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# South

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# Escaping SA's economic clutches

Realism is the keynote of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference's plans for economic independence.

**T**he nine-nation Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) has set itself objectives — development through collective action as well as political freedom through relative economic independence — and has chosen a realistic method through which to try to achieve them. That it has not yet yielded any dramatic results is not seen in Southern Africa as grounds for cynicism. Ironically, the opposite has been the case.

The SADCC countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Tanzania) have implicitly recognised that polemics and economics have different currencies. And as such, the organisation attempts to give some substance to its anti-apartheid position. For, failure to achieve the SADCC's objective — that of loosening South Africa's economic grip on them — means failure for any international efforts to end apartheid. This was the position of Botswana President and SADCC Chairman Quett Masire, when he recently addressed the second SADCC heads of state and government summit in Salisbury, Zimbabwe.

While a multi-tiered institutional structure was agreed to just 15 months after the SADCC launching in Lusaka last April, the conference has avoided unwieldy bureaucracies.

Among the institutions ratified by the Salisbury summit are annual summits, a council of ministers, a technical committee of officials, a permanent secretariat and commissions for handling SADCC projects. The permanent secretariat will start operating July 1982 in Botswana, the home of the existing *ad hoc* headquarters staff. Its staff will number less than eight people at an annual cost of about US\$280,000.

So far, the SADCC can boast of only one commission, the Mozambique-based Southern African Transport and Communications Commission. At the Maputo conference in November last year, the international community pledged aid and soft loans amounting to over US\$650 million for transport — a third of what was required for the entire transport plan. So far, the bulk of the work has been on rehabilitating the existing road and rail systems, as well as telecommunications.

In other areas of economic cooperation, Zambia had completed a report on a Southern African Development Fund, which it submitted at the

May council of ministers meeting in the Swazi capital, Mbabane. However, according to an SADCC official, the report raised more questions than it answered, and as a result, the nine member states presently discussing how to set up the fund. Zimbabwe has secured loan pledges to fund a number of feasibility studies on regional food security, for which it is responsible. Botswana has made some headway on crop research and animal disease and the region will be self-sufficient in foot-and-mouth disease vaccines by the end of the year. On crop research, an international agency (International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) has suggested that it provide the SADCC with multidisciplinary teams to assist in crop research, rather than set up regional sub-stations as suggested by Botswana in Lusaka last year.

Swaziland is expected to attend the SADCC donors' conference in Malawi's capital, Blantyre, in November with firm proposals on regional manpower development. And although the main purpose of the gathering is to assess SADCC progress with donors, Swaziland hopes to come away with the necessary pledges to help fund its projects.

At the Mbabane meeting, Angola submitted a preliminary report on energy, requesting more input from its eight partners. SADCC officials are keeping silent on the contents of the report. But the SADCC energy strategy — outlined in a paper prepared by Angola for the UN Conference on Energy and Renewable Sources of Energy, held in Nairobi in August — hinges on oil conservation or substitution. The policy also involves extensive exploitation of the region's coal reserves, estimated at over 20,000 million tonnes, and increased use of large hydroelectric power schemes.

Tanzania has yet to submit full proposals on industrial development, for which it is responsible. Talks among SADCC officials on a long-term programme for identifying and implementing joint industrial development are still continuing. However, the nine have agreed to short-term action such as the exchange of information on their industrial capacity, export potential and import requirements.

To administer and implement their respective projects, Swaziland and Zimbabwe plan to establish small technical units. Commissions will come later.

Transport, the official noted, was a priority area. The benefits of transport cooperation in the region are obvious. All but three of the Nine are landlocked, and dependence on the South African transport system is considerable. Lesotho is totally dependent; Botswana is almost equally so; the bulk of Swaziland's imports come via the White Republic; and even Mozambique, with its ports, relies on South African transit traffic as an important source of foreign exchange. Furthermore, Zimbabwe's inability to move its bumper maize crop this year highlights the importance for economic development. Now there are grounds for cautious optimism.

For example, since the opening of the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique less than two years ago, 25 per cent of Zimbabwe's international trade has shifted from South African to Mozambican ports. And Mozambique reports that it can handle more. However, a Zimbabwe transportation expert reckons that it will take ten years before Mozambique will be able to handle half Zimbabwe's trade.

In addition, the Benguela rail line, which runs from the port of Lobito across central Angola, has recently reopened. But its security remains doubtful, although the Angolan government is confident that it can ensure this. It maintains that the rail line no longer appears to be a prime target of the right-wing Unita forces who are operating much farther south in the country's southeastern region, although there are still reports of occasional sabotage. The route also seems safe from the South African invaders, who are unlikely to advance that far north.

Another major proposal is the rehabilitation of the 615km rail line linking Malawi to the Mozambique port of Nacala. The transport commission, which has started searching for some of the aid for the project, will need about US\$200 million to complete the job.

On the whole, considerable economic potential exists in the region. In an area bigger than the United States and with a population of 60 million, the SADCC states have a wide range of agricultural and mineral resources, including oil, iron ore, copper, coal and vast hydroelectric power potential. But, clearly, the organisation's objective of economic independence can only be limited. South Africa's economic power in the region and the geographic



position of some SADCC members makes it so.

Lesotho, an island in a hostile apartheid sea, as well as landlocked Botswana and Swaziland, rely on South Africa for about 90 per cent of their imports. Zambia and even Malawi, which has no direct rail link with South Africa, receive about 25 per cent of their imports from South Africa. And the relatively strong Zimbabwe economy is firmly wedded to its South African counterpart as a result of the UDI years.

Added to that, about 86 per cent of Lesotho's, 50 per cent of Botswana's, 20 per cent of Swaziland's as well as about 15 per cent of Malawi's and Mozambique's wage employment is located in South Africa. Only two member states, Angola and Tanzania, are free from South Africa's economic apron strings.

Despite their economic potential, the sharp differences between the SADCC

members in terms of size, potential and level of development, economic structures and ideological leanings will hinder economic independence. This is exacerbated by a shortage of skilled manpower, administrative personnel and capital.

On the one hand, the political differences between black Africa and white South Africa, and the signs of an inevitable confrontation are a spur for the SADCC to succeed. On the other hand, South Africa seems to have the capability for seriously hampering in the medium-term any attempt by the SADCC to become organised.

And South Africa will not refrain from using its economic muscle, as Zimbabwe knows only too well. Zimbabwe's rejection of apartheid and verbal support for majority rule in South Africa has resulted in Pretoria giving notice of ending the 16-year-old preferential trade agreement and

expelling 20,000 black Zimbabweans in the Republic on contract work.

Another Pretoria counter to its neighbours' political hostility and their varying degrees of support for South African liberation movements is its military and financial backing for dissenting groups in black south African countries.

A report commissioned by the SADCC on regional cooperation notes: "Judging by conventional conceptions of what constitutes the essential ingredients of successful economic cooperation or integration, the odds do not appear favourable in southern Africa."

However, failure to give the SADCC a try would be to condemn, at least for some time, the member states to underdevelopment.

Jenny Barrell

## Reliance on South Africa

### South Africa



**Main mineral resources**  
coal 38% of all mineral production, iron ore 6.7%, manganese 3.2%, phosphates 6.4%, vanadium 6%, diamonds 4%, nickel 11.4%, tin 1.5%, uranium 1.4%, gold 0.4%

#### Main trading partners

UK 22% of all trade, Japan 11%, Federal Rep. of Germany 8%, USA 8%

#### Main foodstuffs

Imports: vegetable products 1.9% of commodity imports  
Exports: veg products 12.2%, prepared foodstuffs 13.4%  
(All figures are for 1975; Source: Africa South of the Sahara, 1978-79 Europa Publications)

#### Numbers of foreign migrant workers in S.Africa

Botswana	17,763	Swaziland	8,090
Lesotho	96,309	Zimbabwe	13,000
Malawi	13,569	Others	7,179
Mozambique	39,539	Tanzania	

Most are employed in the mining industry, all figures are approximate for 1980. Source: Optima and Euromoney

### Angola



**Main mineral resources** manganese, oil, diamonds, haematite iron ore,

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: wheat 2.3% of all imports  
Exports: coffee 20%

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports 10%  
Exports 2%

### Botswana



**Main mineral resources** asbestos, manganese, coal, copper, copper-nickel, diamonds, potash, gypsum

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: foodstuffs 17.3%

Exports: negligible

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports: 24% Exports: 80%

### Lesotho



**Main mineral resources** diamonds

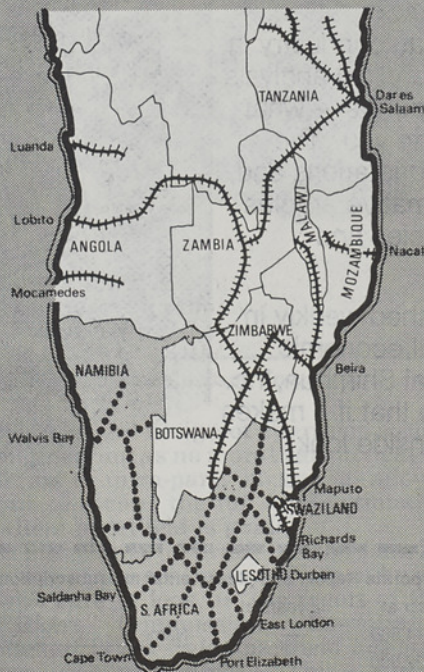
#### Foodstuffs

Imports: maize + foodstuffs 23.2%  
Exports: none

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports: 94.4%  
Exports: 89.9%

### Railways: The South African connection



— main railways  
... South African and Namibian railways

### Mozambique



**Main mineral resources** bauxite

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: wheat 8%  
Exports: cashew nuts 30%, tea 8%, sugar 5%

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports: 20%  
Exports: 6%

### Swaziland



**Main mineral resources** iron ore, asbestos, coal

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: various 8.4%  
Exports: sugar 54%

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports: 87.4%  
Exports: 21%

### Tanzania



**Main mineral resources** diamonds

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: wheat 4%, rice 6.1%, maize 7.3%  
Exports: coffee 36%, sisal 6%, others 10.8%

#### Trade tied to South Africa

none

### Zambia



**Main mineral resources** copper, lead, zinc coal, emeralds

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: various 7.8%  
Exports: maize 0.2%

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports: 7%  
Exports: 0.3%

### Zimbabwe



**Main mineral resources** coal, chrome, iron, copper, gold

#### Foodstuffs

Imports: none  
Exports: various 10%

#### Trade tied to South Africa

Imports: 23%\*  
Exports: 10%\*

Sources: IMF Trade manuals. Research by Mark Hoffman

\*Pre-UDI figures



# Apartheid: drawing the barbed wire curtain

The eviction of black squatters from Cape Town reveals a sinister new harassment by the South African government.

**W**hen agents of the Ministry of Co-operation and Development — Callousness and Destruction would be a better name — burned black families' bush-shelters on a bitter winter's day in Cape Town in early August, it wasn't only the brave squatters' homes that went up in smoke; with them went the carefully-nurtured liberal image of the minister responsible, Dr Piet Koornhof.

Tears once came to the eyes of the garrulous Koornhof as he beheld some or other example of apartheid's handiwork. But this time Nationalist headline writers had themselves a ball, pouring scorn on a couple of US congressmen who wept at the airport after inspecting apartheid's latest madness — the reign of terror unleashed on a few hundred black people with the temerity to have chosen the Mother City as the place in South Africa where they wanted to live.

The circumstances were familiar enough. Cape Town, like every other "white" city in the country, has a large population of "illegal" blacks, people whom apartheid has decreed belong not there, but in some or other "homeland", people who nevertheless move to the towns in search of work or a family life. Such people are criminals if they do not have the permission of Koornhof's ministry to be accommodated and employed in the 86 per cent of the country under white occupation.

The ejection of black people from "white" South Africa is a continuing process. It is absolutely intrinsic to apartheid and is being done with increasing desperation, as black population growth remorselessly outstrips white. The number of victims already runs into millions.

The point about the outrages against the Cape squatters is that their fate is not extraordinary. It is normal.

In the Western Cape, black people are doubly unwelcome, since it is a "coloured labour preference area", which means that "coloured" (mixed race) people must get preference over blacks in obtaining jobs. One day, men like Koornhof hope, the whites' sacred Cape will be purged of its indigenous people altogether.

It is fashionable in some quarters to explain the Nyanga outrages in terms of the huge shift to the Right in the general election in April. Dr Koornhof's onslaught against the squatters is thus viewed as mainly a tactical manoeuvre to appease the right wing in

the Nationalist Party caucus, to mollify the ultra-rightwing Nationalist Party leader Dr Andries Treurnicht.

This analysis of South African politics — common outside as well as within the country — is dangerous. It is dangerous because it is deeply misleading — sometimes (notably when it comes from the *verligte* elements) deliberately so, one suspects. For some people, however, the mistake — or trick — of seeing what is *strategic*

provide either jobs or adequate land for the people living in them, let alone anyone dumped there by Koornhof's ministry.

In theory, apartheid's solution is that blacks not needed to toil in the "white" areas will either never leave the "homelands" in the first place.

Blacks born in the cities or resident there for a long time naturally regard themselves as city people. And those who might indeed have moved in from a "homeland" comparatively recently, usually do so for one of two reasons: to join a husband and father employed there without the Koornhof-given legal right to have his family with him, or to find work for themselves, because the alternative would be to starve in an overcrowded, overgrazed, soil-eroded, poverty-stricken "homeland".

And for many Xhosa-speaking blacks in Cape Town, living under white rule would be no worse than under the Matanzima brothers in the



Young squatters in Cape Town: facing a reign of terror.

to the grand design of apartheid social engineering as no more than *tactical* in terms of intra-party bickering, allows one to escape the full implications of where apartheid is going.

The course charted for the last 20 years of the century can be seen by all who care to look, in the report of the Riekert Commission. Essentially, Riekert is old-style apartheid adapted for modern times. This means "strengthening" it to cope with the three overwhelmingly important socioeconomic crises now facing the South African government. They are: (1) the fact that the white minority, despite periodic exhortations to make more babies, is being more and more heavily outnumbered by blacks. (2) The fact that skill shortages, inflationary pressures, and balance-of-payments constraints, combine to prevent the economy from growing fast enough to stop the steady increase in black unemployment. (3) The fact that the so-called "homelands" are unable to

Transkei, since that unpleasant pair have proved excellent students of the nasty techniques of their master in Pretoria. The result is that Pretoria's dreamed-of diaspora-in-reverse can come about only by methods like burning people's shelters or cutting off their bread.

The Riekert Commission diagnosed the problem and charted the future. Step one: tightening up the pass laws to weed out the illegal people. Step two: erecting bureaucratic barricades around the towns to keep them out. With the quintupling of pass-law fines, step one is already being implemented. Koornhof is now busy with some of the messier details of implementation among some of the more obstinate of the victims. Step two may also often be more easily charted in theory than enforced in practice.

But the inexorable logic of enforcing apartheid must sooner or later dictate the erection of physical barriers.

**John Kane-Berman**



# "Postponing the millenium"

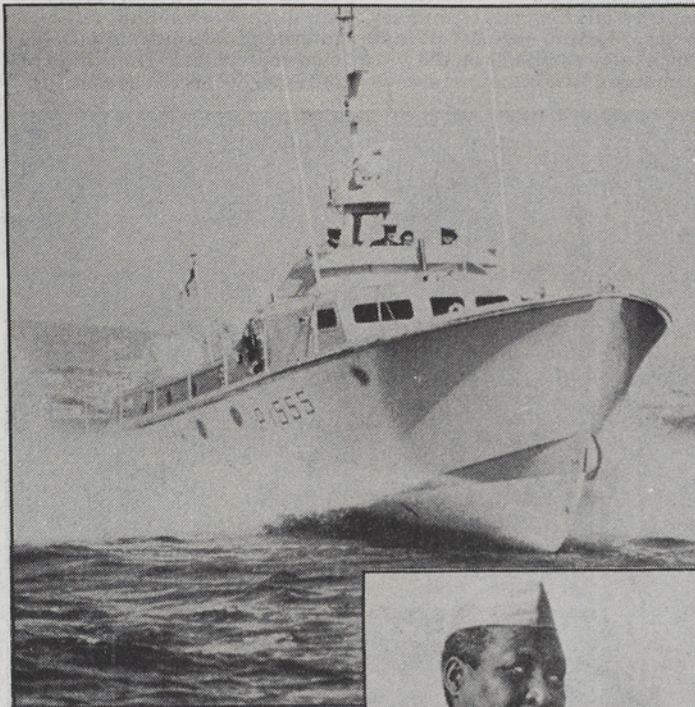
**Why South Africa will survive**  
by L H Gann and Peter Duignan  
(Croom Helm, London) £14.95,  
h/b.

**Southern Africa after  
Zimbabwe** by Alex Callinicos  
(Pluto Press, London) £2.95, p/b.

**"US** economic interests in sub-Saharan Africa is heavily concentrated in the southern third of the continent. The area contains immense deposits of many strategic minerals which are vital to industrial economies like ours, (to) western defence and high technology industries." The potential of the area "is enhanced by southern Africa's geopolitical importance along the strategic sea-routes around Africa". President Reagan's US "seeks to build a more constructive relationship with South Africa, one based on shared interests, persuasion and improved communication. We recognise that a measure of change is already under way in South Africa... it is our task to be supportive of this process so that proponents of reform and non-violent change can gain and hold the initiative."

These words were spoken by Dr Chester Crocker, US under-secretary of state for Africa, at the height of South Africa's invasion of Angola, early in September 1981. Until the events of that month, Gann and Duignan's book would have found a place along side those now dusty tomes in support of Ian Smith's Rhodesia, which gave short-lived comfort to a western minority unable to face the certainty of African majority rule. The book must now be reappraised in the light of the support given to South Africa by the Reagan administration at the United Nations. The South Africans must have counted on this support when they repeated their 1975 attack on Angola. This time they must have been assured that American support, if still covert, would not again be suddenly withdrawn.

The first half of the book describes the communities, politics and economics of South Africa, past and present. The level of error and ignorant distortion is dangerously high. A few of the many examples: "The main opposition to apartheid comes from the ranks



of businessmen;" "Die Burger, well known for its... objective reportage;" Chief Luthuli, in a 1977 survey, "received less than 1 per cent of the votes as the most popular ANC personage"; not surprisingly, as the chief had died ten years earlier. Most curiously, the Natives Land Act of 1913 has been wrongly blamed as the keystone of African dispossession since it "put an end to erosion of native land holdings". The blacks, they say, would otherwise have been "reduced to a landless proletariat, a grim prospect for white conservatives," not to mention for the landless proletariat.

The book is not written for them, however, but for those who will not be astonished when they read that the development of the "Bantu homelands", the renamed native reserves of 1913, "has also provided a career and a sense of mission to idealistic young Afrikaners, more constructive than the narrow nationalism of the old." One such developed homeland, the Transkei, has, they claim, a higher income per head than citizens of Tanzania, Zaire, Guinea or Burundi. None of these countries, of course, has the great majority of its labour force "continually absent" as migrant workers, because, unlike Transkei, they were not



Chief Luthuli in ANC uniform.

established as native reserves to provide cheap labour.

The text relies repeatedly on such comparisons, often with the world's poorest or least democratic countries. "An unskilled labourer in a modern South African town is infinitely better off materially," we are told in one of the more absurd examples, "than a hired hand on an old-time farm... a slum dweller has a better life than the (long ago) farm labourer in South Africa, and for that matter, in England, Ireland and Poland."

The second half makes claims for South Africa's importance in western strategy which must be taken seriously if only because they so closely parallel those of Alexander Haig. And therein

lies the influence which encourages South Africa's belief in its ability to survive in its present form. But influence is not enough. Gann and Duignan call on the West "to promote a policy of reform by supporting the *Verligtes* (moderates) in the National Party rather than the South African opposition, whether liberal or revolutionary". This goes beyond Crocker, where we began, only in naming the new allies in South Africa.

Gann and Duignan's comfort to those who oppose the rapid end of apartheid rule in South Africa will be reinforced by Alex Callinicos, an Oxford don, whose marxist analysis defers the day of reckoning almost indefinitely. His *Southern Africa after Zimbabwe* traces a somewhat polemical account of the Zimbabwean revolution, with the conclusion that capitalism cannot be overcome by the Mugabe government while the country remains in the grip of the transnational corporations working from their apartheid South African base.

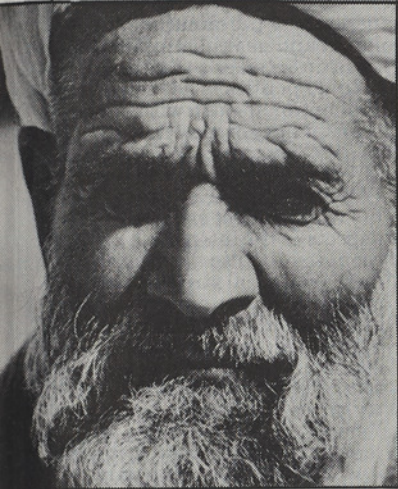
He examines the state of the revolution in South Africa and prescribes trade union action as the only remedy. The formula of the South African Communist Party and its supporters among the leadership of the ANC are not to Callinicos' liking: "First the national democratic revolution against apartheid, then the socialist revolution against capitalism." Socialist revolution alone is his "precondition of national liberation in South Africa". His account of the struggle internally is an antidote to Gann and Duignan's, since they clearly lack his grasp of the black political scene. But socialist revolution in Zimbabwe, following on political change in South Africa, is to Callinicos only a feeble hope, since "only an international revolution, based on the unity of workers in different countries against both their own rulers and multinationals could end the system so well epitomised by South Africa". Long live Zimbabwean freedom, indeed, until the coming of this millennium; and likewise long live those dedicated to ending apartheid rule in South Africa without waiting for either that millennium, or the Reagan-supported *Verligtes*, to do it for them.

Randolph Vigne



Baluch population of Pakistan, the largest of the communities which comprise the 5 million Baluch of the region spread over Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Selig Harrison has written a pioneering survey of the historical, economic and political dimensions of the Baluch issue, based on thorough first-hand research and a good deal of political common sense.

Harrison's basic argument is that the growing pressure for full independence among young educated Baluch is a



Pushtun tribesman, Samangan.

result of the failure of Pakistani and Iranian rulers to grant serious autonomy. One of his most interesting conclusions is that the Soviet Union has till now shown little interest in the Baluch cause and has favoured the maintenance of Pakistan's existing frontiers.

Robert Wirsing's is a brief summary of the historical and demographic data on the Baluch and the Pathans, accurate if outdated in its statistics. It does, however, misrepresent the Soviet role. Like Harrison, he does not give enough space to the causes of Pakistani stubbornness. Two small mistakes appear on the titles of these studies: the people are Baluch, not Baluchi — the latter refers to the language — and the Baluch would, I suspect, object to being presented as "in Afghanistan's shadow". If they are in anyone's shadow, it is surely that of the Punjab?

It is now possible to answer the two question posed at the beginning of this review. The only one of these books that provides a substantial amount, of new information is Harrison's, and this relates of necessity to issues marginal to Afghanistan. On the other hand, these works are, despite their varying political viewpoints, marked by a considerable dosage of political realism and are therefore a welcome corrective to the fantasies of the mainline press.

F. Halliday

## Writers in Society

At a meeting recently convened by him in *Nsukka*, Nigeria, Chinua Achebe, veteran novelist and critic, addressed the assembled audience of Nigerian writers on the need to form their own professional association. Apart from the necessary business of contracts and copyrights, there was reason for them to organise themselves. The presence of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, there at Achebe's invitation, gave point to his arguments.

The extracts which follow are from Achebe's address to the convention.

The other reason is more grave and fundamental: the freedom and safety of writers in society. I have no doubt that in the long run the best guarantee of this freedom and safety is an enlightened and humane public opinion. But we are nowhere near the long run; we are very much in the short one. And in that condition, enlightenment and humaneness are mere dreams for idealists. Therefore writers must seek some of their safety in their own organisation and members.

In the cosy optimism in which most of us elite Nigerians live and move and have our being, danger may seem rather far-fetched. But behind the smiling facade of the present dispensation slouches the rough beast of fanaticism — religious fanaticism, ethnic fanaticism and political fanaticism. Let me illustrate briefly with what I have read and seen in the last two weeks alone.

A columnist in one of our leading national dailies wrote approvingly of Iran as the one country in the Third World which has successfully checked the onslaught of both East and West with the effective weapon of religion. This was about two weeks ago. This week we have all read and heard that among the strange things happening in Iran was the execution of a poet, Said Soltanpur, for crimes of "earthly corruption" and "war on God".

It is hardly necessary to say more on the matter. Writers are natural sceptics and there is no way they can be safe in an atmosphere of religious fanaticism. I used to wonder why Bertrand Russell held that one of the greatest evils introduced into the world by religion was the notion of righteousness which, incidentally, the Jews must take the credit for inventing. But looking at the

contemporary world and contemporary Nigeria infested with all kinds of dangerous lunatics who believe in their own righteous justification to commit any crime in the name of God, we must understand what Bertrand Russell was talking about.

And now to political fanaticism. Do we need prophetic insight to see the deadly portents? And again the real source of worry is not the existence of fanaticism but the absence of any genuine force of public sentiment to check its manifestation and prevent a consolidation of incipient fascism.

The other day a state governor said to an airport



Achebe: "Grave and fundamental reasons" for a Nigerian writers association.

press conference: "Damn it, I am the government!" And he received an ovation and laughter instead of shocked silence. Louis XIV of France said precisely the same thing more than 300 years ago. He not only ruined France, but two reigns later his descendant paid for it with his head in a revolution that unleashed a horrendous blood-bath in that country.

Perhaps an airport press conference is not the ideal place to gauge the enlightenment and political sophistication of a country. Perhaps things are better in the sober, intellectual atmosphere of academe. If you think so, I have bad news for you. About the same time another chief executive told an audience at this university: "Politics is power, and nobody gives up power peacefully." He was applauded. By academics! In a seat of enlightenment!

My concern here is not what politicians say or do, but the absence of a countervailing tradition of enlightened criticism and dissent. I am not talking about our accustomed factional and inter-party squabbles that are largely devoid of objective ideas and principle. I am saying that in this situation a writer who must be free, whose second nature is to dance to a "different drummer" and *not* march like a Boy Scout, such a person has no choice really but to run great risks. And we had better know it and prepare for it.

## Writers and politics

**Writers and Politics in Nigeria** by James Booth  
(Hodder and Stoughton, London)  
£6.95 h/b, £3.95 p/b.

**Writers in Politics** by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Heinemann Educational Books, London)  
£2.95 p/b.

Two books published within three months — one dealing with writers and politics in Nigeria and the other with Kenya, home of Ngugi wa Thiong'o — may seem like a happy coincidence and in some respects these two books do complement each other very satisfactorily.

The choice of conjunction or preposition in these titles is significant. James Booth, for all his years as visiting lecturer at the University of Ife, writes as an outsider. Whether he and other so-called colonialist critics have anything useful to say

about African literature is a subject that has been hotly debated by African writers like Chinua Achebe and the younger, more radical Nigerians, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Thechukwu Madubuike, in their recent book *Toward the Decolonisation of African Literature*. For Ngugi, this particular form of "cultural imperialism" can be as dangerous as any other.

This particular "colonialist critic" does, however, write well, and Booth's account of the complex Nigeria political state of affairs in *Writers and Politics in Nigeria* is clear. His application of Frantz Fanon's famous "three phases of colonial literature" — the phase of "unqualified assimilation", "undivided consciousness" and the "fighting phase" in which the native writer "turns himself into an awakener of the people" — to Nigerian literature over the last 20 years is illuminating. His analysis of the work of Wole



Soyinka is particularly interesting, showing a depth of sensitivity and understanding too often lacking in studies of African literature. Yet this remains a limited book: there is an overwhelming emphasis on the "classics" of Nigerian literature; no detailed attempt to discuss the literary reponse to the greatest political trauma of all, the Nigerian civil war, and no reference at all to any book more recent than Soyinka's long poem *Ogun Abibiman* published in 1976. There is certainly no attempt to come to terms with recent writers like Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike. Nevertheless, until these writers produce their own study of the relationship between literature and politics in Nigeria, this book will fill a useful gap.

One of the useful calls made in *Toward the Decolonisation of African Literature* was for the replacing of traditional English departments in Nigerian universities with three departments headed by a department of "African languages, oratures and literatures". This echoes Ngugi wa Thiong'o's plea in *Writers in Politics* that "the literature of the African peoples should come first" at both university and school level. And a literature that is increasingly written in the "national" languages of those people. As he declared in



Ngugi: suffered for marxism.

his 1979 speech: "Kenyan writers should remember that no foreigners can ever develop our languages, our literatures, our theatre for us: that we in turn cannot develop our cultures and literatures through borrowed tongues and imitations."

It is a challenge which Ngugi himself has faced in his most recent work. Although he made his reputation as a writer with novels written in English, it was his Gikuyu play *Ngaahika Ndeena*, performed by the peasants and workers of Kamiriithu in his home area of Limuru, which was almost certainly responsible for his

year long detention in Kamiti maximum security prison in 1977, described so movingly in *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* published simultaneously with *Writers in Politics*. The novel which Ngugi wrote in prison was also in Gikuyu — the version shortly to be published under the title *Devil on the Cross* will be a translation.

Ngugi's views on literature have come a long way since his earlier book of essays *Homecoming* in 1972. That collection dealt with African and Caribbean literature, culture and politics; the present collection opens with a series of essays on "Literature, Education: The Struggle for a

Patriotic National Culture" and then concentrates on resistance writing in East Africa, South Korea and Afro-American literature. The analysis is consistently marxist, and read alongside *Detained* the marxist rhetoric seems repetitious. Yet one should never forget that these are views for which Ngugi has been prepared to suffer, and still suffers (he has still not been reinstated as associate professor in the department of literature at the University of Nairobi), and that they are views which have developed directly out of his experience of the situation in colonial and neo-colonial Kenya. This is no outsider's view and for Ngugi politics is not some sort of optional extra with which the writer may or may not choose to deal:

"Here a writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society. What he can choose is one or the other side in the battle field: the side of the people, or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics?"

Jane W. Grant

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# Military solutions

**Portrait of an Exile** by Andrew Graham-Yooll (*Junction Books, London*) £9.95, h/b; £3.95, p/b.

**Prisoner Without a Name. Cell Without a Number** by Jacobo Timerman (*Weidenfeld Nicolson, London*) £7.95, p/b.

One of the greatest fears of the Argentine military is what has come to be known as "another Nuremberg" — the calling to accounts for the thousands of deaths, "disappearances" and tortures which hallmarked their return to power in the second half of the 70s. They have made the absence of any such accounting the unwritten cornerstone of any formula for the return to elected rule in Argentina.

The soldiers' attempts at justification are simple enough. The country, they say, faced a grave threat from left-wing guerrilla movements; an extraordinary new form of warfare that demanded the adoption of exceptional counter-strategies and tactics. It was a "dirty war" and they admit that some excesses did take place in its course. Protests against violations of human rights, they complained, ignored both the special nature of this war and overlooked the fact that the guerrillas themselves had violated human rights.

The facts, however, hardly fit the simplicity of this explanation. Even from the distasteful angle of the statistics of death, for each casualty officially attributed to "subversives", there were at least ten, and perhaps even 20, attributable to the security forces. And most of these casualties were not the result of open armed clashes or of applying the draconian legislation introduced by the military. Suppression of "subversion" was clandestine and brutal; unacknowledged kidnappings took the place of formal arrests; systematic torture replaced legally accepted interrogation procedures; death was meted out secretly instead of by firing squad.

Nor were all, or even the majority of the victims members of the two guerrilla organisations, Montoneros and ERP. The "enemy" was defined with great latitude, embracing people allegedly belonging to guerrilla "front" organisations and the enormous and loose

category of "ideological subversives". Very frequently, the families and relatives of those so identified were also assimilated into these categories.

Much of the horror of these years has reached the outside world through the cold, factual reports of Amnesty International and other human rights organisations. Now these two books flush out the broader facts and bring them to life through highly personal accounts. Both authors are journalists and important actors in the recent Argentine drama. Andrew Graham-Yooll was the political editor of the English-language *Buenos Aires Herald*, the daily newspaper that to this day has unremittingly reported and criticised abuses by the security forces. Jacobo Timerman, perhaps the Argentine's most innovative journalistic entrepreneur, was the editor-in-chief of *La Opinion*.

Graham-Yooll went into exile after threats on his life and constant harassment became intolerable. Timerman was imprisoned, tortured and subjected to a campaign of character assassination. Though in the end no charges were brought against him, his newspaper was confiscated and he was stripped of his citizenship and expelled from the Argentine.

"The government of the armed forces eliminated thousands of individuals in Argentina who had no relation with subversion, but who (according to the military) formed part of, or represented, that world which they found intolerable and incomprehensible, and who hence constituted the enemy".

**Jacobo Timerman**

Graham-Yooll is a vocational witness; his many painstakingly compiled chronologies (the bulk of which still remain unpublished) are an invaluable record of events in the Argentine since 1955. *Portrait of an Exile* is perhaps his most brilliant book: a dissection of the fear and the compulsions dominating those who live through the terror and forced themselves to resist the pervasive temptation of seeing nothing, hearing nothing and saying nothing for the sake of survival. Its very wryness is a remnant of the protective mechanisms adopted to ward off the fear and somehow dull the impact of the horror.

Timerman's *Prisoner* is larger in the dramatic sense. Its unique contribution is the penetrating portrayal of the ideology and psychology of the Argentine's

"dirty warriors". Rather than the classical counter-insurgency formula of winning "hearts and minds", he shows up a strategy of utter annihilation of the enemy, the "Final Solution" whose savagery was glorified by the myth of a Third World War already under way, with the Argentine as its first battlefield. Timerman's experience of imprisonment and torture was aggravated by the fact that, as a Jew, he suffered the full impact of the anti-Semitism that was one of the many ugly faces of this repressive crusade.

Both are very private books. Graham-Yooll eschews political analysis to concentrate on the impact on the individual (mainly himself); Timerman provides some valuable insights into the broader picture, but concentrates on how his ordeal strengthened his Jewishness. These are not shortcomings; inasmuch as they are faithful to their respective particularities they help to reveal the wider picture.

There are, however, two

"The men in the car were watching me . . . The man at the wheel called out something about my beard and added a remark that ended in an oath. I began to turn my head, slowly, stiffly. The car drove away. It was not me they wanted this time".

**Andrew Graham-Yooll**

important omissions. Graham-Yooll fails to mention that his newspaper, so brave on the human rights issues, was one of the staunchest defenders of the economic policies which could only be implemented through wholesale violation of human rights. Timerman does not speak of his own important role, in the mid-60s, in building up the ethos of military intervention in politics, the embryo of the "national security" ideology which would later claim him, and many thousands more, as victims.

**Eduardo Crawley**

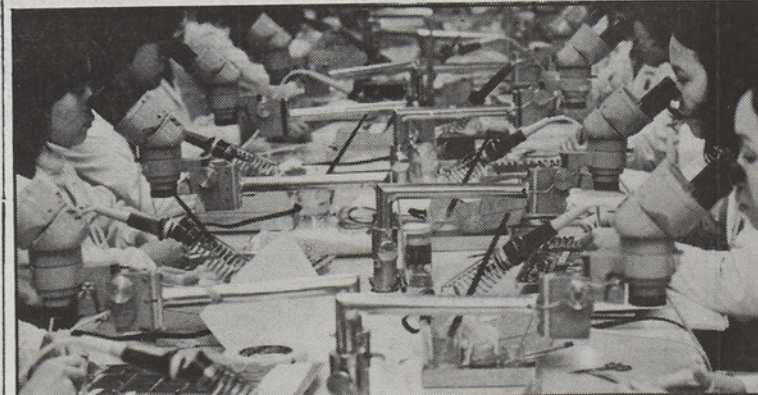
## Chips for the South

**The World Challenge** by Jean-Jaques Servan-Schreiber (*Simon and Schuster, New York*) \$14.95, h/b.

A little over a decade ago, Jean-Jaques Servan-Schreiber jolted many Europeans with his thesis on the American domination of that continent. In *Le Défi Américain* (The American Challenge), which sold more copies in its first three months than any other European work of non-fiction since World War II, he argued that the US domination of the European economy would continue, with the multinationals playing an ever bigger role in it. As a result, the economies of western Europe would be in danger of being reduced to a mere outpost of

American industry. The secret of this phenomenon, he then diagnosed, did not lie in the US capacity to invest more, but in its talents for better management.

In *The World Challenge*, the United States no longer dominates the scene: several far-reaching changes have affected the economic geography of the world in the intervening years. Other centres of economic power have emerged during the past few years: the European Community, Japan, the Arabian Gulf and South East Asia. Many of the countries in these areas have already caught up on the management techniques. Moreover, the United States itself appears to have grown effete and to be suffering from "the first symptoms of the English sickness". It has lost much of its innovative spirit, which alone could lend it the leadership of the 80s. Japan is



Making the technology of the future: microchip factory, Japan.