1985 to the Present.

The National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health has recently held a series of seminars at the Health Transition Centre in Canberra on AIDS in Africa.