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The preconditions for effective and protracted insurgency do not exist in the South African scenario

In Vietnam too, the American defeat was political rather than military. The war was lost domestically with the loss of political will and support in the States itself.

Giliomee: How would you place the war on South Africa's borders in this world perspective?

Chaliand: If we systematically analyse counter-insurgency warfare we see that what counts is the determination of the state. The

Unita guerillas lay plastic explosives on the Benguela Railway at Cangonga (Angola).

state must be resolute. Secondly, the battle against the insurgents must be considered by the state as one that is vital to win. For the United States or the French it was never vital to win in Vietnam. For the South African state the war against ANC insurgency is vital. From the viewpoint of the insurgents, the guerillas must have access to sanctuaries or

bases beyond the borders. In South Africa the ANC insurgents lack outside sanctuaries. With the Nkomati agreement, the state has won a very important battle against the ANC.

Giliomee: Mozambique, Angola, Vietnam were situations where colonial powers backed down in the face of insurgency. But what about Zimbabwe? For the white Rhodesians it was vital to win.

Chaliand: The guerillas in Rhodesia could not have beaten the whites decisively. The war could have gone on for many years if Rhodesia had not been pressured by the US, Britain and — most importantly — South Africa to settle. Unlike the South Africans, the Rhodesians never established a firm and sophisticated system of control — we are talking here of South Africa's divide-and-rule system based upon the homelands, the segregated African townships which can easily be isolated by the security forces and the large numbers of informers that have infiltrated organisations hostile to the state.

Moreover, the Rhodesian guerilla movements ZAPU and ZANU had sanctuaries, particularly in Mozambique.

To sum up: in South Africa you have a resolute state, it considers the battle as vital and the insurgents lack sanctuaries. The preconditions of protracted insurgency do not exist in South Africa. Since Nkomati the ANC is compelled to organise inside South Africa. This is always much more difficult and much easier to crush.

Giliomee: If we look at the different liberation movements – how would you rate the ANC, Unita and Swapo in a universal perspective?

Chaliand: If we look at levels of organisation, the South African liberation movements are still a far cry from the great movements of the Chinese and the Vietnamese. I knew the Vietnamese guerilla leaders first hand and they were without any doubt people with extraordinary organisational abilities. None of the movements in Southern Africa are in the same league. There are a certain number of deficiencies: in organisation, in seriousness, in timing and in lack of discipline.

Against this background I would say that Unita is a movement that must be taken seriously as it is a movement that has genuine roots in Angola. They enjoy the support of the largest ethnic group in Angola, the Ovimbundu, which form about forty percent of the population. Nobody can rule without the Ovimbundu, if you really want to create a nation in Angola transcending ethnic divisions. But it is difficult to say what Unita would be without South African support. Without sanctuaries and foreign assistance, liberation movements decay.

I believe the South African state will fight in Namibia for longer than most people think. It has no interest in a Swapo government in Windhoek. I have heard many people say the war is costly but that has not prevented many

states from waging war for ten years or more.

Can South Africa win the war against Swapo conclusively? There are two vital factors to take into consideration. Firstly Swapo has a serious demographic weakness, Namibia is underpopulated. Most of the recruits from Swapo are Ovambos who altogether total only half a million people. It has limited resources. If it loses 5 000 men it is badly hit. If the South African state deals severe blows to the main body of Swapo it has to go on the defensive, to low intensity war.

Secondly, South Africa uses the method of hot pursuit into foreign territory which gives the South Africans much more freedom to manoeuvre than western colonial powers had. All in all, South Africa is not winning but nevertheless has succeeded in weakening Swapo; it is preventing Swapo from winning.

Giliomee: To come back to the ANC. Why would the ANC be so drastically affected if South Africa can make the same kind of agreement work with Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and perhaps even Angola?

Chaliand: The South Africans have devised a new technique in counter-insurgency warfare. This is the technique of using guerilla warfare against powers who give sanctuary to guerillas targeted against it. Renamo in Mozambique has no popular support inside but it does not need it. Using that kind of guerilla technique one just engages in hit-and-run operations and sabotage in order to weaken the state and to destabilise it. One forces the state to engage in perpetual mobilisation, politically and militarily. This is a lesson which the United States most probably learnt from South Africa. It is now applying it in Nicaragua.

At least South Africa is innovative somewhere . . . if one can be forgiven for some black humour. The Nkomati agreement, if it can be enforced, is a *very* serious blow to the ANC. It is not possible to overestimate its importance. The ANC faces a crisis. It has to redefine what it realistically can do now in a quite new ball game.

Giliomee: What would the main options of the ANC now be?

Chaliand: Only two options are available. The most probable is low intensity terrorism. That is not too difficult to generate. You do not need much money or many men. The second option is working within legal institutions — if the state makes any credible institutions available to blacks. This option is crucially dependent on the kind of support the ANC can get if they go for entering the government's legal structures.

Giliomee: Is there any precedent of liberation movements transforming themselves into a non-violent, legal movement?

Chaliand: (Pause) I don't recall any.

Giliomee: What does it do to a state, if it attempts to engage in successful anti-insurgency warfare? Is it possible to maintain civil liberties at home?

Chaliand: It depends on the intensity of the

struggle. In low-key guerilla war many of the civil liberties can be maintained. But no state which uses torture can condemn terrorism, especially if the target is selective, that is, not against civilians as the ANC has done most of the time. Torture also corrupts the state. When it becomes known it creates widespread feelings of guilt and uneasiness among the part of the population on which the state depends for support. In South Africa, by the way, I see little sign of guilt, except in rather small circles.

What the state tries to do is to have exceptional measures against the insurgents and to keep civil liberties for its own population.

Giliomee: Can one maintain this kind of border line in one political system? Is it not too tempting just to waive civil liberties aside?

Chaliand: The South African state has been quite successful in keeping a western democracy for whites and something quite different for blacks. But, if the threat becomes larger, states almost automatically proceed to harsher measures. To force your newspapers and television station not to report on the insurgents and not to report on the crimes committed by the security forces is already a victory for the other side. It all depends on how important democracy is for a society.

Giliomee: Looking at the other side, it has been the tendency (if one leaves out the Pretoria bomb) of the ANC to engage only in selective terrorism. Would it not be better for them to escalate terrorism in order to polarise South African society? Is the ANC policy perhaps related to a statement you make in one of your books that a revolutionary war should be convincing and meaningful by itself?

Chaliand: The ANC has chosen to exercise low intensity pressure through sabotage. It has made a strategic choice. It has not antagonised whites by killing whites indiscriminately, which I find a wise policy.

Indiscriminate violence tends to only occur when the insurgent movement is firmly established and has got a strong internal organisation and when the war is already in an advanced stage. Nothing of that exists in this country as far as the ANC is concerned. All that can be achieved by random terrorism is to escalate oppression — which will take a heavy toll from blacks. So I think the ANC has been extremely sensible and acting in its own interests not to engage in random terror.

For a guerilla organisation, at this early stage in South Africa, it makes more sense to weaken the country in its basic resources — energy, bridges, communications, industries. This also is serious business for the state. It requires mobilisation and money on the part of the state to guard all those things that can be hit. Industrial and infrastructure sabotage is very spectacular and it scares off foreign capital. It is more effective to do this than to engage in random terror which creates martyrs on one hand and victims on the other. 北北

Destabilisation, an innovative technique in counter-insurgency warfare, forces hostile states into perpetual political/military mobilisation

The ANC has two options after Nkomati: continued low-key terrorism or transformation into a non-violent, legal movement

The use of torture corrupts the state itself and creates widespread feelings of guilt among government supporters

Indiscriminate violence occurs only at an advanced stage of war when the insurgent movement is firmly established internally

GUERILLA WARFARE

THE BUSINESS OF REFORM
Strategic Planning & National Goals

By Chris Ball, Managing Director of Barclays National Bank Ltd

The principles to be learned from elementary economics about the art of managing change apply equally to commercial and political enterprises. Chris Ball draws an instructive parallel between the business response to major changes in the market place and the approach to socio-economic and political developments in South Africa. He suggests that politicians might profitably follow management guidelines and observe the critical aspects of the strategic planning process, in order to shape direction and structures to sustain the gathering momentum of change.

The private sector generates the growth needed to fund social and political developments in society

Effective communication is essential for successful organisation: to consult, inform, understand and commit

When political debate becomes intense and direct, the degree of flexibility in public opinion increases

As an integral part of the socio-economic and political process, business has not only the right, but indeed a duty to the community at large to make a positive contribution to socio-political development in South Africa. The private sector is the engine-room of the economy, generating the growth needed to fund the social and political developments in our society. The lessons of elementary economics are still fundamentally misunderstood by many in positions of power in this country. In some respects running a country is similar to running a very large business, and businessmen have a great deal to contribute in terms of strategic planning, efficiency, innovative organisational concepts and sheer drive.

When a business enters a period of major change in terms of marketplace needs and perceptions it is obliged to make significant adjustments to ensure its survival. To be truly effective the strategic planning process requires a great many inputs: a comprehensive appreciation of the needs of the marketplace; a frank and honest assessment of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses; a careful reassessment and reorganisation (if necessary) of the structures needed to make it operationally efficient. Getting the right people into the right jobs is a key part of the process.

The direction and set of overall strategic objectives of any enterprise must be clearly mapped out so that all members of the organisation understand their role in moving it in this direction. An essential ingredient that characterises successful organisations is communication: consultation, information, understanding and commitment. Managers who impose solutions automatically from above run the serious risk of lack of cooperation and therefore failure.

Strategic Planning

I make these points because I believe that South Africa is now in need of sound strategic planning to shape its direction and structures to meet the needs of the forseeable future. A momentum of change has begun to develop in South Africa, but I have a real concern that the authorities are too cautious in their approach, and are failing to achieve effective communication.

It is often held that politicians are limited by the electorate in their ability to take action. But this implies that electorates have views which are fixed, or which do not change significantly in the short term, and ignores the extent to which people in power are in a position to influence public opinion and to shift public perceptions - or stop them from shifting - in order to motivate developments they consider important.

When debate in the political arena becomes intense and comment is direct, there is often an increase in the degree of flexibility in public opinion with a potential for a material reorientation of

perceptions. Over the past few years and particularly in the past couple of months, such a movement of views in South Africa has become evident.

Closer to Change

Statements made by influential people across the political spectrum in the December/January period and the intensity in the communication of key points and issues as a result of various stimuli have shifted attitudes quite dramatically. This has been followed by the series of dramatic and encouraging statements made by the State President and members of his government. I take this process as highly encouraging and I subscribe to the view that we are now much closer to change which will bring about a new climate of equal opportunity for people of all groups in South Africa.

But, in my view, the government is still underestimating its ability to positively influence the perceptions of the community - and thereby to win continued support from its followers and new support from other quarters. Thus it avoids opportunities which arise to further shift attitudes and perceptions.

Lip Service

The nub of the problem is that while key members of the government perceive the emergence of a new way of life in South Africa, the attitudes of many of their colleagues are still rooted in the past and governed by those very perceptions that need to be changed. How often has one seen the same situation in an historically well-run company whose managers have acknowledged the need to make major adjustments to meet a changing environment, but who are so rooted in their traditional way of doing things that they lack the appreciation of how to achieve the change. How often does this not lead to short-term palliative action, failure to address the real long-term issues with courage and resolve, and a steady deterioration in the performance of the firm as a result.

Perhaps most worrying of all has been the government's strong belief in authority which has tended to become converted into a rigid authoritarianism, powerfully reinforced by its throttling control of television - a medium which should hold so much potential for airing new ideas and stimulating healthy social debate.

Straitjacket

In the context of these rigid attitudinal constraints and the resulting communications chasm between the key groups, the questions are: 'do the whites, as the group that holds the initiative, have the courage and the will

to break out of the straitjacket? What chance is there of achieving the sort of consultation and communication needed for effective national planning? And if so, what are the key realities to be considered in initiating the process?'

I believe that events and external pressures are rapidly forcing us to face up to these issues and that we are perfectly capable of tackling them with flair and resolve, and private sector initiative is needed to assist in breaking the pattern.

Distorted Perceptions

Identifying the realities of our environment which determine the limits of achievement is difficult in view of the distorted perceptions which prevail in the South African political scene. In particular, the chauvinism of the white group in South Africa has perpetuated perceptions of the black group which are a painful and wasteful distortion, and which in turn have resulted in equally distorted countervailing attitudes.

Nevertheless, from where I stand there are certain unquestionable realities:
● The complexity of the conflict management needed in the wake of the apartheid ideology
● The existence of the effective and relatively powerful South African economic machine, the only one in sub-Saharan Africa
● Black communities which are not yet economically effective in themselves without critical skills input from the white sector
● The increase in the number of unskilled people in the community at a rate which is too high for it to absorb; and black political leaders' reluctance to tackle this issue in their own interests
● Relative deprivation and the fundamental issue of how to cope with it
● The limitations of our skilled resources
● Persistent discrimination in the disguise of ethnic self-determination
● Lack of confidence in the democratic process within self-governing black groups.

A Few Suggestions

Given these realities and the distorted perceptions, how do we manage the 'deregulation' of the political process in South Africa necessary to establish channels for consultation, communication and a common development of national goals. I would like to make a few suggestions.

The government should resist the temptation to address the situation by focussing on little laws in little steps, but rather establish a clearer view of its overall direction and goals: basically, it should concentrate on the form of federal government to be developed in

The catch 22 for politicians is that they must move fast enough to maintain stability, but slow enough to retain electoral support

Like business managers responding to new conditions, the government is constrained by attitudes as to traditional ways of doing things

Most worrying of all is the tendency of government to convert a strong belief in authority into rigid authoritarianism

Rather than focussing on little laws in little steps, the government should address its overall direction and goals

BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT

Government should utilise private sector expertise by co-opting businessmen onto key decisionmaking committees

When involved in decisionmaking, the state bureaucracy goes beyond its role as service secretariat and imposes its views on the community

Not enough of the most talented people participate in the decisionmaking process, in government or the civil service

The bottom-line is, 'What form of federal democracy will be developed to protect group interests?'

South Africa. Once that has been established a great deal will hopefully fit into place and anachronistic pieces of legislation may be changed or terminated much more easily.

To start making this happen there should be urgent concentration on unblinkered mutual awareness and understanding between groups. We need contact groups around the country involving the full range of leaders to draw out and expose views. I think we would find a remarkable degree of consensus on some of the fundamentals, which would make it possible to map out a course for positive action.

Dismantling Restrictions

I am concerned that effectively the government is trying to manage a process in relative isolation. If it were to acknowledge this it could productively involve members of the private sector more directly in its decisionmaking. I would like to see the government form a small number of key committees to assist in dismantling unnecessary restrictions. However, it needs first to accept that the current communication process between it and the private sector is inadequate and far from effective. Certainly in the financial sector, the pattern of communication appears to consist of individual lobbying followed by dictated solutions from the authorities. There is little effective consultation between the government and an accountable group from the financial sector.

The state bureaucracy, which should be no more than a secretariat whose job is to keep the wheels turning, has become an authoritarian force in its own right, imposing its views on the community.

The magnitude of our problems makes it fundamental that as far as possible we have the best people involved in the decisionmaking process. We need to be sure that we are fostering and using all the best talent in the community. Not enough of our best people are either in the government or in the civil service.

There is plenty of scope for Pygmalionism and we need to get enthusiastic about the talents of all our communities and to harness them.

Authoritarianism

The government should temper its authoritarianism, which is not productive at this delicate stage. It has a tendency to overreach itself and involve the state in decisionmaking and action where its bureaucracy has no fundamental role.

The extent to which the state in South Africa sees itself as the solver of problems is one of its major failings. Cabinet

ministers have tended to make pronouncements about what is good for people in the various communities, yet in most cases the people concerned are neither voters nor supporters of the government. Why on earth should the communities accept these pronouncements or participate in giving effect to them? From their point of view they are simply statements by extraneous autocrats with whom the various communities have no real communication at all.

However, there are now real and welcome signs that this tendency is being curtailed.

The present government's length of tenure in office causes it to run the obvious risk of becoming non-accountable. It needs to debate carefully the roles of its representatives, of the state bureaucracy and of the private sector, and to revise the decisionmaking process accordingly.

Aspirational Goals

We need aspirational goals for the whole community. People need to know where they are going. Whites are much more likely to be flexible in a period of change, if they can see strategically where the change is taking them; and blacks need to know that there is the genuine prospect of real freedom and power-sharing. We need to get excited about the future.

There is no doubt in my mind that if we can achieve a breakthrough in attitudes and national direction with the support of the majority of the people, we can confidently expect our friends abroad, in their own self-interest, to support us in making a real contribution to the development process in Southern Africa and the creation of wealth in the sub-continent. What they want is to see the direction and to see real movement.

The government and the private sector are busy with a host of suggestions as to things that should be tackled. This is admirable, but we must be realistic and be aware that the most important suggestions are about the order of events.

Bottom Line

We need a clear and strong identification of our strategic direction so that real leadership can take us from where we are to where we ought to be. At the end of the day there is only one question and one bottom line: what will be the form of federal democracy which will protect the interests of the various groups who wish to live their lives in their own ways? We need to get to that point rapidly and clean the present anomalies out the system so that the federal form of government becomes the single differentiational factor in the community. ISSA

Representing South Africa's Business Community

By Dr J van Zyl,
Executive Director of the Federated Chamber of Industries

Recent joint action by South Africa's major employer associations has emphasised the need for an end to the fragmented and competitive situation which prevents the private sector in South Africa from speaking with a unified voice. Federal or confederal bodies represent business in countries such as France, Great Britain, Germany or Japan, absorbing sectoral interests. Dr van Zyl suggests that the time when South African business follows such examples may not be too far off, although sectional, regional and ethnic differences have hitherto prevented the formation of an umbrella body. He stresses the urgent need for the private sector, through the medium of a representative 'think tank', to tap the comprehensive expertise available to it and address the critical issues facing this country.

His concept of a 'project-specific' approach to issues may well become a viable method of drawing the considerable resources of the business community together to tackle urgent problems which the government seems powerless to resolve.

By any standards the organised representation of South Africa's business community is highly fragmented. At national level important bodies like the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI), ASSOCOM, the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC), the Federated Chamber of Industries (FCI), the Chamber of Mines and the Agricultural Union operate essentially side by side. In many cases there is a substantial overlap of membership among these organisations all of which individually stake claims on the financial and manpower resources of the private business sector.

In addition, the majority of businesses will also be members of several more specialised sectoral organisations. Some of these, such as the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA), the Building Industries Federation (BIFSA) and the Clearing Bankers' Association, are independent of the national employer bodies. Others again are affiliated to national employer organisations, as NAAMSA is to the FCI.

Too Many Voices

The considerable fragmentation of the voice of business causes problems both for the government and for the business community itself. Government has no clear idea as to which of these conflicting private sector voices to listen to. In the past this has allowed the government to play one sectional interest off rather easily against another, forcing the major organisations to adopt the strategem of developing informal lines of communication on a functional basis to align particular representations to the authorities. Indeed, in practice there is a substantial degree of informal cooperation among employer bodies, some of which percolates down to sectoral levels.

Nevertheless, this kind of situation is fundamentally unsatisfactory and for many years there have been attempts to align business representation more formally, following the lead of other developed countries in which bodies such as the CBI in Britain, the NCPF in France, the BDI in Germany or the Kaidendron in Japan have been formed. Such federal or confederal bodies absorb sectoral and sectional interests and are able to represent the business community as a whole. It is interesting to note that in a number of such cases the formation of a single representative body occurred as a result of pressure from government which sought to unify the voice of industry.

Identity Fears

It is clear that any merger into a unitary structure would destroy the identity of the individual organisations, jeopardising the interests of minorities. In South Africa the existence of different organisations has historically been justified by apparently separate interests: those of mining as opposed to industry, those of industry as opposed to commerce. In addition, regional or ethnic divisions have led to the independent existence of say the Cape Chamber of Industries or the AHI and, more recently, the NAFCOC.

The highly fragmented representation of South Africa's business community has allowed the government in the past to play one sectional interest off rather easily against another

For many years there have been attempts to align business representation more formally which would, however, jeopardise minority interests

To circumvent deepseated fears about identity issues, several institutions were established to pool the resources of the business community to handle specific tasks, such as black urban development

These institutions, however, in effect compete with the major national employer bodies and, furthermore, lack a broad democratic base, allowing government to acknowledge or ignore their representations

An effective private sector force must be seen to represent both larger corporations as well as smaller and more numerous business firms

Recent economic and socio-political developments have re-emphasised the urgent need to form a broader consensus on how the really critical issues facing the country should be addressed

There can be no doubt that the fear of loss of identity and all that goes with it continues to be a significant factor in organised business in South Africa, preventing some organisations from participating in any kind of move towards more formal cooperation. Hence a situation of stalemate currently prevails, since the nonparticipation of important organisations would seriously flaw the credibility of an umbrella body claiming to represent the broader interests of the South African business community.

Functional Strategy

To circumvent these difficulties, the strategy of getting corporations together on a *functional* basis to address particular problems of real significance to South African businessmen has been utilised. Thus the South Africa Foundation, the Urban Foundation and the Manpower and Management Foundation were established to pool the resources of the business community to handle specific tasks such as overseas representation, black urban development and management training respectively.

In practice, functional coordination of another kind occurs through organisations such as the Transport Consultative Committee, the Private Sector Export Advisory Committee and indeed the Economic Advisory Council, all of which are largely constituted from representatives of major employer organisations.

In the final analysis, however, all these institutions operate in competition with the major national employer bodies, simply adding to the babble of voices emanating from the private sector.

Big versus Small

Many of the large business corporations in South Africa believe, no doubt sincerely, that their sheer size entitles them to speak with particular authority to the government. Whereas in the case of specific issues this may be true, it is less certain whether the large business organisations on their own are effective in getting the government to change its broad policies. In fact most of the large corporations tend to shy away from overt criticism of government policies because of their experience that government is able to show displeasure in ways which adversely affect their interests. As a result many make their representations even on specific issues through the medium of some specialised association.

The basic problem with the organisations that do represent the private business sector is that they lack a broad democratic base, allowing the government to choose whether to acknowledge or ignore their representations. Indeed, it goes without saying that the most important prerequisite for an effective private sector voice is that it must be seen to represent both the interests of the larger corporations as well as the smaller and more numerous business firms. The widespread

public concern over the alleged concentration of economic power in the business community in South Africa makes this consideration particularly significant.

Future Umbrella

Doyen industrialist Dr Albert Wessels, in his farewell address to the Johannesburg Afrikaanse Sakekamer, proposed the establishment of a consultative umbrella body to formalise the existing ad hoc cooperation between the national employer bodies, AHI, ASSOCOM and FCI. He reasoned that this would permit these bodies to align their policies and speak with a single voice without however submerging their individual identities. Implicit in this reasoning is the fact that should such an umbrella body come into existence its representativeness alone would force the government to recognise it as a primary spokesman for the business community. In addition, other business organisations might well in due course be forced to bring themselves under this umbrella, either individually or by affiliating with one of the constituent members, or run the risk of ultimately losing their effectiveness.

While there is little doubt that in the longer term circumstances will force the business community in South Africa to form an effective umbrella body to represent its various constituencies, at present this institutional route is not a viable proposition because, as argued above, deep seated fears about identity issues are still very prevalent in important quarters.

An Urgent Need

At the same time recent economic and socio-political developments have emphasised once again that there is an urgent need to weld together the resources of the business community, to tap all other areas of expertise, and to form a high level business 'think tank' to address the really critical issues facing the country. These might include in particular:

● An integrated strategy for black urbanisation and urban development

● Safeguarding the market orientated 'business way of life' in South Africa through appropriate black constitutional reform

● Industrial policy and its implementation

● Southern African stabilisation and development

● The effective countering of international moves to isolate and apply sanctions against South Africa.

In each of these areas one or more of the major private sector organisations have developed considerable credibility and expertise. While their at least partial effectiveness in addressing these problems is undoubted, there is an urgent need to pool resources and to form a broader consensus on how issues such as these are to be tackled both by the business community and by the government.

Alternative Strategy

In the absence of a broadly supported umbrella body through which business resources could be channeled, some alternative strategy is required. The formal adoption and support of clearly important specific projects by a group of leading corporations and major organisations representative of business at large is an approach which shows some promise.

Thus a project such as 'Urbanisation Strategy' could be jointly orchestrated by say, the Urban Foundation, the Barlows Contact Group, the AHI, NAFCOC, ASSOCOM, the American Chamber of Commerce and the FCI. Another project, 'The Implementation of Agricultural Policy in South Africa' (against the background of the recent White Paper), could be adopted by a different group of participants including the South African Agricultural Union. This is to an extent a 'horses for courses' approach but with the additional consideration that private sector support for any project should be as broad as possible.

In every case the credibility of the enquiry and the final recommendations made would depend crucially on (a) the number and status of the individual bodies sponsoring it and (b) the professional quality and relevance to South African conditions of the research undertaken.

Project Orientated Cooperation

The major advantage of orchestrating organisational support around important specific projects of clear significance to the business community lies in the pragmatism of this approach, which would avoid the thorny issue of individual institutional identity and allow attention to be focussed on the real issues involved. In fact, by adopting a strategy which stresses the importance of collective participation on a coordinated basis in which no particular organisation is singled out in any way, the maintenance of institutional identity could be turned to advantage by allowing a range of specialised inputs.

Such a framework seems to imply the following essential elements:

● The choice of a respected leader in the private sector as the convenor of a particular project. This person would be chosen because of his/her unquestioned ability to lead the team addressing the problems involved, while the personal status of such a leader would give additional credibility to the project

● The appointment of a steering committee broadly representative of the interests reflected in the sponsoring bodies as well as the problem area itself. Thus there might be representations from the major national employer organisations and foundations, recognised business leaders, representatives from the labour movement and (in the case of black urban development) representation from church groups and black community leaders. The appropriate constitution of such

a steering committee would give additional legitimacy to the project, as in the case of a commission of inquiry appointed by the government

● The terms of reference would have to be clearly spelt out and agreed upon by all participants

● There would have to be an explicit commitment of both manpower and financial resources from the various organisations and corporations so that the project could operate effectively. In practice such commitment would only be sought once a particular project had been structured in appropriate detail

● Consultants and experts in the academic fraternity, chosen as and when required could also be invited to participate in the particular projects

● Built into each project should be workshop sessions with senior government officials, to ensure cross fertilisation of ideas and if possible that the outcome of the study undertaken would be broadly acceptable to the government

● When necessary adequate publicity would have to be given to the projects and in due course to the results thereof

● Public opinion as well as the government would have to be addressed, not only to propose solutions to vital national issues but, more important, to demonstrate that the business community as a whole is indeed capable of effectively focussing on critical problems in a coordinated manner.

Summary

● Both the business community and the government feel the need for some rationalisation of business sector representation in the country. At present deep seated concerns that *minority interests* might lose their identities stand in the way. While an umbrella body covering the main employer groups will doubtless emerge in the longer term, this is not presently a feasible proposition.

● In the meantime, however, there are a number of issues of vital importance to the country which the business community needs to address. The approach of project orientated coordination suggested would enable both large and small businesses represented by the major business organisations in the country to pool their resources. Appropriate publicity would be an important consideration.

● Projects would have to be formally constituted and a commitment given by the various private sector bodies involved to enable progress to be made and to lend credibility to the study.

● In this way the ability of the organised business community to work together on really important national issues would be tested, and if proven feasible, could go a long way towards formally establishing a 'Federation of South African Business' at some time in the future. IPSA

The joint orchestration of specific projects by a group of leading corporations and major organisations representative of business at large is an approach which shows some promise

The major advantage lies in the pragmatism of this approach, in that it would allow attention to be focussed on the real issues involved

The maintenance of institutional identity could be turned to advantage by allowing a range of specialised inputs

The ability of the organised business community to work together could go a long way towards the future establishment of a 'Federation of South African Business'

BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT

IN DEFENCE OF THE NOVELIST
A Refutation of Heribert Adam's
Concept of the 'Literary Fallacy'
OR
Pumpkins in the Interregnum

by Tony Morphet

In this seminal and long-overdue critique, Tony Morphet takes issue with political sociologist Heribert Adam's attack on novelist Nadine Gordimer (Indicator SA Vol I No 3), which caused some consternation in the South African literary establishment.

While Morphet acknowledges that Adam is justified in exposing the inadequacy of Gordimer's political, social and historical understanding of South Africa, he strongly disagrees with Adam's concept of 'the literary fallacy', which Adam used to question the validity of the social perceptions expressed by creative writers.

That Nadine Gordimer's analysis of South African society is skewed and partisan, he argues, is precisely its value: her analysis is the embodiment of a crisis of experience; her work speaks of a conflict of self and society that is uniquely South African.

Heribert Adam's dismissal of Gordimer and his application of social-scientific rigour 'flattens out' the meanings in Gordimer's testimony.

This non-meeting of minds between novelist and sociologist takes place on a stony corridor between the two disciplines, where little of value is likely to grow. Accordingly, the critic turns his attention to a far more fruitful encounter: Gordimer's critique of J M Coetzee's 'The Life and Times of Michael K'. From this conflict of ideas between novelist and novelist emerges a compelling contrast of metaphors for the role and position of the artist 'in the barren and broken times of the interregnum'.

Set against the anguished hope of Gordimer's vision of a creative moral future in which the artist can find a home is Coetzee's much harsher vision of the artist as a solitary refugee, eking out a meagre subsistence amid the unintelligible chaos of history, concealing the products of his labours, intent on nothing more than keeping the idea of his creative freedom alive.

Both metaphors are deeply embedded in the South African experience: both, according to Morphet, address a fundamental theme of our culture – the condition of the homeless self, face to face with the ferocities of history.

For Morphet, neither of these metaphors, these visions of the future, could be 'wrong': literature cannot be distanced from the culture it expresses; there is no 'literary fallacy'. The role of the critic is not to 'correct' the 'fallacies' present in the work of the artist or writer, but to glean from these unique and visionary perceptions some insight into 'the subterranean pressures of the geological strata beneath visible society'.

I t is a simple axiom that creative writing offers rich and varied insights into the life and times of a social milieu. Ironically, it is in fact very difficult for us as South Africans to draw directly on the resources offered by our writers. Part of the problem lies in the rigid patterns of our common thinking about social life. But another part of the problem lies in the way South African writing becomes entangled with international expectations, assumptions and patterns of perception. We tend to read our own writers and view our own society through lenses which are precision ground in London, Paris or New York. Moreover, South African writers are lured and pressured into collusion

with the shaping forces of the dominant Western attitudes.

Reality Instructor

Heribert Adam is the latest international inspector (Indicator Vol 1 No 3) to go to work on a South African writer. He riffles through Nadine Gordimer's 'conceptual baggage' with brusque efficiency and whips seven contraband 'fallacies' out of the 'confession' she gave to the international democratic left in October 1982 (published as 'Living in the Interegnum', New York Review 1983). Six of these 'fallacies' form the basic conceptual structure of her eloquent and passionate account of living in South Africa. The seventh is something bigger altogether. Adam calls it the 'literary fallacy' and he uses it to question the validity of the social views of creative writers.

Under his rather lugubrious mask Adam plays his role as reality instructor (Saul Bellow's phrase) with some style and barely concealed pleasure. He is, however, able to show in simple and direct ways that Gordimer's political, social, economic and historical understanding of South Africa is confused, skewed and partisan; and, despite some formal and rather heavy patronage, he rejects her account of a revolutionary South Africa as 'false and ineffectual in seeking alternatives in South Africa'.

Adam is, I think, right about Gordimer's social analysis. It *is* skew, and one must be grateful to him for pointing it out so clearly. But where he is quite grotesquely wrong is to dismiss Gordimer's account of living in South Africa on those grounds. What he fails to see is that the distortions of Gordimer's view are a precise part of her meaning for us, just as Picasso's two eyes on the same side of a face are part of his meaning.

Crisis of Experience

Reading as a foreign social scientist operating within a particular ideological framework, Adam flattens out the meanings of Gordimer's testimony. He fails to see the other dimension of her speech (and her fiction). At the core of her perspective is a crisis of experience. Fundamentally it is the crisis of the unaccommodated self caught in the storms of history. She speaks of a segment of the white population:
'there is a segment preoccupied, in the interregnum, neither by plans to run away from nor merely by ways to survive physically and economically in the black state that is coming. I cannot give you numbers of this segment, but in measure of some sort of faith in the possibility of structuring society humanly, in the possession of skills and intellect to devote to this end, there is something to offer the future. *How* to offer it is our preoccupation. Since skills, technical and intellectual can be bought in markets other than those of the vanquished colonial power, although they are important as a commodity ready to hand they do not constitute a claim on the future. That claim rests on something else: how to offer one's

self (emphasis original) (Gordimer, 1983).

The intensity and poignancy of the final phrase takes one to the heart of Gordimer's passion and predicament — and it is not hers alone. She speaks to and for all South Africans. The resonances of the phrase are powerful. There is a personal intimacy linked to images of lovers or marriage, as well as a moral courage and creativity implicit in the idea of 'offering' one's 'self'. Only when we see that the act of exposure is made to the turbulent and destructive pressure of African history does the full force of her intention become clear. It isn't surprising after all that Canadians and Germans fail to see this — it isn't their problem. And it is not something that lends itself to comfortable detached contemplation. Gordimer herself shies away from its full force:
'I have shunned the arrogance of interpreting my country through the private life that, as Theodor Adorno puts it "drags on only as an appendage of the social process" '.

It is, in my view, just this reluctance to face up to the cruel implications of what she in fact does do, that flaws part of Gordimer's fiction and that lures her into facile collusion with 'the international democratic left' and its literary establishment. The truth of Gordimer's art lies not in her intentions and deliberate purposes but in the *logic* of the distorted social reality she creates. Her full truth reveals itself to us behind her back as it were. We see not only the South Africa she describes but *her* as well.

A Cool Flat Eye

Art cuts into social reality in strange and unexpected ways. The images of self and the social world are two sources of a unified pattern of meanings. The logic of the pattern is formed in the crucible of the self. The writer founds his/her author-ity in the reality of the experience endured within the self. That authenticity, once grasped, empowers the imagination to lend the same degree and condition of selfhood to the lives of others in different conditions and circumstances of life. Art 'grows' social reality from within. Social science looks on with a cool flat eye.

To suspend one's disbelief in the selfhood of others, in Lionel Trilling's formulation, is of course particularly difficult in South Africa. More or less every condition of the culture militates against it and it is not surprising that in even our most distinguished writers we should find the creative capacity partially distorted and blocked.

Ferocities of History

Gordimer's work speaks, almost in spite of itself, of the agonies and anxieties of the self without a place in time and space; of confronting the ferocities of history without the protection of a home or a family. This is the hidden foundation of all of her fiction. The skewed South Africa which she constructs in her interregnum vision is created out of need and hope. Needs and hopes for a creative moral future, for a family or culture in which she can belong; for

As reality instructor, Adam identifies six socio-political and historical 'fallacies' which underlie Gordimer's literary representation of SA society

Adam fails to see that Gordimer's distortions of social reality form part of the meaning: her crisis of experience

In Art, as opposed to social science, the twin images of private self and social world form a unified pattern of meanings

Contrary to Gordimer's intentions, her expression of experience endured within the private self is the foundation of all her fiction

COETZEE/GORDIMER

'Accident at a social
function'; ink drawing,
Jeff Rankin 1983.
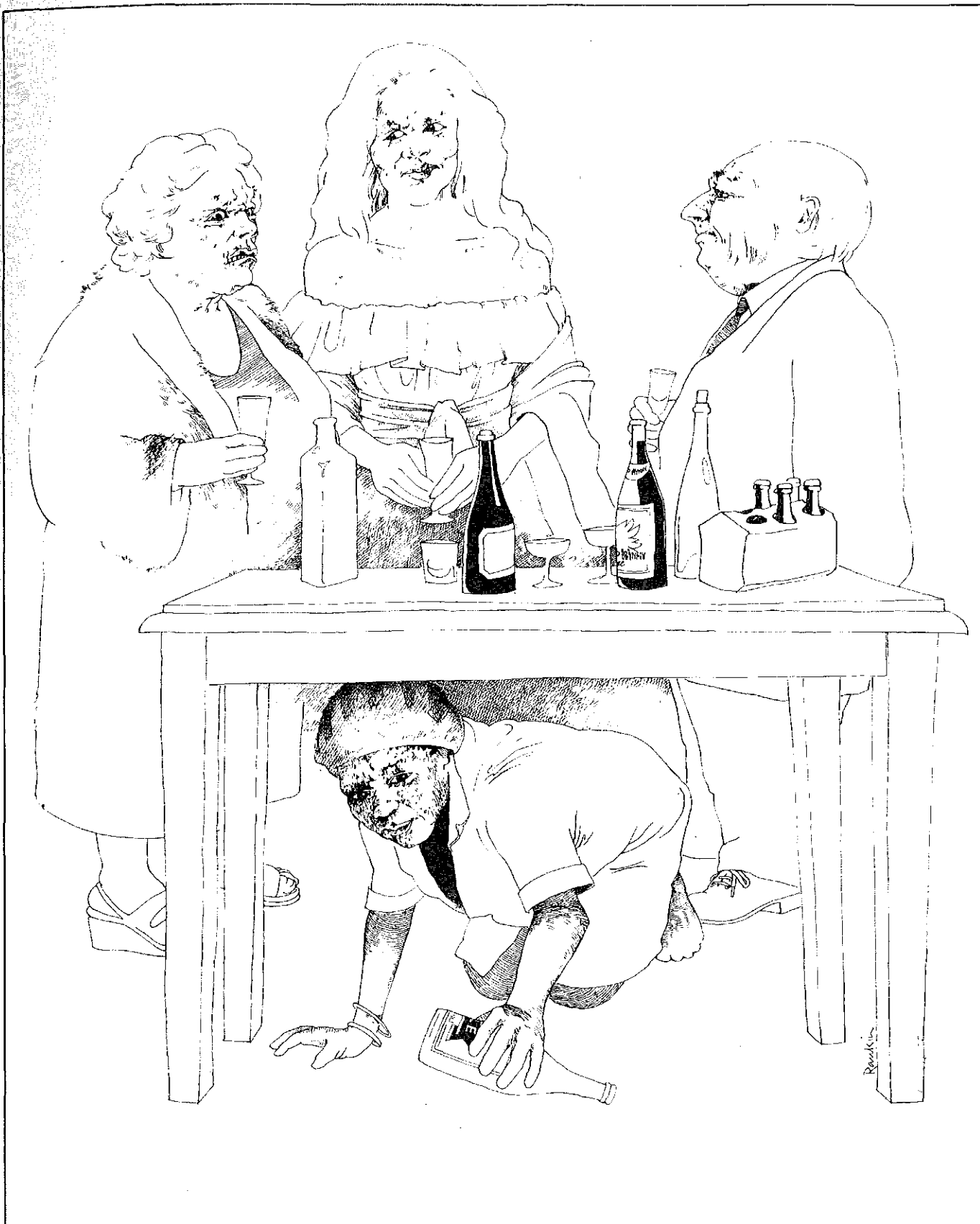Collection of Prof D N
Dyke-Wells.
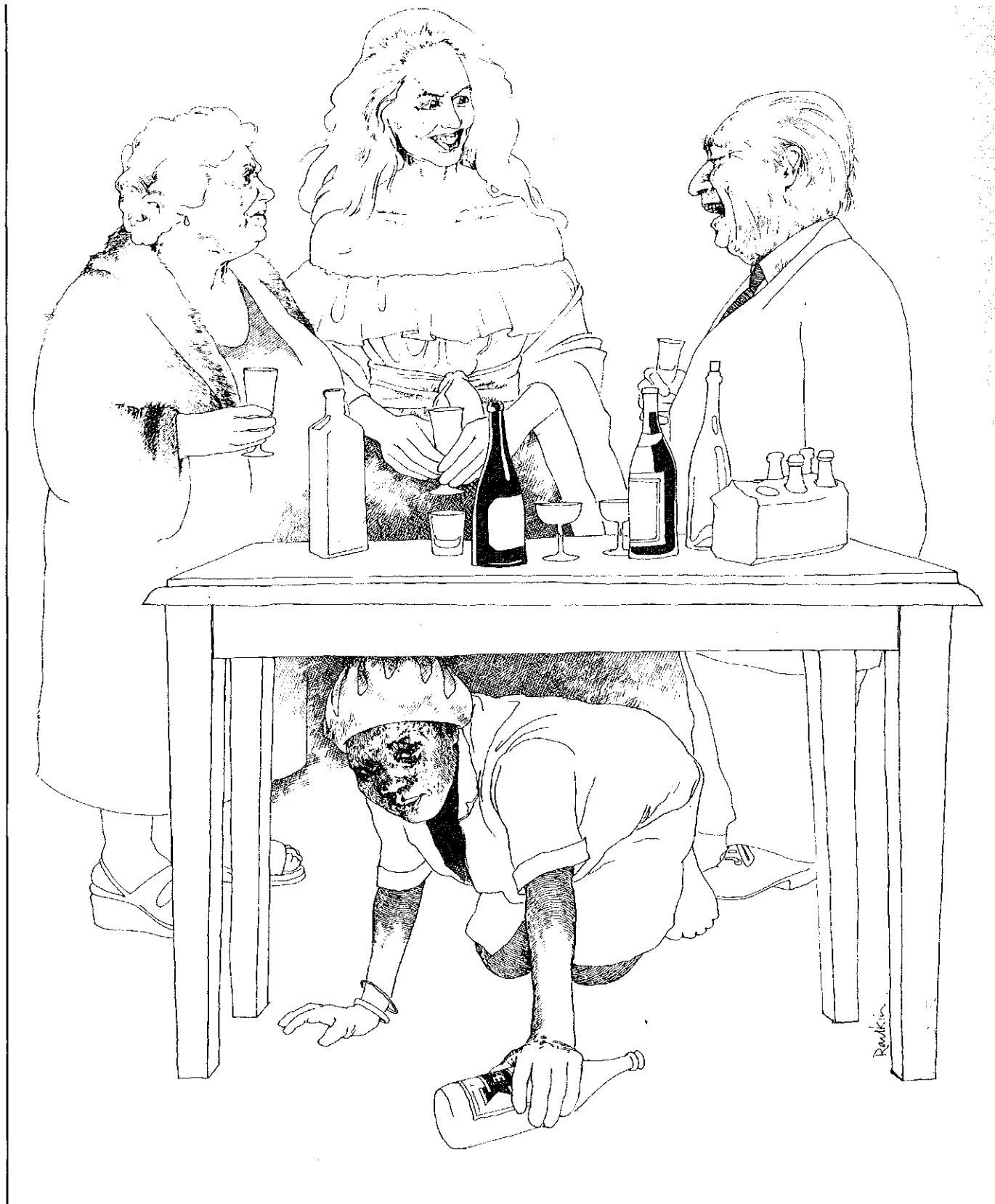
a home or social structure which will sustain
and value her as she values her own reality.
Which South African can fail to feel it?
Which foreigner can understand? Is this the
seed of revolution or of messy compromise?
Probably both.

The Idea of Gardening

A more stark, uncompromising and direct
treatment of Gordimer's (and South Africa's)
fundamental theme comes in John Coetzee's
'Life and Times of Michael K'. Michael K *is*
the homeless wandering self, caught between
the hostile camps of South African historical
forces, finding momentary refuge in the
isolated primitive 'garden' of the Karoo and
living with the miniscule hope of planting
seeds and drawing water from abandoned
windmill shafts with a bent teaspoon and
string. Coetzee retreats from Gordimer's
revolutionary hope no less than from Adam's
political power accommodation towards a
more fundamental bedrock condition:
'there must be men to stay behind and keep
gardening alive, or at least the idea of
gardening; because once that cord was

broken, the earth would grow hard and forget her children. That was why' (Coetzee, 1983).

Reviewing Coetzee's book Gordimer took issue with his vision of South Africa. Coetzee's presentation, she argues, 'denies the energy of the will to resist evil. That this superb energy exists with indefatigable and undefeatable persistence among the black people of South Africa — Michael K's people — is made evident, yes, heroically, every grinding day. It is not present in the novel'

(Gordimer, 1984).

Gordimer argues that Coetzee's novel distorts the integral relation between private and social destiny 'more than is allowed for in the subjectivity of every writer' and that the exclusion of revolutionary resistance may 'eat out the heart of the work's unity of art and life'.

Critical Encounter

This encounter between our two most significant novelists is a critical moment in

Gordimer argues that Coetzee's most recent novel distorts the integral relation between private and social destiny

Gordimer neither accepts Coetzee's exclusion of revolutionary hope nor rejects the stark logic of the survival of the self and the earth

contemporary South African culture and it is conducted with great honesty, openness and courage. Vision is tested against vision, theme against theme, art against art.

Gordimer cannot accept Coetzee's exclusion of revolutionary hope but neither can she reject the stark logic of the survival of the self and the earth. She concludes hanging on to a question mark:
'Beyond all creeds and moralities, this work of art asserts, there is only one: to keep the earth alive, and only one salvation, the

survival that comes from her. Michael K is a gardener "because that is my nature"; the nature of civilised man, versus the hunter, the nomad. Hope is a seed. That's all. That's everything. It's better to live on your knees planting something . . .?' (ibid).

Coetzee's novel can be read in many ways. It is certainly an evaluation of South African life taken at the deepest levels. It is also a metaphor for the artist in the barren and broken times of the interregnum. When men have gone to war and they live either in the
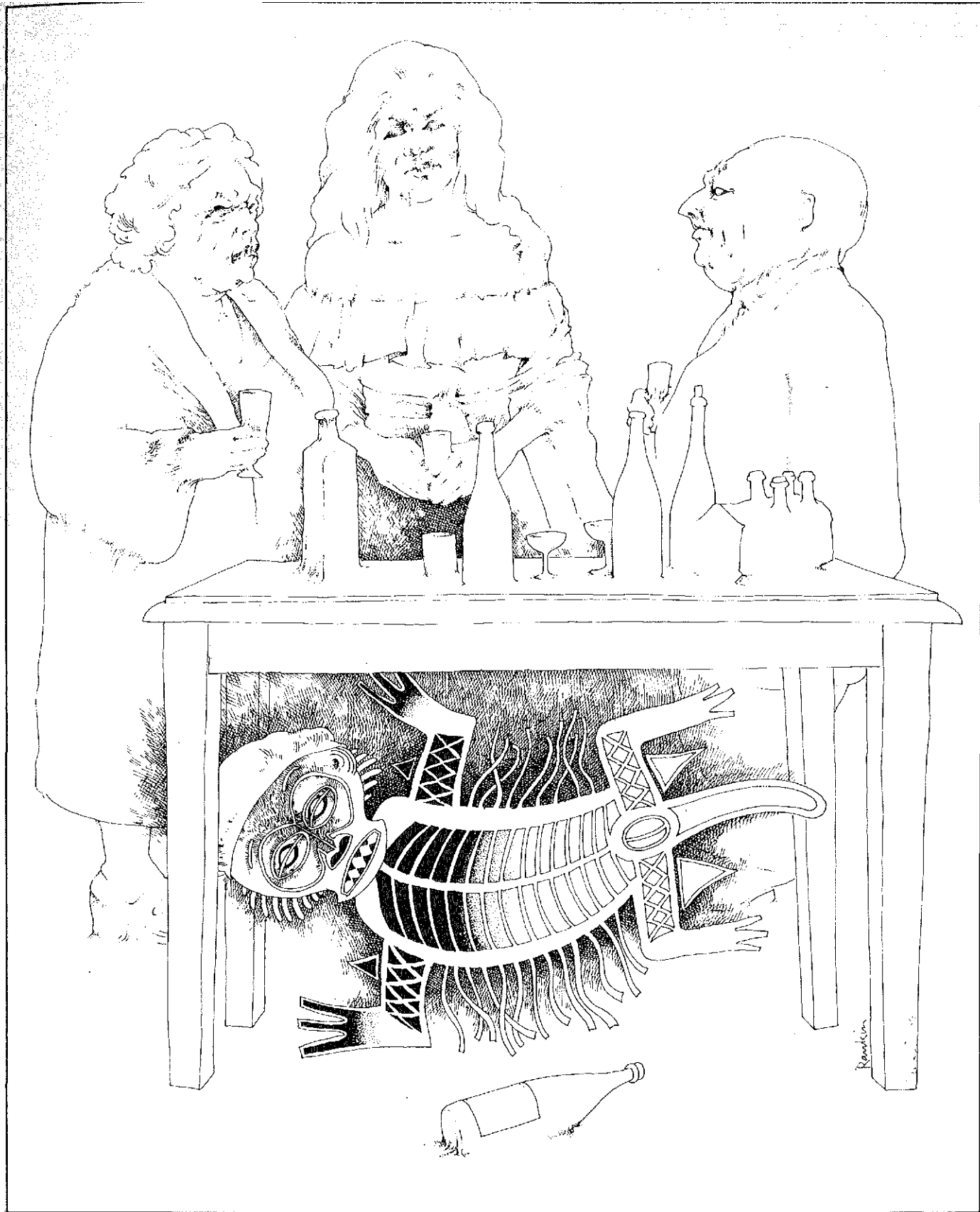
camps as the ruling power or in the mountains as guerillas, then art must turn to its own gardening, if only to keep the idea of human society alive. Thus one grows pumpkins in the Karoo. Michael K's strategy is Coetzee's own. Gordimer may be our last novelist to attempt to hold our social reality in artistic synthesis. Coetzee is the first to undertake directly our fundamental theme — the condition of the homeless self.

There is no dispute about the capacity of social science to register and interpret the phenomena of the social milieu — as a barometer reads pressure changes — but to comprehend the subterranean pressures of the geological strata beneath the visible society only the profound mining of art will suffice. The indicators are different. There is no literary fallacy. ꤈ꤗ꣸

Coetzee depicts the artist's condition of the homeless self; Gordimer integrates our social reality in artistic synthesis

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WESTERN EUROPE & SOUTH AFRICA
The Need for Consistent Foreign Policies

By Gerd Bossen,
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W hile West European nations attempt to promote and accelerate the reform process in South Africa, there is little consensus between individual governments on either the form or means of achieving change. Because official foreign policy platforms lack the important features of regional coordination and consistency, leading European governments have not achieved much success in converting their economic and political muscle into effective collective pressure to influence South Africa's domestic policies. Without unified action, the EEC (European Economic Community) inevitably suffers a loss of political influence in the international arena.

Attempts to coordinate stances on central foreign policy issues under the umbrella of the EEC have produced guidelines which are sufficiently vague to enable each government to pursue its own political goals. From the resulting mélange of foreign policy strategies, which range from boycott to constructive engagement to silence and avoidance, confusion reigns supreme as the South African government receives conflicting signals of simultaneous European rejection, encouragement and collusion.

To make matters worse, separate West European governments do not appear to implement consistent long-term foreign policies vis-a-vis South Africa. Independent government policies towards South Africa tend to evolve on a reactive and ad hoc basis, rather than developing from their own initiatives on a pro-active basis. Whenever a controversial event occurs, which is subsequently taken up by a pressure group as a political issue, these governments feel compelled to react and appease public opinion through making disapproving noises.

Conflicting Interests

The search for a consistent foreign policy is naturally constrained by the divergent nature of the domestic inputs of lobbying groups. Governments like Great Britain, France or West Germany have to juggle with a complex combination of expectations and demands from many quarters. Pressures on foreign policy formulators involve the following groups and factors:
- Trading partners from black Africa and other developing countries who reject all links with the white South
- Multi-national corporations with substantial and profitable investments in South Africa
- The domestic military-industrial complex in each country, dependent on South Africa for the supply of certain strategic minerals and for markets for goods
- Fellow western governments with trading links and investments in South Africa, intent on promoting economic stability there
- The anti-apartheid groups who mobilise public opinion around certain controversial issues

- The black voices inside South Africa, which dismiss the condemnations of European governments as ineffectual rhetoric designed to appease them.

Although the apartheid issue does not play a decisive role in any election in Western Europe, incumbent governments always have to consider the fact that part of their domestic constituency is aligned with these conflicting pressure groups.

The Credibility Gap

In a context of pervasive economic cooperation with South Africa, European governments are under increasing pressure to follow verbal criticism of apartheid policies with deeds of substance. Black people and the worldwide anti-apartheid lobby claim that for too long now they have heard strong condemnations from West European capitals, without seeing corresponding action.

From Pretoria's viewpoint, the constant stream of foreign criticism of its domestic policies is interpreted as the product of radical group pressure on host governments. The South African government is tempted to write off such condemnation as sheer rhetoric due to the expedient nature of politics.

Inconsistency and Vulnerability to Pressure

This kind of complacency and duality in foreign relations is unhealthy because it indirectly obscures the fact that apartheid in all its dimensions is unacceptable and deeply repudiated by the vast majority of West Europeans. If the constructive engagement stragagem comes to be seen as embodying critical rhetoric cancelled out by economic collusion, these governments might well be forced to abandon their reasonable stance under pressure from more radical anti-apartheid groups. In the absence of a consistent policy western governments are highly vulnerable to the specific demands of pressure groups.

West European governments should take cognisance of the fact that they can no longer afford to let their foreign policy on critical issues be determined by the changing winds of the day. And it is high time for Pretoria to accept that the deeprooted feelings on racism held by Europeans are a fact that western governments cannot ignore in the formulation of policy.

Ultimately, viable solutions acceptable to the majority can only be evolved internally through the joint efforts of all South Africans. West European governments can only promote and facilitate this process. However, this kind of assistance is dependent on the clear expression of a uniform, pragmatic and constructive long-term foreign policy. □