

REPORTAGE

The COSAW Newsletter *Ditaba/Izindaba* has undergone a metamorphosis in form and content. It has changed from its original magazine format to the new tabloid size you now have before you. This expansion in size is reflected in the extension of its content.

The underlying reasons for these changes are manifold. The most important motivation is underpinned by the desire to enhance the effectiveness of the newsletter as a means of informing the large COSAW membership in the far-flung regions of the country, as well as the general public, of the vast range of activities initiated and hosted by the Congress of South African Writers. In addition it was felt that some of the cardinal debates and interventions made by various COSAW members in different forums be disseminated as widely as possible for response and further elaboration. This edition of *Ditaba/Izindaba* has been compiled along these lines.

The Congress of South African Writers has made great strides since its inauguration, five years ago, in 1987. During the years of repression it effectively mobilised the cultural community in the struggle against apartheid and white minority rule. In the period which followed the liberalisations introduced by the De Klerk government, COSAW led the way in the process of internal assessment and reorganisation which the unfolding situation demanded of all oppositional groups.

By streamlining its structures and placing emphasis on constructive, empowering and transformative tasks COSAW began a new challenging phase in its development. This enabled COSAW to enter the current situation of transition with far-sighted programmes aimed at ensuring that social transformation is inextricably linked to the democratisation of all cultural institutions in South Africa. While the range of this advanced perspective is recorded in this publication, its efficacy is registered within the cultural community and the broader society.

Ditaba/Izindaba aims to enhance, sharpen and accelerate these processes. We therefore invite all readers and the South African public at large to participate in this process by asserting their cultural needs and rights.

This Newsletter sheds light on COSAW activities. All opinions are welcomed and will be published at the discretion of the editor. Send material to:

The General Secretary
Ditaba/
Izindaba
P O Box 421007
FORDSBURG
2033

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elected for a year term at the COSAW AGM :
19/21 June 1992

· Njabulo Ndebele - President
· Nise Malange - Vice-President (Projects)
· Walter Chakela - Vice-President (Administration)
· Willie Kgositsile - Vice-President (Publications)
· Nadine Gordimer - Publicity Officer
· Orenna Krut - Secretary
· Gavin Mabie - Treasurer

COSAW PATRONS

· Nadine Gordimer · Gladys Thomas
· Dennis Brutus · Mongane Serote
· Zwelakhe Sisulu · Jeremy Cronin
· Mi Hlatshwayo · Dikobe Martins
· Govan Mbeki · James Matthews

COSAW STAFF

National Office

· Junaid Ahmed - General Secretary
· Sizakele Nkosi - National Administrator
· Mike van Graan - National Projects Officer

Transvaal

· Morakabe Raks Seakhwa
- Co-ordinator
· Luvuyo Nontenja - Assistant

OFS and Northern Cape

· Lionel Beukes - Co-ordinator
· Africa Boso - Assistant

Natal

· Dumisani Phungula - Co-ordinator
· S'bu Ndimande - Assistant

Eastern Cape

· Susie Mabie - Co-ordinator
· Brigitte Pullen - Assistant

Western Cape

· Geraldine Engelman - Co-ordinator
· André Adams - Assistant

COSAW Publishing House

· John Duarte - Manager
· Andries Oliphant - General Editor
· Shereen Usdin - Design/Layout
· Andrew Lord - Artist
· M Krause - National Sales/Distribution Manager
· Sandra Braude - Administrative and Editorial Assistant

Continued from page 1

We headed back to the moodless comforts of suburbia, silent, tense, exhausted, knowing that what we had just experienced defied human comprehension.

That gut-wrenching experience endeared Nancy to us in a very special way. No longer was she just a world-renowned poet, but had become a comrade, who would expose the realities of the 'New South Africa' to the rest of the world. In turn, we became resolute that we would do everything in our power, albeit limited, to assist Cuba in its courageous stance against a crippling isolation.

Like Keats, Nancy often picked about the gravel. I can remember that on about three occasions I caught her digging her toes into the soil. When I asked her what she was doing, she replied, 'I like to feel the places I visit. It is important

for me to experience a place both physically and mentally'. What that revealed to me is that Nancy reveled in the poetry of the immediate, the ever-present now. She does not have to intellectualise her feelings, quote non-descript lines from inane critics — 'who in my opinion are failed writers anyway'. When something grips her attention she has a burning need to respond there and then.

On the Wednesday night of her stay we invited her for a 'Sherry jol'. She was over the moon. She had been longing to interact with people in an intimate social way. That night we realised more than ever that we (onse Kaapies) had a great deal in common with our Cuban guest. When the sounds of Sipho Gumede filtered into the room, Nancy jumped up and immediately started swaying to the beat. The haunting sax of Basil and Robbie had her begging to know who was playing. She made us promise that we would record all the music that she liked before she left.

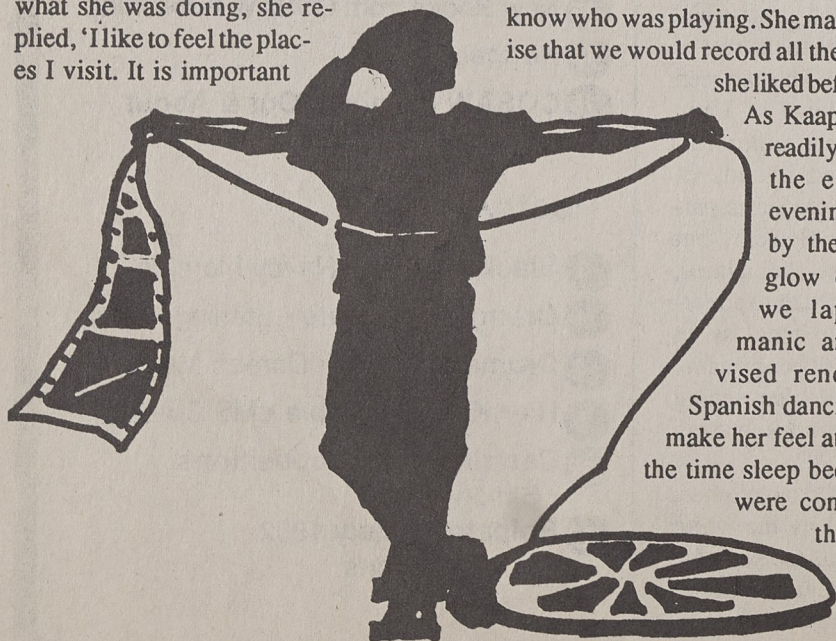
As Kaapies go, we readily obliged. At the end of the evening, warmed by the burgundy glow of Sherry, we lapsed into manic and improvised renditions of Spanish dancing. Just to make her feel at home. By the time sleep beckoned we were comforted by the thought that we had made a new

special friend.

The following day Nancy wanted to see 'the mystical place where the two oceans met'. But before going there she wanted to have her favourite Cape dish for lunch, 'snoek and chips'. (We had introduced her to this delectable treat a few days before. She claimed that never before had she eaten such tasty fish). When we arrived at Cape point, one could see her eyes lighting up in expectation. As we alighted from the 'Flying Dutchman' one could sense a feeling of awe pass through the bones. Probably like Moses on Mount Sinai. The uphill climb didn't matter. It was as if the point's energy force lent wings to feet. When we reached the look-out point, Nancy responded spontaneously. The spiritual energy emanating from the place soon had us all silent. We wanted to hold onto that moment forever. Thirstily we drank up that moment of rare inner peace. A brief respite for our over-vexed souls. Nancy wanted to take home a memento, preferably a piece of rock. Gone went our over-conscious green values. We understood. She needed something to remind her of that great spiritual healing force. We could always comeback the next day. She was leaving. After pulling at many pieces of rock that had become embedded in the soil, we eventually managed to tear a piece from an overhanging ledge.

That's desperation for you. Nancy was deeply grateful. She made doubly sure that she had the stone packed away in her suitcase when she left the following morning.

As we waved goodbye at the airport the following morning, I returned home to read a quotation from a man who had been one of Nancy's closest friends, (he might be dead, but his memory will live on forever), the Argentine writer, Julio Cortázar: 'Thirsty for being, the poet ceaselessly reaches out to reality, seeking with the indefatigable harpoon of the poem a reality that is always better hidden, more real. The poem's power is an instrument of possession, like a net that fishes by itself, a hook that is also the desire of the fish. To be a poet is to desire and, at the same time, to obtain, in the exact shape of the desire'.



DITABA ★ IZINDABA

NEWS FROM THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN WRITERS NOV 1992 NO.4

A Sparrow Before Our Windows

Beverly Mitchell

'If a Sparrow come before my window, I take part in its existence and pick about the Gravel ...'
John Keats.

I can only empathise with the sentiments expressed by that great doyenne of Western feminism, Germaine Greer, that Cuban people, but more especially, Cuban women, are a puzzling yet refreshing lot to comprehend. When Germaine was invited as guest to the First National Women's Conference of Cuba, she was flabbergasted at the flamboyancy and manicured beauty of her Cuban feminist counterparts. No short dirty nails, no long armpit hairs, and definitely no leather studded arms waving an aggressive arm in the direction of your seat. No ma'm it sure was a sight to behold. Brightly coloured floral dresses, high-heeled shoes, long manicured nails, beautifully made-up faces, and last but not least, sensuous dancing to the rhythm of the seductive calypso beat. Germaine claims that was just the beginning of many cultural shocks during her visit to Cuba.



Nancy Morejón's brief yet illuminating visit to Cape Town left me with a similar feeling. It was as if a much-needed gust of fresh air had detoxified my smoke-laden lungs. From the moment she opened her mouth to deliver the key-note address at the National AGM in Bloemfontein, I realised that here was a woman of great lucidity who miraculously lacked the stomach-churning banality of academic mumbo-jumbo.

I was fortunate enough to interact with Nancy on a less formal level during her five day stay in Cape Town. From the many discussions, both formal and informal, she

emerged as a woman, but above all, as a writer, of great integrity and sensitivity.

When she was taken on a guided tour of the Cape Flats townships, one could immediately see that she was greatly affected. In fact, even those of us who were born and bred in Cape Town silently echoed the tears forming in the corner of her eyes. We had all felt like aliens invading the very privacy of other people's lives. The wastelands of Khayelitsha, flooded by the recent rains made her gasp and cry out in outrage. She was adamant that this hidden poverty had to be exposed to the rest of the world. She had seen the slums of Latin America, the rat-infested ghettos of the United States, particularly Harlem, but nowhere else, she claimed, had she experienced a poverty

so desolate, so bone-achingly barren, so hopeless. In her own words Nancy felt that 'I will never be the same again...something inside me has changed after seeing this. I feel as if something precious has been taken away from me'.

With the stench of poverty still clinging to our clothes, we headed back to the comforts enjoyed by the white minority and aspirant middle classes. It was too soon for her. We decided to take her to a friend's sister in Mitchell's Plain where she could have time to recuperate her senses.

Continued on page 2

CONTENTS

Features

- 1 A Sparrow Before Our Windows
Beverly Mitchell
- 2 Editorial
- 3 Speaking From the Boundaries
Tony Morphet
- 4 COSAW Publishing on Stream
- 5 Two Exciting Projects From COSAW Publishing
- 5 COSAW Meets With the Mozambican Writers Association (AEMO)
- 7 The Arts For All Campaign
- 7 Profile: Bheki Maseko
- 8 Challenging the Metropolis as the Market Place for Third World Literature
Peter Horn
- 9 The Need to Push Our Own Literature
Andries Oliphant
- 10 Multiple Literatures: One National Culture
Sizwe Satyo
- 10 African Literature Forum Launched
Vicky Mumasaba
- 11 Snake With Ice Water Launched
Barbara Masekela
- 11 Miles to go Before We Sleep: Is Political Poetry Dead After February 1990?
Tatamkulu Afrika
- 12 Towards a Democratic Culture in Natal: Restructuring Arts
- 13 COSAW Regional Reports
- 15 New Books from COSAW Publishing
- 16 Notices
- 16 COSAW Members Out & About

Poetry

- 3 Black Woman • Nancy Morejón
- 4 Orange Free State • Sterling Plumpp
- 4 Drums of Africa • Doreen Mangala
- 6 Hier Kom Die Topie • MS Qwesha
- 12 Certain Naive Propositions
• Simon Lewis
- 14 Boipatong: July 1992
• Abu Solomons

SPEAKING FROM THE BOUNDARIES

Black Woman

I still smell the foam of the sea they made me cross.
The night, I can't remember it.
The ocean itself could not remember that.
But I can't forget the first gull I made out in the distance.
High, the clouds, like innocent eye-witnesses.
Perhaps I haven't forgotten my lost coast,
nor my ancestral language.
They left me here and here I've lived.
And, because I worked like an animal,
here I came to be born.
How many Mandinga epics did I look to for strength.

I rebelled.

His Worshiopp bought me in a public square.
I embroidered His Worship's coat and bore him a male child.
My son had no name.
And His Worship died at the hands of an impeccable English lord.

I walked.

This is the land where I suffered
mouth-in-the-dust and the lash.
I rode the length of all its rivers.
Under its sun I planted seeds, brought in the crops,
but never ate those harvests.
A slave barracks was my house,
built with stones that I hauled myself.
While I sang to the pure beat of native birds.

I rose up.

In this same land I touched the fresh blood
and decayed bones of many others,
brought to this land or not, the same as I.
I no longer dreamt of the road to Guinea.
Was it to Guinea? Benin?
To Madagascar? Or Cape Verde?

I worked on and on.

I strengthened the foundations of my millenary song
and of my hope.

I left for the hills.

My real independence was the free slave fort
and I rode with the troops of Maceo.

Only a century later,
together with my descendants,
from a blue mountain

I came down from the Sierra

to put an end to capital and userer,
to generals and to bourgeois.
Now I exist: only today do we own, do we create.
Nothing is foreign to us.
The land is ours.
Ours the sea and the sky.
the magic and the vision.
Compañeros, here I see you dance
around the tree we are planting for communism.
Its prodigal wood resounds.

Nancy Morejón

From *Where the Island Sleeps Like a Wing*,
Published by the Black Scholar Press.

Tony Morphet

Mamlambo by Bheki Maseko and
Life at Home by Joel Matlou
(COSAW, R22.50 each)

The Congress of South African Writers has an unenviable reputation for dead-head political promotions and productions. It used to seem that we would have to form a Congress of Readers to negotiate for something we could get through without gagging. But changes are afoot — even advanced.

Two recent books of short stories from COSAW show how far things have come. One, from Joel Matlou is wonderful; the other from Bheki Maseko, is less assured but nonetheless interesting. Both were *Staffrider* originals in the 1970s.

Matlou's work is remarkable. There are six stories; few of them longer than 10 pages. The book even has something of the look of an easy reader — the print is large, the pages small and there are strange intriguing illustrations done by the author. But the writing and the content are anything but simple.

An autobiographical thread connects the stories. They tell of the childhood, youth and manhood of 'Medupe' also sometimes called Matlou; but one cannot be sure that this is the author himself. Certainly there is no single point of view from which the stories are told. Sometimes Medupe speaks; sometimes he is spoken about. Sometimes the world he is in is given in realistic terms; sometimes he appears to be in a mythical landscape outside the bounds of recognisable social life. Sometimes the linguistic forms are from written English; sometimes from an oral tradition.

Two things mark the stories as highly unusual. One is the way they unfold the conditions of the world around Magaliesberg, Brits and Pretoria from within. The other is the radically personal perspective that shapes all the material.

Matlou the writer refuses all knowledge of the word apartheid. He doesn't see the world through its distorted lenses. His close-up focus is on the immediate terms of life and on bargaining his way through the hazards and opportunities as they emerge to confront him. Some of these are familiar things seen through strange eyes; others are in themselves strange and bewildering.

The book transforms the categories of South African social fiction. The building of Boekenhoutfontein township outside Pretoria (a typical apartheid event) comes as a central opportunity for the Matlou family and enables them to escape

the captivity of the farm.

The telling of this leap from rural confinement into the freedom of the urban world has a classic feel. It includes his father's careful slow stealing of chickens from the farmer to build up stock for the better life to come — as well as the magical moment when the family manages to get the pass books which make them legal.

But it is the stories which go out beyond the social boundaries that are the most startling of all. They carry a kind of medieval atmosphere of people lost in phantasmal pre-social worlds; worlds which are full of horror and despair but also of unmediated presence and vigorous life.

One is about a madman who destroy himself; the other about Medupe lost in 'the south east' — a landscape which is out of time and place. In the latter, Medupe is seduced (if that can be the right word) by a 'female animal'. This is no metaphor — it is a wild animal of the bush. I confess I was shocked — not so much by the fact as by the gentleness, even tenderness of the telling of it.

Matlou speaks from the boundaries. His work deserves the closest attention of scholars and critics. At the same time it will surely win him a large and attentive readership.

Bheki Maseko, by contrast, remains well within the patterns of realist South African fiction. Mtutuzeli Matshoba comes to mind as an important model. His central subject is the wounding and subjugation of people. The world he uncovers is full of enmity, treachery and ruthlessness but he too has moved on from the apartheid paradigms. It is less the structural conditions of apartheid than the preying of one person on another which produces the punishing circumstances he describes.

Maseko's fictions have several weaknesses, but they do have an important strength. He has absorbed the import of the arguments made by Njabulo Ndebele and others about the task of the writer in South Africa and he has abandoned the denunciatory 'external' style of protest in favour of exploring what the internal patterns of black social life mean.

The weakness of his work arises out of the fact that he has not yet made up his mind about a crucial question. Is what he sees the terrible 'war of all against all' or is there some saving principle embedded in the inheritance from the past: something which makes possible the construction of a vision of regeneration?

The important point though is that he is exploring and opening up the question to which no

one yet has any coherent answer.

Both books demonstrate the resourcefulness and the fragility of writing in the present moment. COSAW deserves full credit for the support it has provided.

Long Live Reading !

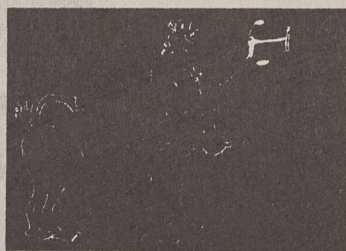
(Weekly Mail 9/4/92)

MAMLAMBO
AND OTHER STORIES



Bheki Maseko

*Life at Home
and other stories*



Joel Matlou

COSAW Publishing on Stream

After a tentative start the fledgling publishing programme of the Congress of South African Writers is now on stream. It began in 1988 with a sprinkling of regional journals and went on to publish, among other important works of poetry, the best-selling collection of Mzwakhe Mbuli, *Before Dawn*. This book has sold well over ten thousand copies during the last three years.

Other ground-breaking books included the innovative and exuberant rap poetry collected in Lesego Rampolokeng's *Horns for Hondo* and the screen play of *Mapantsula* by Oliver Schmitz and Thomas Mogotlane. With the publication of works by previously exiled poets such as Keorapetse Kgositsile and others, a turning point was reached. The time to expand the publishing programme and embark on a more structured basis by moving towards an income-generating publishing house, had arrived.

By riding through a preparatory and transitional period during 1991, COSAW Publishing is now an autonomous company owned by the Congress of South African Writers. This switch has seen an increase in the volume, range and quality of books published over the last eighteen months.

With *Staffrider* as its national journal and flagship, COSAW Publishing is set to develop into the foremost literary and cultural publisher in South Africa. Its brief is to serve all South African Writers and particularly those who have been, and continue to be denied opportunities of self-expression and publication in a society characterised by monopolies, exclusivity and unequal access to the means of communication.

In this short period COSAW Publishing has given substance to its credo of literary and cultural empowerment with accomplishment and diversity. The poetry collection, *Ear to the Ground* introduced by Mi Hlatshwayo has been welcomed by critics as a refreshing and important contribution to worker poetry. The publication of the screenplay *Mapantsula* with its vivid dialogue and innovative narrative structure has, within a matter of months, become a set-book in the Film Department of the University of Natal. It is a text that should be read in conjunction with the film at all levels of society.

Hot on the heels of Mongane Wally Serote's essays *On the Horizon* came the incisive, path breaking and seminal critical work of Njabulo Ndebele titled *Rediscovery of the Ordinary*. British and American editions of the book are soon to be published by Manchester University Press.

Last year also saw the publication of three new short story collections. Joel Matlou's masterful, brilliant and startling narratives which combine personal and imaginary elements as well as literary and oral forms of story telling have floored every reader who encountered *Life at Home and Other Stories*. In South African fiction and narrative art it already towers above everything else.

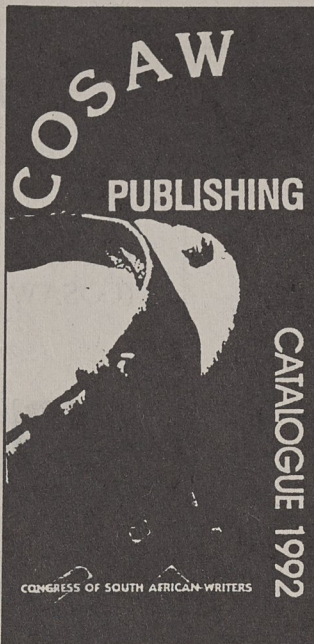
So too, are the stories of Bheki Maseko published in the collection *Mamlambo and Other Stories*. Alert to the physical and psychological mutilations proliferating in a conflictual society, Maseko brings his sensitive and highly imaginative narrative skills to bear on the horrors of contemporary life. The redemptive impulse in his work stems from the compassion his stories radiate and the manner in which marginal figures rise to the defense of the vulnerable.

In *A Vision of Paradise* Kaizer Nyatumba explores the inner life of people, their emotional needs, illusions and desires in humorous and refreshing narratives. These three story collections mark the extent to which South African fiction written with a sense of social reference has shaken off the dead hand of repression and the limited

reactions of protest to assume new, varied, memorable and imaginatively rich forms.

The latest publications include an extensive anthology of poets edited and introduced by Andries Walter Oliphant entitled *Essential Things*. In this book twenty-three new poets, some previously exiled, extend the boundaries of feeling, dreaming and communication in the multiple forms and experiences which make up the full complexities of subjective and social life.

High on the list of priorities are also a number of books addressing women's issues and gender questions in the context of social and cultural change. Maggie Resha's *Mangoane O Tsoara Thipa Ka Bohaleng* was published jointly with South African Writers in London. The title is a Bafokeng proverb which can be translated as 'Mother Holds the Sharpest Edge of the Knife'. It is an autobiography which recounts her life in South Africa and exile in an elegant and moving manner. This publication was followed by A



Snake with Ice Water edited by Barbara Schreiner. The book draws on the personal experiences and creative responses of South African women to imprisonment. Nadine Gordimer describes the book as 'a vital part of the history of the struggle for a new South Africa. Boldly lived through and vividly captured by women'.

Of equal importance is the forthcoming collection edited by Matthew Krouse, *The Invisible Ghetto*, a collection of Gay and Lesbian writing which foregrounds the vast body of homosexual literature and relates it to processes of social change and struggles for gender equality.

In addition to these books new collections of poetry by Achmat Dangor and Peter Horn are also scheduled to be released this year along with the short stories of Deena Padayachee, Maureen Isaacson and a selection of stories from the 1991 Nadine Gordimer short Story Award.

Flowing from the success of the Gordimer Award two additional awards, namely the Alex la Guma and Mankayi Sontonga Awards are also sponsored by COSAW this year. Details appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

These strides in publication are complemented by a concerted programme of promotion, marketing and distribution aimed at getting COSAW books to the public cost-effectively and at reasonable prices. To crown this, all COSAW members are offered publications at a substantially reduced price. As the COSAW Publishing programme gathers momentum and the current leading into the future accelerates, we plan to be out there way ahead of other publishers to service writers and meet the literary and cultural needs of South Africa.

Orange Free State for Lionel Beukes

Rows and rows and rows

Match
box shacks perhaps,
your shot
gun is not architecture.

But,
your dark faces
wandering paths
Your
miles and miles and miles of
wealth. Reflect
the Mississippi Delta
with ored — veins.

Your
blacks huddled
at the cross
roads must have
a Robert Johnson or
Bessie Smith
to moan destinies
from flooded overtures

Some
how. Your land
scapes are familiar.

I have been here.
In easy rhythms of
black women, some
thing balanced
on their heads, a hymn
tucked beneath silenced
lips. For a rainy day.

Sterling Plumpp

Sterling Plumpp is professor of African Literature studies at the University of Chicago at Illinois. He conducted poetry workshops in the OFS for COSAW members during December 1991. Lionel Beukes is COSAW OFS co-ordinator.

Drums of Africa

Hunger
Suffering
The never ending cries
They are the pains of Africa

Violence
Clashes between different groups
These are echoes
The pain which strikes
Through the heart of
The Nation.

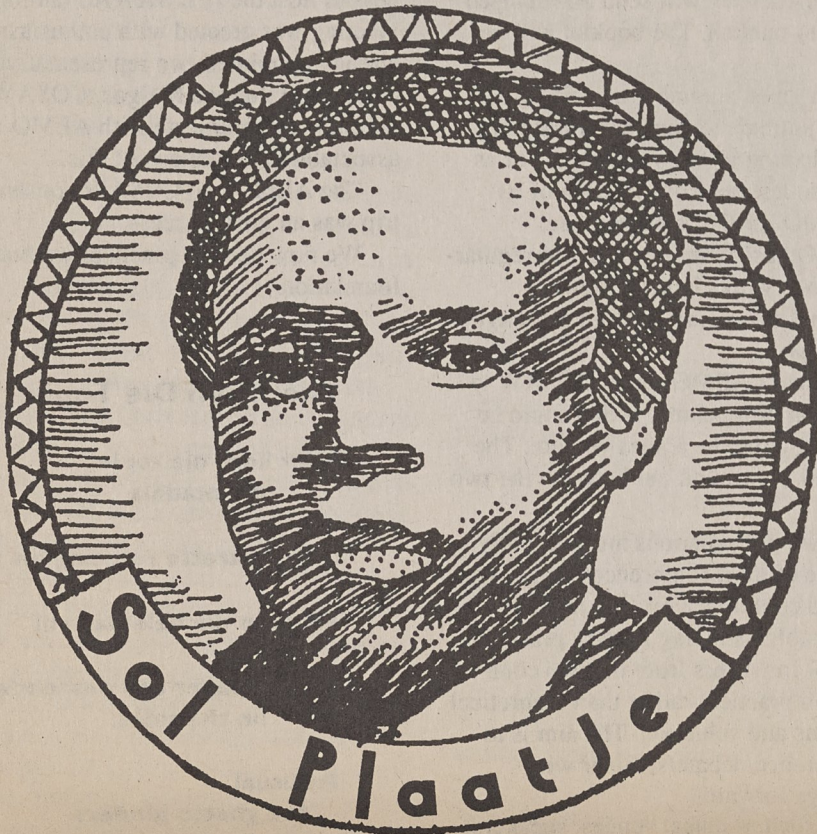
Musicians, Poets, Writers, Politicians
Every young talented individual
They are all part and parcel of the Nation
Africa!

Traditional beliefs
Tribal feasts and customs
Celebrations
They are the chants
The rhythm
The beat
The Drums of Africa

Doreen Mangala
(OFS)

Writing and Reading
in the Indigenous Languages

TWO EXCITING PROJECTS FROM COSAW PUBLISHING



At a recent meeting COSAW Publications undertook to embark on a programme aimed at creating opportunities for writers and the South African public to develop writing and reading in the indigenous languages. This programme stems from a desire to correct the historical neglect of literature in the indigenous languages and to overcome the restrictive forms to which the languages have been limited for the past forty years or so.

The project will consist of two publication initiatives. The first will centre around the translation of existing literary works from English into an indigenous language, and the second will involve the search for a new, unpublished work of fiction in an indigenous language.

Translation Project

This project will involve the translation into one of the major indigenous languages, for example Isizulu, Isixhosa or Sesotho, of a selection of short stories by South African writers originally written in English.

Guidelines for the selection is to compile an anthology which reflects some of the main developments in the short story written in English by South Africans, as well as to ensure that memorable, entertaining, humorous as well as illuminating forms of writing are foregrounded. In addition, the plan will be to bridge the gaps and voice the silences forced upon stories written in the indigenous languages through censorship and the conservative, racist publication policies of the past.

Translators will be drawn from the COSAW membership and other experts in the field. The book will initially be translated into one indigenous language. Which language it will be, is to be decided upon after further consultation. If the book is a success consideration will be given to translating it into other indigenous languages. We would like to call on translators to offer their services to this project.

The Encouragement and Search for an Original Novel in an Indigenous Language

This project aims to encourage new forms of narrative writing in the indigenous languages. COSAW Publishing is searching for a new novel in any indigenous language. This is a publication project and not a literary award. It marks COSAW's commitment to create publishing opportunities for new popular forms of literature in the indigenous languages. The criteria for publication will be based on the following:

- It must be a novel for an adult readership
 - It should have a strong story line
 - It should have a well-structured plot
 - It must have rounded, convincing characters
 - It must be a highly readable story
 - It should appeal to a broad readership not necessarily interested in social protest and political relevance
 - Preference will be given to adventure stories
- Manuscripts submitted will be evaluated by the COSAW Editorial Collective in consultation with other knowledgeable readers in the field of African Languages and Literature.

While writers are encouraged to submit work in any of the indigenous languages, other than English or Afrikaans, the initial project will involve the publication of the best manuscript submitted to COSAW Publications. Further projects will be considered based on the success of the first publication. The deadline for submissions is 30 March 1993.

Encouraging Reading

To ensure that these publications are brought to the attention of the public a comprehensive marketing and promotions strategy will be devised by the COSAW Sales Department. It will aim to cover book stores, informal outlets, libraries, schools, reading, writing and literacy groups.

For further information, please contact Andries Oliphant, COSAW General Editor

COSAW Meets With The Mozambican Writers Association (AEMO)

Two COSAW delegates, Nadine Gordimer (Nobel Laureate and National Vice President — Publications) and Morakabe Seakhoa (COSAW Transvaal Co-ordinator) met with the Mozambican Writers' Association (AEMO) between 28 August and 3 September 1992 on the occasion of the latter's 10th anniversary celebrations.

On arrival at Maputo airport, the COSAW delegates were met by the Mozambican Minister of Culture and Youth, Mateus Kathupa, Vice-President Marcelino Dos Santos and poet Professor Sergio Viera. After a brief reception, Nadine and Morakabe were driven to Hero's Acre to lay wreaths for our fallen comrades. Thereafter, a short tour of the Eduardo Mondlane University took place, and the COSAW representatives were shown the office where Ruth First worked and died, murdered by agents of the South African regime. Nadine Gordimer then delivered her Nobel Prize lecture which was simultaneously translated into Portuguese, at the offices of the Mozambican Writers Association. Gordimer's lecture drew tremendous interest and appreciation.

In the evening of 28 August, the COSAW delegates attended an exciting cultural event: an integrated performance including theatre, poetry, prose, music and visual arts at the Teatro Averida in Maputo.

On the 29 August, the COSAW delegates had lunch with President J Chissano, Pedro Chissano — AEMO general secretary, Fatima Mendonca and Sergio Veira — senior members of AEMO. Discussions were held on a range of issues — political, literary and general. This was followed by a brief photo session and a guided tour of the President's official residence.

What follows are excerpts from Morakabe Seakhoa's report to the COSAW National Executive.

We visited and were taken on a guided tour of Malangatana Ngwenya's workshops — Malangatana is Mozambique's foremost painter.

A cocktail at the Children's Friends Association was hosted in honour of Nadine. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet many of the writers, artists, musicians, actors, literature students and cabinet ministers.

Continued on page 6

A short reception speech was made by Sergi Viera, in honour of Nadine. There was also a musical performance. In between these, we were taken around Maputo and familiarised with the city.

On the 30 August 1992, comrade Nadine had to leave for South Africa to launch the Weekly Mail/Guardian Book Week.

Meeting AEMO Executive — 31 August 1992

Morakabe Seakhoa met with the AEMO Executive with the view of establishing practical working relations between AEMO and COSAW. The meeting was attended by General Secretary Pedro Chissano, the Vice-General Secretary, Leite Vasconcelos, Secretary for International Affairs, Suleiman Cassamo and Vice-President Fatime Mendonca.

The meeting started off with comrade Raks giving an overview of COSAW: its history, structures, activities, projects, problems, campaigns, future plans, and so forth.

AEMO expressed appreciation for COSAW's commitment in establishing practical working relations and mechanisms between the two organisations, the following points of information came up:

AEMO was established in 1992, with less than 10 published writers when launched, it is now a large family of 80 established and aspirant writers.

The organisation is a founder member of LEC (League of Writers' Organisations of the Five (Portuguese-speaking Countries in Africa) and of PAWA (an African Writers' Association) and AAWA (African-Asian Writers' Association).

It participates in meetings and activities of the Portuguese Writers' organisation — first in Lisbon 3 years ago. The structure of the organisation is made up of a General Assembly and Executive Secretariat.

It aims to organise writers, sympathisers, supporters and sponsors.

It also publishes books though with difficulty because of financial and technical problems, and lack of paper. (The Nordic countries have been assisting.)

AEMO is also networking with other art organisations to start a campaign to pressure the government to release money and pass legislation for untaxed arts donations. They feel that enterprises will act favourably once a legislation exists. Support for their initiatives by the State is evident in computers donated to them by the country's president.

They also aim to establish relations with cultural organisations internationally.

Regarding networking with Southern African Writers' Organisations, language is an impediment.

In relation to South Africa, there were very many and healthy links between writers of the two countries, especially during the 1950s and until the cultural boycott. They hope to renew these links.

On distribution, AEMO does not have the same problem COSAW has, the politico-economic system has been a socialist and not a capitalist one. There has been a socialist and not a capitalist distribution monopoly, which was a boon to AEMO. In addition, there are very few bookshops and no independent distribution infrastructure. Now that the social system is to change to a capitalist one, problems may increase. However, AEMO is considering applying for an import license, dealing in foreign currency.

After this exchange of information about our respective organisations, the meeting centred around the following discussion points: exchange programmes and writers; publishing in each other's journals/magazines/newsletters; hosting joint conferences/debates/seminars; and the formation of a Southern African Writers Association (SAWA).

We reached consensus in principle on all of the

above four points as a consequence.

AEMO proposed that Jose de Craveirinha be the first one to come to South Africa to a COSAW event. Regarding programmes, AEMO and COSAW will exchange their programmes of activities and further discuss the modalities.

AEMO made the following proposal for COSAW to consider:

One way of making sure that the two organisations do not have problems regarding writers exchange is to sell each other's publications and keep that money to fund each other's visiting writers in the two countries — instead of sending the money back.

AEMO is already translating Nadine's Nobel Prize Lecture into Portuguese, to be accompanied by pictures of her Mozambican visit. They will send all finalised material to COSAW to publish. The booklet will be bilingual.

COSAW has been given a number of AEMO-published books and journals to consider translating into English and publishing in our publications or as they are. COSAW also left one copy of each of its publication with AEMO for the same purpose.

In addition, AEMO has committed itself to regularly publishing COSAW's works in the following newspapers and journals: *Noticias; Tempo; Domingo; and Diario Mozambique.*

One of the urgent tasks AEMO wants COSAW to consider is a translation programme. If this could be worked out, publishing could be a joint venture. The practicalities must still be worked out between the two organisations.

Furthermore the two organisations must urgently consider a programme of joint conferences on these. An idea mooted was a conference on 'writing and language: practical problems facing literary practitioners'. This could draw in writers from the two countries who will focus on practical rather than theoretical and academic problems and solutions. The aim is to come out of the conference/debate/seminar with concrete plans for ways forward.

The practicalities, such as dates, venues, speakers, finances and so forth must urgently be looked into.

Southern African Writers Association

Two meetings have taken place before: one in Harare between Matthew Krouse, Wally Serote, Fatima Mendonca, Botswana Writers' Association and Zimbabwean Writers' Union representatives.

The result of this meeting was the drafting of the SAWA constitution. The next step is to circulate the draft constitution to all Southern African Writers' Unions and associations to read and amend. AEMO has already, also, taken the draft constitution to the last SADCC meeting for discussion. They are awaiting COSAW and other organisations to respond and these will be submitted to SADCC.

The next meeting was in South Africa at COSAW Head Office, attended by Fatima Mendonca, Willie Kgositsile, Andries Oliphant and Matthew Krouse. At this meeting, COSAW was to respond to the SAWA draft constitution — which was left with the COSAW delegates.

In our 31 August 1992 meeting, COSAW's readiness to host the first SAWA Planning Committee meeting was greeted with enthusiasm. AEMO has already appointed two representatives: Leite Vasconcelos and Filimone Meigos. COSAW must now urgently communicate with AEMO and other writers' associations to implement this.

The AEMO and COSAW consensus was that this trip was an great success.

We now need to practically advance on this foundation.

Hier Kom Die Topie

Hier kom die topie
die madala

The cigarette roasting his stick fingers.

Hy loop die hele pad vol

a paper cap descends
on the sides.

As usual
the ghetto kinders
shower the yells:

Ou Ruiter

die manoja van die dladla
die timer van die ou dae;

those days

when things were a penny

no more.

Die Sam Nujoma T-hemp

aan sy bors

and a nip of cheap wine
held between two sticky

fingers.

Sy honde draf na die hek

kiss, one, kiss, two

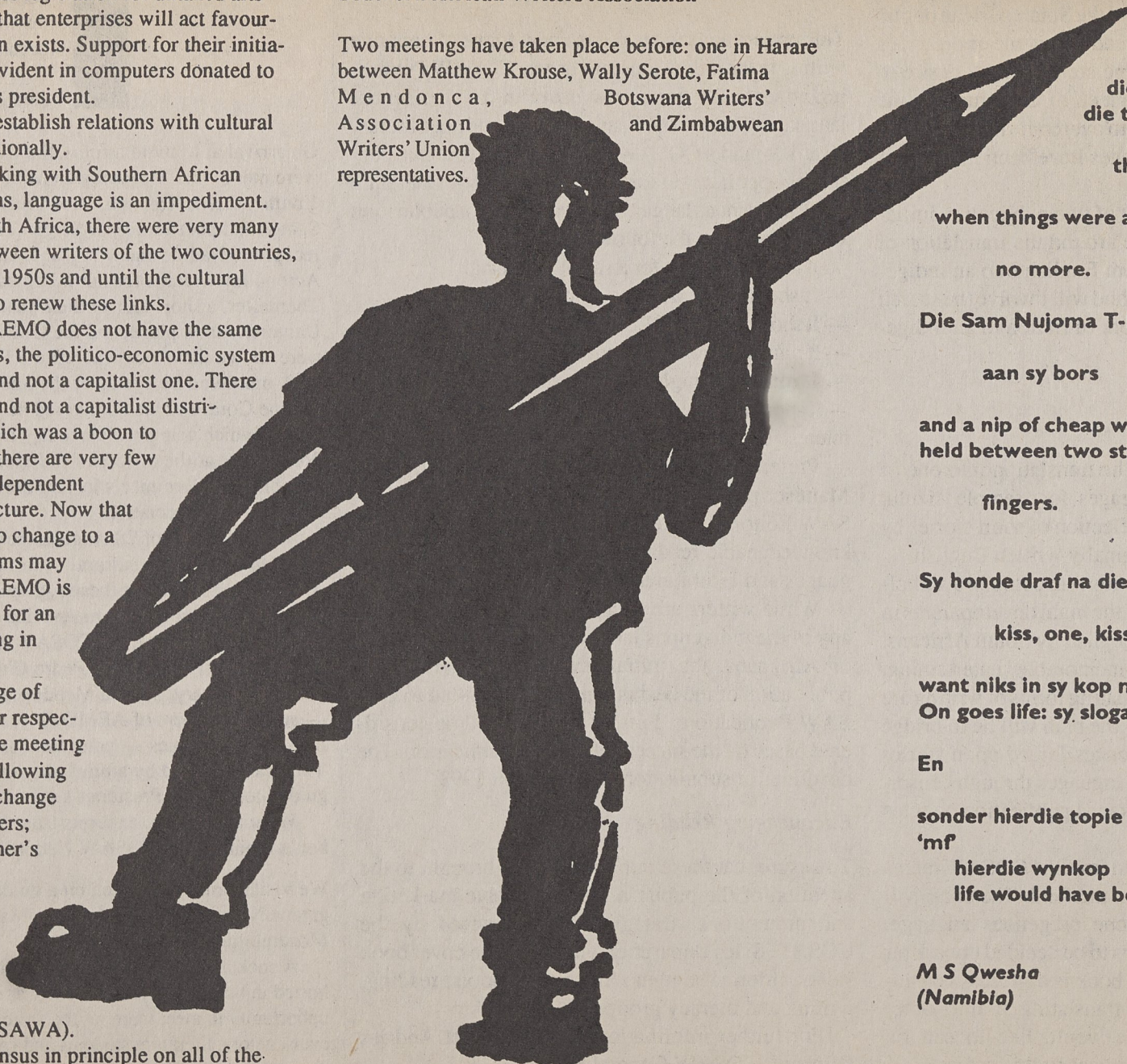
want niks in sy kop maak 'n saak nie.
On goes life: sy slogan.

En

sonder hierdie topie
'mf

hierdie wynkop
life would have been dull.

M S Qwesho
(Namibia)



The Arts For All Campaign

The arts are integral to any healthy society. They are important means for communities and individuals to affirm, challenge, explore, question, celebrate and attempt to understand their existence within particular realities. Premised on freedom of expression and critical, creative thought, the arts have a vital role to play in the democratisation of our society. Where the arts are integrated into — rather than excluded from — overall processes of social development, this leads to a more holistic and thus higher quality of life where the material, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of human beings are catered for.

South African music, dance, film, theatre, literature and visual art and craft have great potential to link us to other parts of the world, so broadening our consciousness and invigorating our own cultural life.

However, the arts are not considered to be a political, economic, developmental or educational priority at the moment and in the face of current housing, medical and employment needs, financial resources for the arts — from the private and public sectors as well as from international donors — are becoming increasingly scarce.

It is clear that unless the arts community itself takes responsibility for its future and for that of the arts in general, the arts will continue to be neglected or limited by ill-informed state or party political policies, traditional developmental priorities and narrow economic concerns. It is important then, that the arts community comes together to assert its common interests and to organise to ensure the future sustenance of the arts.

In April this year, in the context of decreasing international and local funding for the arts, COSAW initiated a campaign to place the arts on the agenda with fraternal arts organisations in Johannesburg. It was initiated believing that the future of individual organisations would be better served by a collective lobby of similar organisations.

Since mid-June this year, the campaign has been formalised with mandated representatives from the Arts Educators Association (AEA), the Association of Community Art Centres (ACAC), COSAW, Dance Alliance, the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO), the Performing Arts Workers Equity (PAWE), the South African Musicians Alliance (SAMA) and the South African Workers Cultural Unit (SAWCU). Representatives of all these bodies serve on the Joint Secretariat, which is the co-ordinating structure of the campaign, now known as the **ARTS FOR ALL CAMPAIGN**.

The first initiative of the campaign was to propose the National Arts Policy Plenary, by convening a forum at the end of August to which approximately 70 individuals involved in and representing a broad range of interests in the arts were invited.

The Joint Secretariat recognised that it did not represent the interests of all arts practitioners and institutions by any means. However, not all practitioners were represented by existing institutions and organisations either; so it was decided to convene this forum of individuals who had links with significant organisations and constituencies in the arts, to elect a steering committee from among themselves to oversee the organisation of the Plenary, with a mandate to be as inclusive as possible in terms of art disciplines, regions, language, ideological positions, class, gender, cultural backgrounds, and the establishment/community and urban/rural continuums.

The National Arts Policy Plenary is a proposed gathering of the broadest possible range of arts practitioners, educators, organisations, institutions and other parties interested in the arts, from 5 — 6 December 1992 in Johannesburg.

The aims of the plenary are:

One, to facilitate the formulation of concrete recommendations for arts policies, structures and funding mechanisms to develop and protect the arts in a democratic South Africa, for presentation to, negotiation with and implementation by a future government.

Two, to contribute towards the emergence of national anti-discriminatory, politically independent and representative structures which will consistently and proactively represent the interests of the arts and of arts practitioners on an ongoing basis.

The Steering Committee includes:

1. Prof. Njabulo Ndebele, Vice-Rector of UWC and COSAW Chairperson: President
2. Mike van Graan, COSAW National Projects Officer: General Secretary
3. Steven Sack, Director: Johannesburg Art Foundation: Treasurer
4. Corinna Lowry, Johannesburg Dance Foundation: Minutes Secretary
5. Rashid Lanie, S A Musicians' Alliance: Executive
6. Ramaloe Makhene, PAWE: Chairperson
7. Prof. Gary Gordon, Head Rhodes Drama Department
8. Walter Chakela, Artistic Director of Drama for Bophuthatswana Arts Council
9. Bongzi Dhlomo, Director Thupelo Art Project
10. Jay Pather, Jazzart Dance Company
11. Victor Honey, Stellenbosch Fine Art Department
12. Maishe Maponya, Playwright Wits drama lecturer
13. Kessie Govender, Natal Cultural Congress Executive

Co-opted members

14. Pierre van Pletzen, Head PACT drama
15. Nicola Galombik, Film and Allied Workers Organisation Executive
16. Prof. H du Plessis, Head ATKV Skryfskool Potchefstroom University
17. Motsumi Makhene, Director Funda Arts Centre
18. Peter James-Smith, SABC Radio (Orange Free State)
19. John Badenhorst, M-Net PRO
20. Sarita Hauptfleisch, HSRC and Co-ordinator of the Interim Forum on Music Education

With the election of the steering committee, the National Arts Policy Plenary has assumed a life of its own and is no longer under the ambit of the Arts for All Campaign.

The Arts for All Campaign's Joint Secretariat will continue to serve the interests of its constituent organisations and members while it is hoped that the National Arts Policy Plenary will contribute significantly to changing the face of the arts in our country in the interests of all South Africans.

Bheki Maseko

PROFILE



The short story writer, Bheki Maseko was born in 1951 in New Castle, Natal. He was educated at the schools, Sibongile and Sekano Ntoane in Soweto. After leaving school he worked as a truck driver for OK Bazaars and later he was employed as a laboratory assistant for the Chamber of Mines. He began writing stories by drawing on his experiences as a worker.

Maseko published his first stories in *Staffrider* during the late seventies. Unlike many other writers at the time, Maseko's work was relatively free of overt political themes and the strident aesthetics of protest. His stories are, nevertheless, firmly rooted in the harsh realities of black people living in urban and rural South Africa. His fiction probes the social forces responsible for inflicting human suffering and the attempts of people to escape from this.

His stories blend autobiographical, mythological, religious, fantastical and social elements. His narrative style has an off-beat idiosyncratic quality. His tone is gentle and descriptive but not without humour.

His most memorable story is 'Mamlambo'. This story also serves as the title of his first collection of 11 stories published by COSAW Publishers in 1991. It displays Maseko's storytelling talent at its best.

The story begins with a matter of fact explanation of the ways whereby mamlambo, the fortune snake, could be secured. It evokes the traditional values, customs and beliefs of African people then proceeds to narrate a love story centred around a domestic worker, Sophie Zikode, and a migrant worker named Jonas. Sophie, who has had a love disappointment, enlists the aid of the fortune snake to win and keep Jonas' love. The story is an extraordinary mixture of realism and fantasy embedded in the indigenous culture and woven around the

problems and needs of contemporary urban life.

In other stories, like 'The Wedding' and 'The Prophets' Maseko explores the pretentious absurdities that accompany celebrations and the way in which religious faith is abused by fake preachers and prophets. His fiction, built around human problems and the dangers which lurk within and around human beings, is steeped in the ancient art of storytelling.

His story 'Mamlambo' has been republished as *Mamlambo, the Fortune Snake* by Viva Books. The story has been adapted to serve as a post-literacy reader. Maseko lives in Protea North, Soweto and is currently studying for a BA degree by correspondence.

Mamlambo and other stories, published by COSAW, is available at all COSAW offices and in bookstores around the country.

Challenging the Metropolis

as the
Market Place
for
Third World
Literature

Peter Horn

In one of the big supermarkets in Berlin you can buy Chinese ant preserve in a glass and bear's paws from Russia. Two thirds of the world is hungry, but here you can choose expensive delicacies from countries all over the world. Similarly, in the Frankfurt book Fair 8 500 exhibitors from some 90 countries housed in six huge halls with three separate floors offer books from all over the world, including countries were 98 percent of the population are too poor to buy any books and have no access to libraries. Yet for many 'Third World' publishers, who struggle in a climate of poor provision for public libraries by their government and an often very small readership, viability and growth is linked to selling rights on as many titles as possible, both original language and translation rights on this Metropolitan market.

The rich countries pick and choose from among the fare offered the delicacies for their own publishing programmes. It is the publishers and critics of the metropolis who decide not only what the Metropolis reads of 'Third World' literature but also what other 'Third World' countries can read. It is here that the works of Africa, Latin America and Asia are translated into English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and French and redirected and made available for the 'Third World'. It is usually only from these publishers in London, Paris, New York and Frankfurt that we get a glimpse of the literature of other 'Third World' countries.

Even the literature of English speaking

countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand is not readily available in South Africa, except for those writers who have passed the screening in the metropolis and have been approved there. But while it is possible, although burdensome, to form a fairly good idea of the literature of these countries, and to order the books you want with the help of available bibliographies, the task becomes nearly impossible for countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Apart from the fact that many of these books would have to be translated, there is e.g. no 'books in print' or African bibliography. The Canadian Organisation for Development through Education has been urged to enlarge its Publishers' Information Network data base project in Asia and Africa. Funding is needed to translate books from African languages into English for distribution to the rest of the world.

There is no all-African bookfair to assemble once a year the entire African book trade. The Serbelloni conference on Third World Publishing was a once off event, and needs to become a more regular meeting place for 'Third World' publishers. Book publishing is in a crisis in most African countries, wrecked by past corrupt regimes, capital flight, devastating years of drought and famine, and political unrest, and the consequent low provision

for libraries and education which most African countries can make. The price of production materials have rocketed out of the range which African readers can still afford. The picture of Africa, as we enter the nineties is largely that of a bookless society. Yet, books and other printed materials are the key to the creation and maintenance of literacy. Books are not only needed to create literacy, but to sustain it. Knowledge is by and large transmitted through the written word. Book must not only be published but must be effectively distributed.

A great deal of African-published material is now in demand by libraries, scholars and other book buyers throughout the world. While feeding the knowledge industry of the rich metropolitan countries, the material does not easily reach the other 'Third World' countries, who would most benefit from it. The UNESCO-sponsored Regional Book Promotion Centre in Yaoundé, Cameroon, has ceased all activities and exists in name only. Education and text-book production, where it exists, is controlled by large multinational publishers, soaking up the last resources from local publishers.

What we need is a 'Common Market' for African and generally 'Third World' books and publications. What is needed is a network which allows the circulation of those writers who do not write for the metropolis but for the 'Third World', who therefore do not pass the screening devices of the 'First World', and are therefore excluded from this world-wide intellectual traffic.

The conferencia Iberoamericana in its Declaration of Guadalajara, recognising that isolation and non-communication are reasons for marginalisation, poverty and retrogression, decided 'in the face of poverty, warfare, intolerance, hunger, diseases, ecological destruction and ignorance, to propose a new culture of international co-operation, as the only one possible for a just and stable world'. South American publishers have taken the first concrete steps to create a common market for books in their region with International Bookfairs in Guadalajara (1991) and Sao Paulo (1992). Attempts to liberalise the exchange of books are underway (quite in contrast to the ill-considered suggestion at our national AGM to discourage foreign books by a special import duty). Similarly the Toyota 'Know Your Neighbour's programme' supports the translation of local language South East Asian books into languages of other South East Asian countries, including minority languages. Such programmes are much needed for Africa.

For aid donors it is not sufficient to merely stock African libraries with European and American produced books: we need to know our own continent's and other 'Third World' literature as well: and not only the books selected by the Metropolis!

Paper presented at the Weekly Mail Book Week by COSAW Western Cape member — Peter Horn

To South African Poets

The African Arts Fund (AAF) is seeking a poet to apply for a full scholarship at New York University for a Masters Degree in Creative Writing starting January 1993.

This is a meaningful scholarship for the AAF, which is named for the South African poet Benjamin Moloise who was hanged by the South African government. Thus far, three South African poets have successfully completed this course.

Please apply immediately on the enclosed application forms. These forms can be copied if necessary. Send them to:

Maxine Fowles
Creative Writing
Department
New York University
19 University Place
New York, NY 10003
USA

New York University will form a committee to choose a successful applicant.

New York University has offered a full tuition waiver for the chosen scholar, and the AAF will cover all living expenses.

Do apply! It is a chance of a lifetime.

Please address any questions to Dawn Zain, Executive Director of the AAF in New York by telephone or fax at (212) 662 9331. Thank you for your interest.

Application forms are available from:

Junaid Ahmed,
COSAW's General
Secretary
Tel. (011) 833 2530/1/3

Special Offer 20% off all COSAW books

'Mangoana O Tsoara Thipa Ka Bohaleng'
My Life in the Struggle
Maggie Resha

For the first time a leading women in the ANC writes about the heyday of the popular struggle against the South African regime in the 1950s and 1960s. Writing with simplicity and elegance, she provides an unusual insight into the liberation movement. A remarkable story of forty years involvement in the liberation struggle.

Was R 44.00 - now R 35.20

➡ **MAPANTSULA**

Oliver Schmitz & Thomas Mogotlane
The script of the award winning feature film
was R33.00 now R26.40

➡ **REDISCOVERY OF THE ORDINARY**

Njabulo S Ndebele
Brilliant essays on South African literature and culture
was R33.00 now R26.40

➡ **ON THE HORIZON**

Mongane Wally Serote
Essays by one of South Africa's most outstanding poets
was R29.70 now R23.76

➡ **HORNS FOR HONDO**

Lesego Rampolokeng
Fiery rap poems by an innovative and original new talent
was R16.50 now R13.20

➡ **BEFORE DAWN**

Mzwakhe Mbuli
A collection of the People's Poet best work
was R16.50 now R13.20

➡ **TROPICAL SCARS**

Ari Sitas
Synthesizing a wide range of styles, this collection brings a new dimension to South African poetry
was R16.50 now R13.20

➡ **WHEN THE CLOUDS CLEAR**

Keorapetse Kgositsile
A rich collection drawing on the poet's experiences in exile
was R16.50 now R13.20

➡ **THE LONG ROAD, THE TUNNEL**

Zinjiva Winston Nkondo
Committed poetry exploring a life devoted to national liberation
was R16.50 now R13.20

➡ **FLAMES OF FURY**

Sankie Dolly Nkondo
Inspiring poems embracing the intimate, social and political spheres of life
was R16.50 now R13.20

➡ **EAR TO THE GROUND**

In association with COSATU
An anthology of poems rooted in the daily experiences and struggles of workers
was R22.00 now R17.60

➡ **ESSENTIAL THINGS**

Edited by Andries Walter Oliphant
New work by 23 poets embracing a myriad of voices exploring social and private concerns
was R77.00 now R61.60

➡ **LIFE AT HOME AND OTHER STORIES**

Joel Matlou
Startling stories full unexpected twists and leaps of faith
was R24.20 now R19.36

➡ **MAMLAMBO AND OTHER STORIES**

Bheki Maseko
Off-beat tales convey the everyday experiences of South Africans
was R24.20 now R19.36

➡ **A VISION OF PARADISE AND OTHER STORIES**

Kaizer Nyatumba
Fact and fiction combine to produce gripping narratives of domestic and social pressures
was R24.20 now R19.36

➡ **A SNAKE WITH ICE WATER**

Edited by Barbara Schreiner
Prison writing by south African women
was R55.00 now R19.36

➡ **2 NO LULLABY FOR MY COUNTRY**

Vusi Mavumbela
An epic poem and personal document
Was R21.00 now R12.00

➡ **WHEN DARKNESS FALLS**

Kaizer Nyatumba
A collection of poems by a leading journalist
Was R21.00 now R12.00

Above prices include VAT. Please send cheques or postal orders to: COSAW P O Box 421007, Fordsburg, Johannesburg, 2033

The Need to Push Our Own Literature

Andries Walter Oliphant

In a recent interview I conducted with the poet and academic Keorapetse Kgositsile, on the need for the transformation of the literary curriculum at all levels of education, he wryly observed: 'At South African universities it has become fashionable to establish what is generally called Centres for African Studies. The universities are, as can be expected very proud of these research centres. It has made me wonder what the rest of the university is concerned with'. Although these institutions are doing valuable work, the irony and the effective marginalisation of African studies, seems to have escaped local educational planners, the intelligentsia and educational corps.

It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find African literature subsumed as marginal components in Departments of Comparative Literature. This tendency continues in South Africa despite the fact that African literature has, since decolonisation in the aftermath of World War II, become an important component of World Literature. African literature, Hans Zell and Helene Silver point out in their *Readers Guide to African Literature* has since the 1970s been one of the fastest growing disciplines in America and Europe where it has become a significant part of the syllabus at schools, colleges and the universities.

This is not case in South Africa. African literature is grudgingly accommodated only to be marginalised in all institutions. If, for example, we confine ourselves to African literature in English at tertiary levels, surveys reveal that African literature is conspicuous by its absence. With the exception of some of the black universities where the presence of a radicalised student body necessitated the introduction of African literature, and one or two liberal white academic institutions, African literature is generally dismissed as inferior to British English literature.

In these institutions, English literature is, traditionally defined as primarily British and secondarily African, American, Asian and so forth, predominates. Within this framework, which posits England as the originating centre of the English language and literature, a strictly stratified order of significance and value is upheld. At worst, it regards African literature and culture as insignificant and peripheral and at best as a curiosity of transitory value.

In literature and language, broad parameters for a programme of reconstruction are beginning to crystallise. It is accentuated by demands for a democratic language policy in

which the legacies of linguistic imperialism and domination will be eliminated. These developments must be accelerated and enhanced.

Tentative steps in the direction of reconstruction are evident in some institutions in the face of conservative intransigence. Provisional formulations for the reconstruction of the literary curriculum are also being made at various levels by progressive educationists within and outside the formal educational structures. Much of it is still half-hearted. These developments should, in my view, have as their point of departure the critical demotion of the dominant racially informed tradition with its colonial outlook. It must be replaced by an inclusive alternative.

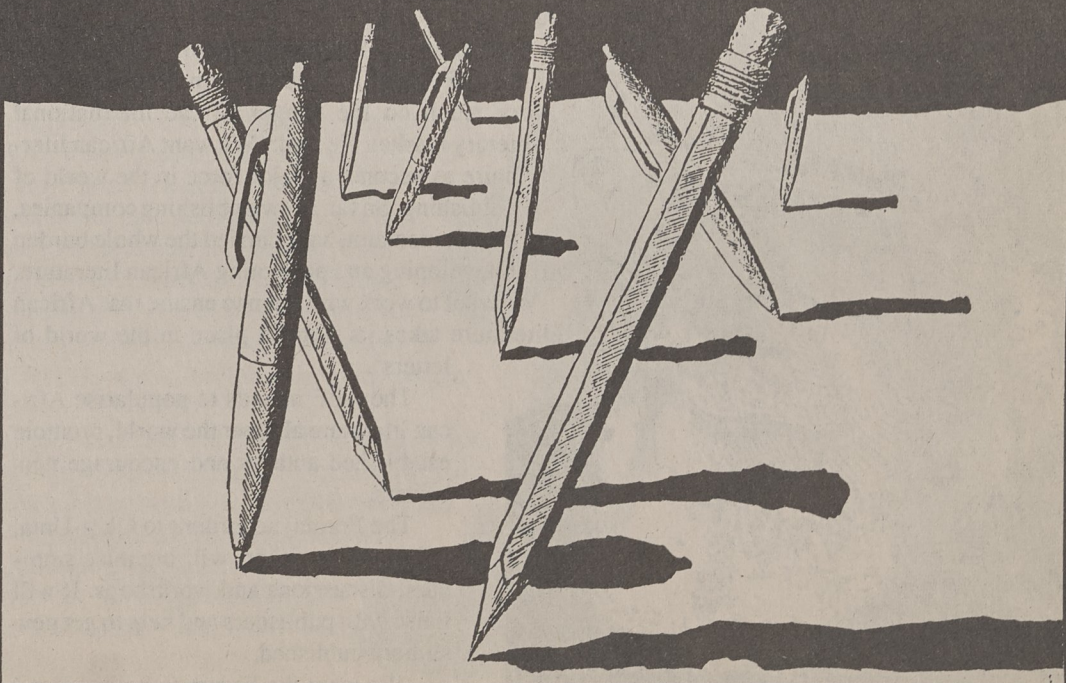
Space does not permit presenting a detailed proposal for a reconstructed curriculum here. I will suffice with the suggestion that the existing Eurocentric tradition be replaced by the previously dormant and now assertively emergent tradition which encodes a people's experience in the long quest for freedom and democracy. This literature in its oral forms of narrative and poetry, its collective theatre, prison accounts, biographies, poetry, short stories, novels, journalistic modes, literary reception and other syncretic popular forms should serve as the underpinnings of a field through which the literature of the rest of the world is drawn into on the basis of an inclusively defined relevance and comparative method. By privileging South African and African Literature in the curriculum, and reading it in relation to the literature of Africa and the rest of the world, the foundations of a self-empowering educational structure will be laid.

Such a curriculum open to democratic participation, reformulations and changes, will focus critically on literature, its forms, institutions and social functions. This will ensure that the barbarism inherent to cultural chauvinism and domination is rendered ineffective as emergent values are given the space to be shaped and developed by all members of society.

New Nation

(10.7.92)

This is a shortened version of a presentation made by Andries Walter Oliphant, editor of the Congress of South African Writers' (Cosaw) publication Staffrider, at the Uppington College of Education during a seminar of the promotion of African Literature in school and tertiary institutions, organised by the Orange Free State region of Cosaw.



Multiple Literatures: One National Culture

The challenges of publishing and translating the various South African literatures

Sizwe Satyo

Nearly ten years ago, the Belgian scholar Professor Albert S Gerard spoke of what he called 'prospects of a national history of South African literature'. He was quick to point out that to explain that 'national literature' as the literature produced by a nation cannot be regarded as a strikingly original statement.' (1983:36) He gave as his reason for this observation the fact that '... it was taken for granted that a nation was a community of people whose unity was established by the fact that all its members spoke the same language, and thus had no difficulty in understanding one another, and in addition to this grass-roots unity, one common set of institutions — executive, legislative and judicial — which is the structural foundation of the state, corresponding at the top ... linguistic unity was a sufficient basis for literary identity'. (Ibid.)

However, polyethnic and multilingual states like ours pose a great problem. Literature in South Africa has been produced through the medium of English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu, Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Tsonga. Gerard makes the following obvious comment about South African writers: 'Some writers are white and some are not. Among the latter, some are black and others offer a wide spectrum of intermedia

chromatic features resulting from racial cross-fertilisation.

'Each of these three groups is supposed to be prevented by law from sharing fully in the experience and culture of the others'. (Ibid.,37) This situation (it is now being gradually changed) has resulted in ethnic literatures that have generally been viewed as self-contained and isolated.

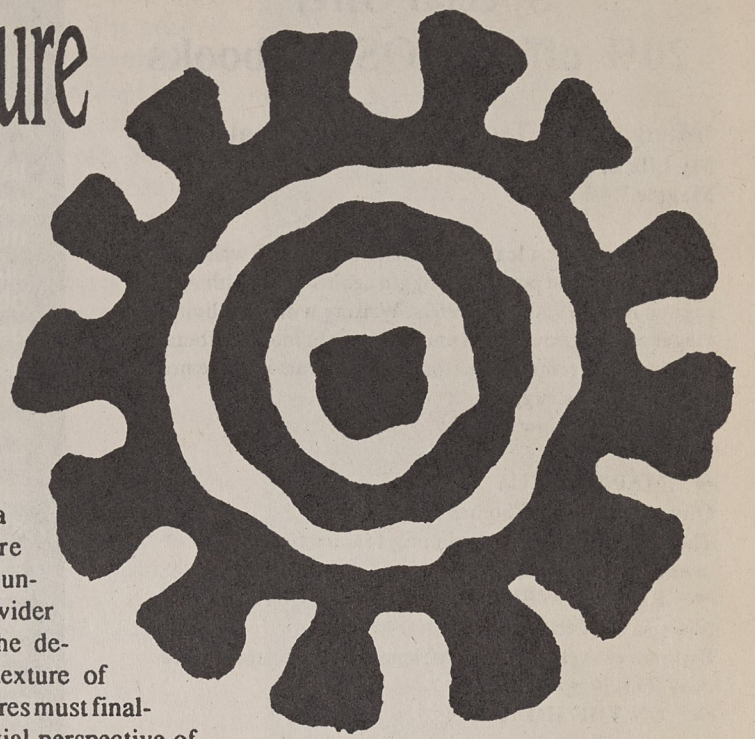
I believe that this discussion marks the start of the process of engaging in the task of breaking down the ethnic and linguistic boundaries that have kept us apart for such long time that we were beginning to forget what our brothers and sisters in the other linguistic or ethnic camp looked like.

Working across these artificial boundaries should enable us to comprehend the lives and times of not only the various South African writers but also South Africans generally. Put differently, we will get an opportunity to assess how human nature (represented by a more representative sample of South Africans) has responded to Apartheid, a word which according to Jacques Derrida 'No tongue has ever translated ...' — as if all the languages were defending themselves shutting their mouths against a sinister incorporation of the thing by means of the word, as if all the tongues were refusing to give an equivalent, refusing to let themselves be contaminated through the contagious hospitality of word-

for-word'. (Gallagher 1991: 10)

The study of these multiple literatures as aspects of a country's literature should enhance our understanding of the wider national culture. The details, flavour and texture of each of these literatures must finally provide an essential perspective of the wider national culture. In this exercise we should also be able to account for the linguistic drifting away from or to some languages as media or literary output. While each of these literatures may have its own substance, that substance is a crucial element of the general South African literary history. We will be able to discern patterns of dominance in the development of South African literature. Therefore even the less developed literatures must be studied very closely because they may be good indicators of political manipulation by the government and its surrogates in the publishing world.

Accomplished writers who are multilinguals should therefore be encouraged to write in any of the South African languages. The works of those who are monolinguals could be made available to a wider South Africa via translation.



References:

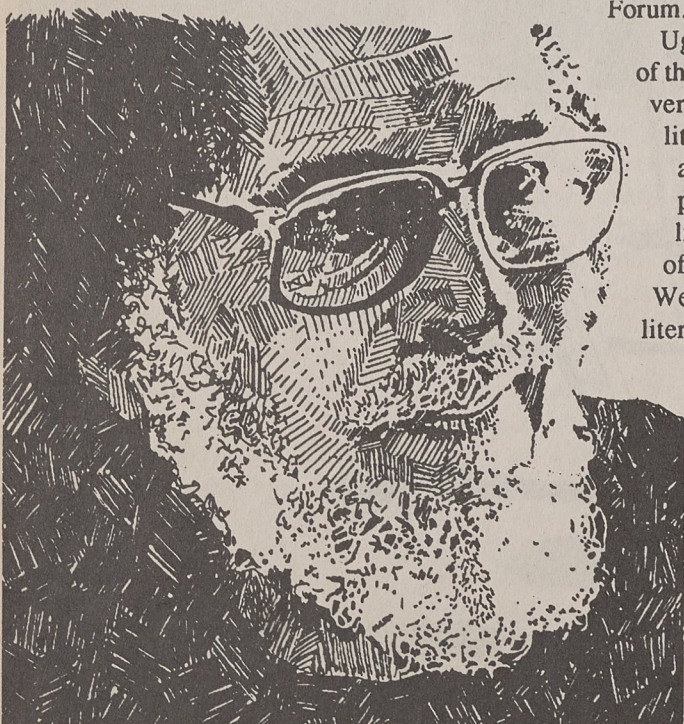
Gallagher, S van Z 1991. A story of South Africa: J M Coetzee's fiction in context. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
Gerard, A S 1983. Comparative literature and African literatures. Pretoria: Via Afrika.

COSAW member, Sizwe Satyo, presented these introductory remarks at a panel discussion which took place at the Mayibuye Centre, University of Western Cape (8/9/92)



African Literature Forum Launched

Vicky Mumasaba



A new African literary organisation, with some heavyweight support, has recently been formed in London. The African Literature Forum (ALF) aims to promote African literary activities in Africa itself and abroad.

Commenting on the new organisation, Professor Dennis Brutus, the South African liberation poet, said: 'African writers have a duty to promote literature and help it expand. This is best done when the writers are organised in groups such as the ALF'.

Dennis Brutus, who has set up several literary organisations in the US is a member of the steering committee of the Forum.

Ugandan poet Vincent Magombe, co-ordinator of the ALF, explained that African literature is still very much on the fringes of the international literary market. He said: 'We want African literature to become a major force in the world of publishing. So far, a few publishing companies, like Heinemann, have carried the whole burden of developing and promoting African literature. We want to work with them to ensure that African literature takes its rightful place in the world of letters'.

The ALF intends to popularise African literature all over the world, promote established authors and encourage new writers.

The Forum, according to Okot-Uma, a founder member, will organise seminars, discussions and workshops. It will liaise with publishers and help to get new authors published.

'We want the Forum to be just that,' he said, 'an organisation where African

writers and thinkers can get together with their counterparts from other parts of the world and discuss literary and cultural issues'.

Another committee member, the renowned novelist, Dr Buchi Emecheta added: 'It is high time that we, who have already made a mark in African literature should actively assist the new generation of talented creators of the literary word'.

South African novelist Lauretta Ngcobo said: 'An organisation like the ALF should help centre our approaches and anchor our Africanness in both expression and thought. It is through working together that we may identify those elements which tend to hamper and dilute our thinking as expressed in our writing'.

Although the organisation has been formed only recently, it had already attracted a distinguished panel of participants. Committee members include novelists Syl Cheney Coker, Sirr Anal Keleuljang and Adewe Maja-Pearce and journalist and author Anver Versi.

International organisations such as Index on Censorship and publishers, Heinemann, James Curry, the Commonwealth Institute and others have opted for corporate membership status.

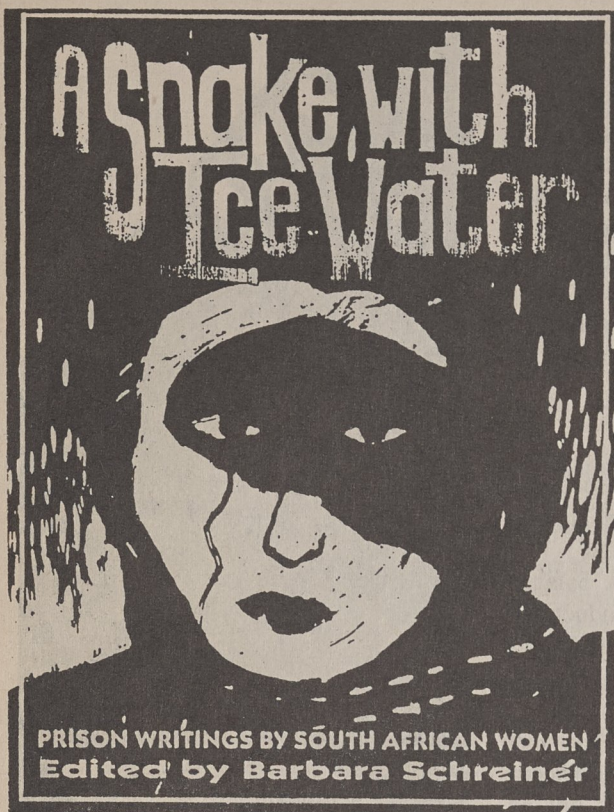
A Dutch publisher, Jan Kees van de Werk has welcomed the formation of the ALF and said: 'There will be a lot of information to be shared. This will strengthen African publishing'.

Among other activities, the Forum plans to publish a newsletter for members and also to launch the first English language Art periodical.

Anver Versi, who is currently setting up an editorial board for the publication, said: 'A high quality African arts publication is long overdue. We hope to showcase the best in African prose, poetry, graphics and other creative fields. But we also want to leave room for new and unknown artists to display their talent'.

Membership of the Forum is open to all who are interested in African literature.

For further information, contact: Dr Paulinos Vincent Magombe, co-ordination African Literature Forum, 294 Misenenden, Aylesbury estate, Inville Road, London SE17 2HY. Tel. 071 252 5293



The COSAW Publication Snake with Ice Water, edited by Barbara Schreiner, was launched on 28/09/92 at Sof'town Jazz Club. The following is an address by Barbara Masekela at the launch

We have met here to launch the publication of a remarkable book which compels us to share in the experiences of former women prisoners. I say compel because it is many ways the kind of book that offers an unwelcome shocking glimpse into a world women are being thrust into: a relentlessly cruel world of continuous measured acts of torture deliberately left out in dozens ever little eternities of time. This book forces us to observe albeit with an air of uninvolved fellow womankind seized on a pin of acute suffering characterised by loneliness, helplessness, bitterness, hopelessness, anger, longing, retrospection and indescribable determination to overcome their jailers.

It is an act of great courage, generosity and love that these women, our sisters, our comrades, have dared to share with us their experiences. We cannot, but bear the responsibility of ensuring that the democratic, united, non-racial South Africa for which so many have made the ultimate sacrifice, for which so many innocent continue to die or live unfulfilled scarred lives becomes a reality without snake pity prisons.

For any woman who is a prisoner in apartheid South Africa, it is not only a battle to survive the experience with dignity and lack of bitterness but also to return to the outside world where women are still prisoners of a patriarchal society bent on keeping them shackled to the dictates of a social and political system based on racism and exploitation.

The dirty secret of women's prisons is out and we must expose it to the merciless scrutiny of those who have designed our fate for more than four decades and to those whom we will elect to create a democratic South Africa. Together we must work and ensure that history does not repeat itself.

We live in a country which has continued to be a monumental jail for all its citizens whether they know it or not. We can only free ourselves by an act of declaring ourselves free first so that we can be enabled to change this South African institution into a place that will nurture the human spirit, and not destroy and distort our people.

We have today amongst us some of the finest, strongest and most resilient ex women prisoners. We work with them, live with them and never give a thought to what they encountered behind bars. That is because we depend on them, rely on them and draw strength in part because of the unspeakable anguish they have been able to overcome. We salute them.

But today we are also called upon to remember the others, those who did not have a whole family to return to because it was shattered by the trauma of brutal separation, those who did not have a political movement to unfold them in the hard embrace of work to realise strong ideals of freedom and justice, because they were caught in the web of apartheid. Not least we must pledge our-

Miles To Go Before We Sleep:

Is Political Poetry Dead After February 1990?

Tatamkulu Afrika

With, hopefully, the advent of democratic government, the granting of basic human rights and the practical implementation of such rights, political poetry, in the broad sense of the word 'political', that is, 'the science of government', should logically come to an end. However, when the post-apartheid cultural and economic condition of a people is not so much the heritage of government per se as the great social evil of racism which underlay that government, and the virus of that racism is still rampant in far too many misguided hearts, then it becomes imperative for the poet to continue writing in pursuance of the dream of happiness for all which will not be summarily realised by any people's election or governmental decree. Such poetry will also be 'political' poetry and never more so than when the economic condition of a people is involved ...

Today, we are worried by the seemingly endless violence and bloodshed which has engulfed our country and every effort should, indeed, be made to have it end. But, quite frankly, were the violence to end tomorrow, no new Eden would arise from the ashes of our devastated land because the true and most terrible legacy of apartheid is not violence and bloodshed, but poverty, starvation, joblessness, collapse of own cultural values, cynicism, lovelessness and despair ...

To bring home the pitiful condition of most of our people and to arouse the compassion which is the only panacea for that condition, is the new socio-political task of our post-February 1990 poets, a task which ... will weigh upon us for many decades and must be borne in the gutsy and uncompromising manner that characterised our writing. That the manner of that writing will suffice for the new, more delicate task, is simply not so — the day of the slogan, the oral call to arms which worked so well from the public platform but mostly failed on the printed page, is past. Here again, by this I do not mean that the styles, themes, cultural affinities of those who abstained from the hurly-burly of the political struggle prior to February 1990 and then (as now) pronounced demotic poetry to be non-art, must be aped. No, our poetry must, indeed, be more demotic than ever before, but now we must not go for the weapon-wielding arm but hopefully, still latent tenderness of the human heart, striking at it till it bleeds and, through that bleeding, finds not only its

own redemption but the redemption also of our agonising land. To take from a non-African culture that which is good and is assimilable into African culture, is not a betrayal of the latter but a duty towards it — but slavish imitation is betrayal, an admission of perpetual inadequacy, a strengthening of the so liable to the perpetual paternalism of the non-African culture, a strengthening, worst of all, of the spirit of predominantly white racism that has dogged and ravished our society for so many years.

The thought occurs to me here — are not some of us who claim to be revolutionaries ourselves imposing forms of paternalism on others without realising what we are about? Many of us, caught up in the ground swell of reformist and progressive fervour, are placing slogans in the mouths and flags in the hands of the impressionable without pausing to consider whether these are compatible with the African tradition, and arrogantly to say the least, not pausing to evaluate whether what we proffer is really better than that which we wish to have replaced. I am open to correction, but I have the feeling there is a vast, silent Africanism out there which does not really approve and which we should beware of someday calling us to account.

This seems a digression, but it is not since it all comes back to the kind of socio-political poetry we must now begin to write, namely:

A poetry that does not preach but merely starkly delineates; a poetry that arises from personal experience and personal pain; a poetry that, being all heart, seizes another's heart; a poetry that is subtly our poetry, this country's, here, now, is that; without striving to be that; is that by being merely, from the deep self, that ... and ... a poetry that, in addition to being all this, is also a poetry that is lyrical in the timeless, universal sense of being lyrical; is clear, not elitist and arcane; is, in short, a demotic poetry that is still good poetry and a poetry that a nation will want to read, not just the 'elitist' few.

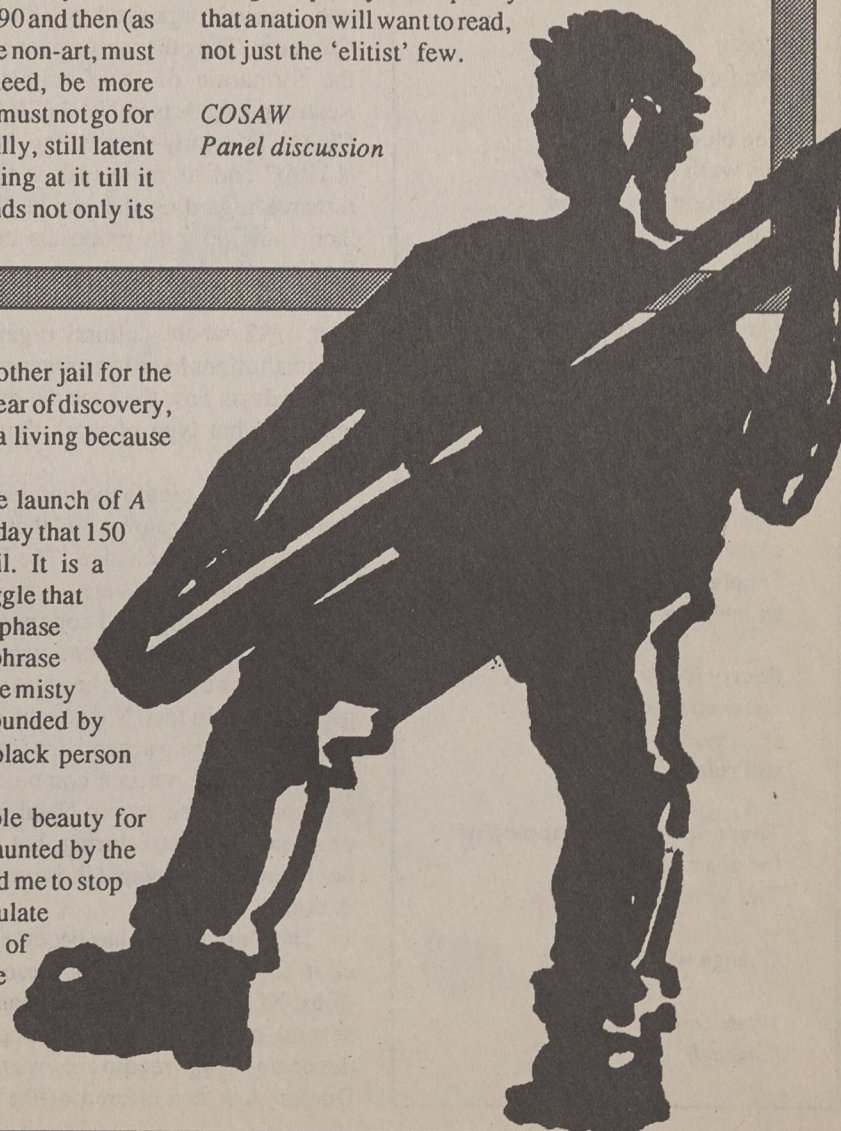
COSAW
Panel discussion

selves to fight the bigotry that create, another jail for the released prisoner who is forced to live in fear of discovery, and the shame of not being able to earn a living because of a jail record.

It is an appropriate evidence that the launch of *A Snake With Ice Water* occurs on the very day that 150 comrades have been released from jail. It is a poignant memory of our continuing struggle that they are being released into the bitterest phase of our struggle when more than ever the phrase 'a new dispensation' is yet a chimera in the misty distance from where we yet stand, surrounded by the violent reality, where the life of a black person costs nothing.

I cannot assist to speak of the terrible beauty for sparks of writing in this book. I am still haunted by the torrents of tears that blinded me and forced me to stop and think. That is good writing. I congratulate Barbara Schreiner for this important work of editing and as for the sharp candour, the economy of toilet paper, notebooks, we can only say, write, women write!

Amandla!



The Congress of South African Writers and COSATU Culture Unit have facilitated the formation of a structure for other cultural disciplines in Natal. This emanates from the origins of COSAW, which took the form of a broad cultural organisation. Hence many cultural activists from different art disciplines joined COSAW. To meet their needs, e.g. dramatists, visual artists, etc., there had to be structures focusing directly on those disciplines, thus the Theatre Alliance of Natal was formed. These structures then decided to form a co-ordinating structure, which we termed Natal Culture Congress (NCC). The organisations that constitute the NCC are COSAW, TAN, NAWAO, MANA, SAWCU, NOVAV, COVIS, etc.

The Natal Culture Congress, from its inception, has been trying to assist other organisation to take off the ground, as they lack financial resources. When talks with government at National level started, here in Natal the NCC also initiated talks with the parastatals like the Natal Performing Arts Council. The main objective of these talks was to try and democratise these structures. In 1990 there were a number of meetings between Napac and NCC. According to the Natal Culture Congress (NCC) the democratisation of Napac meant the following:

Certain Naive Propositions on Which to Base The Constitution Of The New South Africa

All men shall live as one.

and women too.

To hate is not a crime, apartheid is.

Was.
(And ever shall be).

The blood of the lamb will wash your sins away.
The blood of the land will wash its sins away.

Rainstorms and rivers erode not nor wash the soil away.
They are beautiful and can be dammed.

Poetry is the unacknowledged

legislator of mankind.
People may be bound by invisible lines.

Poetry is the legislator's unacknowledged dream.
Free verse will rule.

There are no verse-apologists for apartheid.
The Voice is not verse.

Change will be radical.

Simon Lewis
(England)

Towards A Democratic Culture in Natal

Restructuring Arts in Natal

1. It must serve the wider community. Napac must reach out to the black community and not serve only a small section of the community.
2. The resources that they have must be decentralised for the development of arts in all sections of our community.
3. Reduce the expenses of importing productions at high costs. Since such productions are only viewed by a small number of people and there is usually a great loss.
4. Management Board of Napac be democratically elected and not appointed by Provincial Administrator.

What has been achieved?

From these negotiations there was agreement to form an outreach programme called KWASA. This programme was to be jointly directed by NCC and Napac. At the present moment there has only been one festival organised by KWASA in Clermont. The other agreement was about the formation of the Commission for Restructuring Arts in Natal (CRAN). The CRAN is jointly formed by NCC and NAPAC and its main task is to initiate research regarding the arts in Natal and then come up with proposals that could facilitate the democratisation of the Arts.

There has been a Commission in August 1992 where cultural organisations and institutions have been presenting their proposals on how they see the restructuring and what type of work they are involved in.

This might create the impression that there is a lot of progress and that Napac is willing to accept change. The reality is that these agreements are a way of trying to side-step change and continue to cling to power. Kwasa has done very little to ensure decentralisation because of the capacity it has. In fact, Napac sees Kwasa as a means of getting acceptance from grass-roots people. Cran is a commission that will research the arts in Natal and table proposals for restructuring, but Napac is not bound to implement those recommendations.

The Durban Arts has become interested in the developments of these negotiations. NCC has met with Durban Arts on several occasions and the proposal for decentralising resources was tabled. Durban Arts has offered office space to

NCC. Some funding has also been allocated to NCC.

An interesting development is that Durban City Council is suggesting that NCC link up with Napac before they allocate R6 000 000 to Napac. NCC has tabled the abovementioned demands to Napac. Napac is expected to address these demands before NCC approves their funding. However, Napac is still not willing to change or rather address these demands.

NCC DEMANDS TO NAPAC

1. **Imbalances in audiences:** Eurocentric nature of NAPAC productions appeals more to whites. This must change.

2. **Balance in productions:** A balance should be struck between productions brought from abroad at exorbitant costs and local productions to promote the development of local talent.

3. **Kwasa:** This programme has just scratched the surface of the cultural needs of the wider community. It is not an adequate answer for a meaningful realisation of the artistic and cultural aspirations of the broader community in this region.

4. Human resources:

a) It is important to know whether NAPAC is overstaffed or understaffed. Overstaffing may be draining NAPAC of vital finances that could be used elsewhere.

b) Because of NAPAC's Eurocentric corporate culture, staffing in management and administration is almost entirely white. NAPAC has to be made more representative of the full spectrum of the city and regional community in terms of its activities in the city and region. Representatives needs to be reflected in its staffing.

c) There should be human resources training programmes geared towards bringing other races onto the mainstream of management and administration structure of NAPAC.

d) Relations between workers and management must be improved.

5. **NAPAC/Government links:** If it becomes clear that the board of NAPAC cannot be democratised because of statutory constraints, this committee must find ways and means of overcoming that obstacle.

The last NCC meeting has resolved to pull out of negotiations with NAPAC if they are not willing to address these demands. At face value Natal seems to have apartheid structures that are prepared to negotiate and co-operate, but in essence, these structures are still clinging to their old ways and to power.

There is a need to prepare for the future now. Debates on how Culture should be restructured in a Democratic South Africa should be held at local level. This will ensure that our membership is well informed and are also contributing to this process of formulating a democratic arts policy. There should be an effort to form and strengthen the cultural structures. This will ensure that there is a two-way flow of information from local level to regional level. We also need to discuss the form of the structures that will be relevant to the development of arts at local level.

Lastly, these structures should be formed in a way that will enable linking-up at regional and national levels. Some comrades suggested Local Arts Councils, but that is still subject to discussions at local level.

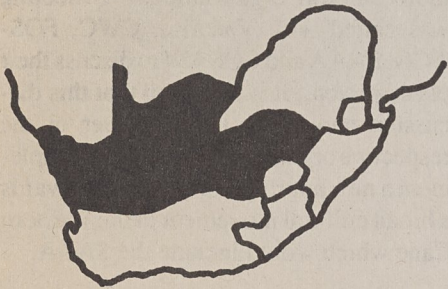
This report was published in the COSAW Natal Newsletter - Vol 1 No. 4 (September 1991)



Brief Reports From COSAW Regions

July - September 1992

OFS/Northern Cape Report by Lionel Beukes (Co-ordinator)



Working groups are established in 3 strategic areas in the OFS, namely Welkom, Bloemfontein and Aliwal North. Members are scattered all over the region which is very big, and makes it difficult for us to organise events on a regular basis that include the whole membership. The Goldfields working area set the example to all the other working areas in running and organising educational events.

The visit of Nancy Morejón contributed much to our development programme in the rural areas. Visits of international writers boost the morale of our grassroots writers, especially writers in the rural areas. After she left the OFS, experienced/skilled writers that can assist us in our future programmes, joined the organisation. We see this as a victory because the OFS lacked the membership of more established writers. These writers have undertaken to conduct workshop for COSAW.

There is still a growing interest of COSAW in the Northern Cape, especially after our successful seminar on African Literature. Teachers are now busy promoting children's literature by encouraging them to write poetry. We hope to compile a barefoot publication on their writings.

Another barefoot publication is the initiative of the Welkom working area will soon be published. It will include short stories in the indigenous languages.

African Voice: Newspaper

After producing our first edition (26 June 1992) we were flooded with calls and letters encouraging us to produce a follow-up copy of the 'educative project'.

Although we have worked around the clock trying to bring in advertisements (which are the backbone and source of income for the paper), prospective advertisers would like to see the paper established by community members.

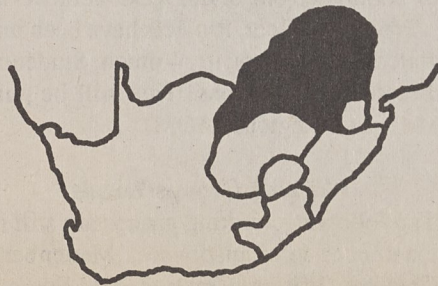
Because of lack in finance, we have decided to stop the project while we are still working out ways and means of securing financial backing for it.

Membership Involvement

After a successful meeting with Mike van Graan (COSAW Projects Officer) who visited the region for two days, we worked on a programme that caters for the needs of

our members, who are not involved in the activities of the organisation. The majority of our members are involved in drama. He suggested the name of John O'Toole, and after consultation with the members they responded immediately informing us that they would like to have him as a facilitator. Dr O'Toole conducted theatre workshops during October 1992.

Transvaal Report by R Seakhoa (Co-ordinator)



This report focuses on important events—since the June 1992 National AGM.

1. Important Events:

a. Monthly Debate Series

Takes place every last Saturday of the month, we have now had two since the last National AGM.

b. Monthly Readings

These take place during last Friday of every month. Here we also had two since the last National AGM (June 1992).

c. Book Talks

Since the AGM, we had one during August, focusing on publishing.

d. Introduction To Foreign Literature

'Introduction to French and Afro-French Literature', 5 September 1992, Johannesburg Art Gallery Auditorium, Johannesburg. Here, the reading programme is accompanied by music, has a director, producer and readers who read pre-selected material.

e. Buskers: Art In The Park

This is basically a performance type of literary art, readings of poetry, prose and excerpts from novels. It will be the first time this year (4 September 1992) that we take it to the parks—in association with the Johannesburg Art Gallery (Joubert Park).

f. Special Events

Nancy Morejón's visit

The programme consisted of talks, readings, workshops and press/media interviews. This took place in Johannesburg, Mamelodi, Thembisa, Mmabatho, and Soweto.

Ruth First Literary Commemorative Day

A joint event was held with the Market Theatre Laboratory. It took place at the Market Theatre Laboratory, Johannesburg, on 23 August 1992. The programme

consisted of readings of her works, speeches/anecdotes from those who worked with her and a moving tribute by Nadine Gordimer.

Thami Mnyele Commemorative Day

It took place in July 1992 to mark the murder of this artist. It took place in Thembisa.

One of the strongest recommendations is that COSAW should consider making this an annual national event, in memory of all the fallen artists.

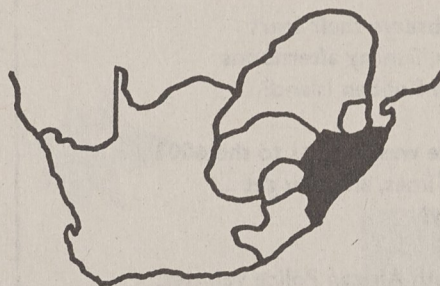
Mass Action

Part of the overall rolling mass action, we took part in attending meetings, helping to draw up the action programme and sending members to participate in the actual cultural component of the mass action (against PACT—Pretoria)

Farewell Reading for Keorapetse Kgositsile

Organised by Vice-President (for Administration), this took place on 21 August 1992 at the University of Bophuthatswana, Mmabatho. It was attended by COSAW members from Mmabatho, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soweto, East Rand, Johannesburg, including the Transvaal co-ordinator.

Natal Report by Dumisani Phungula (Co-ordinator)



Nancy Morejón's visit

Nancy Morejón arrived in Natal on the 23rd July with W Kgositsile. She conducted a workshop on poetry and a seminar on Arts and Liberation in Latin America. The workshop and seminar was extremely well attended.

Video Show

On the 18th July we had a video presentation on Nguqi wa Thiong'o. From the video viewing a discussion around literature in a post-apartheid South Africa was initiated.

Projects Oral Literature

A cassette on oral literature has been completed and we are now considering duplicating it. A suggestion of another cassette of young oral poets as the completed cassette could not accommodate

them, is now being considered.

The interviews of the youth who have been involved in violence is still in process. Publication of these interviews will be available soon at the COSAW Natal offices.

Meetings

General meeting was held on the 2nd August at COSAW offices. This was a report back meeting on the National AGM. From the deliberations of the meeting we came up with a number suggestions in relation to implementing the National AGM resolutions.

Workshops

We had a short-story writing workshop on 21, 22 and 23 August. The workshop was conducted by Nise Malange, Themba Faya and Tiki Phungula. Most of the participants of the workshop were from COSAW writing school. The workshop dealt with story-telling and Zulu short-story writing.

CAN Themba Library

The Short Story Writing course that was organised under the auspices of COSAW Writing School has facilitated members to use our Can Themba Library. As section of our Can Themba Collection has been taken by the St Wendolins local to their community resource centre in a form of suitcase library. We are planning to have some of our activities there.

General

We are in a process of printing T-shirts with COSAW logo as part of fund raising; screens are being designed. COSAW is also participating in the move to buy capital radio that is to be converted into community radio and have as its focus education. Negotiations are underway.

Writers' Talkshop

The Writers' Talkshop is a forum where the writers meet to discuss and criticise their works. We hope to develop small working groups who are going to plan their schedules as there are different interests, e.g. short-stories—Zulu and English, Poetry, Script writing, etc. The first meeting was held on the 29th August at 1.00pm and we hope to have these meetings once a month.

Western Cape Report by G Engelman (Co-ordinator)



Projects

Writers' School

The following workshops have been

conducted the past year. Facilitators were trained to conduct creative writing workshops at the NTORO centres; Manenberg Creative writers did an essay writing workshop; Rondebosch Boys' High School had creative writing workshops for 3 months; the material was collated in a small booklet for the students; a script writing workshop was held for radio and theatre for members; two short story writing workshops were held over a period of two months in 1991 and 1992; a poetry workshop was conducted on the same basis; workshops with the People's Youth Arts Festival in conjunction with the Baxter Theatre was concluded just after the National AGM and the material was published into a booklet; a criticism workshop was held with the Creative Arts Society at UWC; a creative writing workshop was conducted with the Anglican Church youth, recently; a workshop on the promotion of Afrikaans reading with the Afrikaans literacy magazine 'Ons Leer Mekaar' was postponed until November 1993.

Readings/Discussions:

Public readings were held On Violence in

March 1992 and Love Poetry in August 1992.

Discussions, which has been successful for the past months, are held once a month focusing on a specific theme, ie. the Writers' Talkshop. The following themes were used: Violence, Three Western Cape Women Writers, A C Jordan, Three Western Cape Writers, Writing for Children and Alex La Guma.

Panel discussions are held thrice a year. A discussion on 'Is Political Poetry Dead After February 1990?' was held in April this year.

Gyatri Spivak (English Department — Columbia University, USA) had a discussion with COSAW members on 15 August 1992 on 'Third World Literature in the Post Colonial Era'. Nancy Morejon Hernandez had a discussion on Cuban Literature in May 1992.

CAN Temba Resource Centre

After the decision to merge the library with a school or centre in a rural area, a meeting was held in Zolani near Montague with the Head of the Department at a school. We experienced problems with

the cataloguing due to examinations. After a discussion it was agreed to complete the cataloguing within the next week. The library will be moving at the end of September 1992. A monthly programme at the school and an opening of a cultural event will be part of our activities.

Publications

The *Staffrider* editorial collective met on various occasions to collate material for the magazine. Our region is responsible for Vol. 10 No. 3. All material has been sent off to the Publishing House.

A barefoot editorial collective has been established. This collective is responsible for editing work of members who send it in for possible publishing, and work which has been sent to authors for revision from the *Staffrider* collective. The group meets every two weeks to critique and edit the work. The edited work is then posted to the authors or individual feedback is given through a workshop. We are working towards a barefoot publication. Presently, the co-ordinator and the assistant are responsible for the marketing and distributing of all COSAW publications.

Since the visit of the national Projects Officer, Mike Van Graan, we have recently nominated one of our REC members as a Projects Officer. Projects have been initiated by members, ie. Women, Students, Barefoot publications. This will be pursued after Regional AGM.

Working Groups/Locals

The following working groups are still in existence, ie. Lansdowne, Manenberg Creative Writers, Creative Arts Society (UWC).

The working groups in the rural areas have collapsed due to most of the members moving to the urban areas for studying purposes. Some of them are part of the UWC Creative Arts Society. Funding has prevented us from visiting the areas on a regular basis. A meeting was held in the Stellenbosch area on having a regular programme whereby poets would visit the school and share their work with the students. This will happen in the third term with Stellenbosch, Paarl, Somerset West and Strand.

Networking

Western Cape Media Trainers Forum which is responsible for co-ordinating media training in the Western Cape. Our involvement entailed conducting a survey on media training, conducting workshops in the rural areas on COSAW with other media organisations and co-ordinating workshops for the Department of Extra Mural Studies at UCT.

Bush Radio, a community based radio station has been in existence for the past year. Our involvement entailed conducting workshops with community organisations on community radio, being involved in the constitutional discussions and assisting with the conference in Mexico with regards to input on women issues and the relationship with a community based radio station.

For the first time after three years we have been involved in the planning of the Weekly Mail BookWeek which entails organising panel discussions poetry readings, distribution of posters, inviting writers from other countries, etc.

We have been invited to attend a workshop at Community Arts Project (CAP), to discuss the project 'Speaking Out Against Violence Against Women: A Multi Media Course For Women'. The project consists

of a course and initial workshops for women. It is the first phase of developing a programme in communications, education and training, specifically geared to women's needs, issues, material and a cultural position. COSAW will be part of facilitating workshops with community organisations and teachers.

We have had a meeting with Intec College to discuss our joint involvement in their writing courses. This would entail exchanging manuals, assisting them with drawing up their own and information on a monthly basis due to students on COSAW's activities.

SAAA approached COSAW to have joint programmes in the Gallery. It was felt that this decision needs to involve more cultural organisations. A meeting was called with Vakalisa, CWC, FOS-ACO, SAAA and COSAW to discuss their participation. It was agreed that this discussion should be taken further in the respective organisations in order to implement a new approach and to work towards a broad cultural movement in the Western Cape which would include the SAAA.

Eastern Cape Report by Susie Mabie (Co-ordinator)



Progress

A critical reflection on the progress of the region is encouraging. The region is progressing at a positive pace. Membership involvement in the development of the region is good. I am pleased to report that the Eastern Cape region is in a healthy state. A problem area is, however, servicing members in the rural areas. This will be attended to when I visit these areas where we have COSAW members.

Plans to merge the CAN Temba Library with an existing rural Resources Centre is going well.

A regional AGM is scheduled for the 3 October 1992. A regional meeting is planned for the first weekend of September to elect a committee to prepare for the AGM.

Programme To Date

1. One regional meeting was held to date. Important items on the agenda were: Informing members on the development of COSAW nationally.
2. One regional workshop was held to date. Points discussed were: (i) problems which members have with regional programmes, e.g., why they do not attend, etc.; (ii) planning a regional programme.
3. A poetry workshop with Nancy Morejon. This workshop was well attended.
4. Twelve members are presently attending a typing course which COSAW negotiated for them.

Programmes

Committees

COSAW's Eastern Cape Editorial Collective

The Eastern Cape region of COSAW has recently created an editorial collective whose purpose is to foster writing in the

Continued on page 15

Boipatong: July 1992

Splendid February — two years ago,
broke the cages, ushered in a dream—
We sighed, imagined we saw the last:
Sharpeville, Soweto, Sebokeng.

Restive July — a nightmare taints the sky;
while new dispensations were clinched
in the comfort of wood-panelled rooms,
the earth shook in bloody Boipatong:

Maria Dlamini
Paulina Dlamini
Mathilda Hlubi
Elizabeth Kgaile
Nelly Kuba
Jeanet Lathen
Jemima Lathen
Samuel Lathen ...

Is someone calling out the names
of those stubborn but receding shadows:
Haroun, Steven Biko, Hector Petersen?

Do we hear them plead, observe their tears
while we sunbathe casually, Sunday afternoons
on the smoothed stones of Robben Island?

Now, add thirty-eight more wasted lives to the 6002
mentioned in yesterday's Times, and you get ...
since that brilliant February?

The killers: Koevoet in South African Police vehicles,
or the South African Police in Koevoet uniforms?
And magnanimous mine bosses — gave land to Koevoets?

But who will ensnare those evasive rodents?
Judge Goldstein? Agathachristied Waddington,
seasoned, flown in from imperial England?

A white women's words pierce the air—
'When will these ANC supporters stop killing
Inkatha members? Picture a frown on her face.

'Listen lady, blacks are in the majority, honey,
if you don't stop counting on National Party politics,
look deep into your heart ... and mourn with us ...

Questions gnaw as words again become weapons,
despite recent warnings by political aesthetes.
In this spring Gqozo's butchers bludgeoned in Bisho.

Abu Solomons
(Western Cape)

ACHMAT DANGOR



PRIVATE VOICES

Private Voices *Achmat Dangor*

A moving poetry collection which resonantly speaks of love and the erotic in the context of a changing social milieu.

R22.00

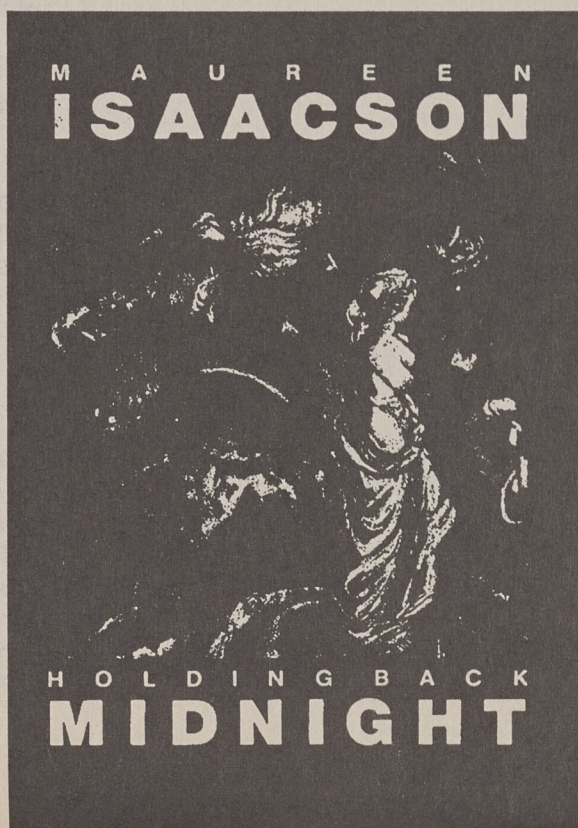
**Five New
Books From
GOSAW
Publishing**

An Axe in the Ice *Peter Horn*

Peter Horn's poetry exposes the superficiality of all debates which insist on a mechanistic opposition between aesthetics and politics.
R22.00

What's Love Got To Do With It? *Deena Padayachee*

A highly accomplished debut collection. This award-winning short story writer lays bare the dynamics of human interaction.
R25.00



MAUREEN ISAACSON

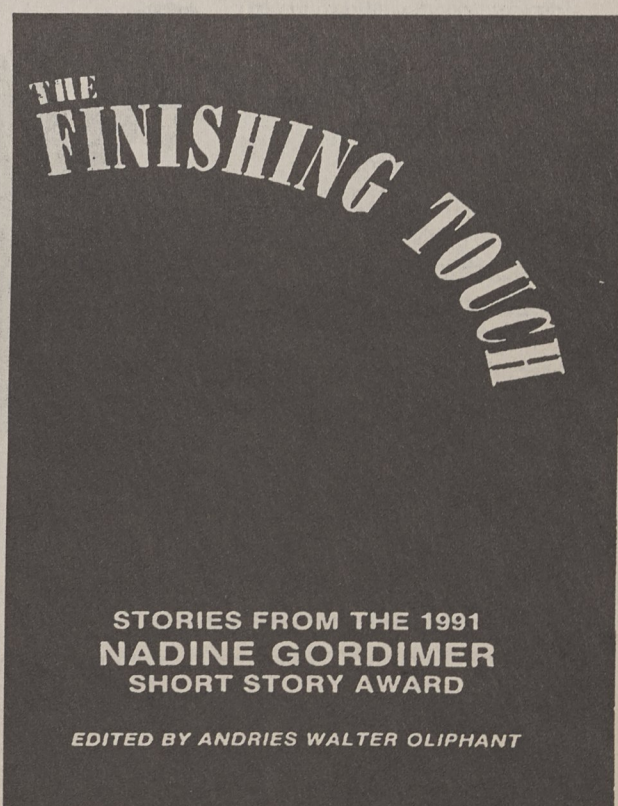
HOLDING BACK MIDNIGHT

Holding Back Midnight *Maureen Isaacson*

Stories by this well-known journalist, 'an entertainer of pyrotechnical effectiveness'.
R25.00

The Finishing Touch Stories From the 1991 Nadine Gordimer Short Story Award Edited by Andries Oliphant

A refreshing and powerful collection of short stories attesting to the depth of new talent.
R25.00



THE FINISHING TOUCH

STORIES FROM THE 1991
NADINE GORDIMER
SHORT STORY AWARD

EDITED BY ANDRIES WALTER OLIPHANT

Continued from page 14

region. Each of the six members of the editorial has experience either as a writer or an editor or both. And while the production of a locally-based magazine is one of the ultimate aims of the collective, it is not the immediate priority. More important is the tutorial feedback the members of the collective will offer to those who submit manuscripts, in the hope that constructive criticism will nurture the talents of likely future writers.

Each editor receives three pieces of writing from the co-ordinator (Susie Mabie) every two weeks, evaluates the material and writes an extended response to each piece. Usually a writer's work is allocated to a particular editor, so that continuity, and a rapport between writer and editor can be established. Those works which anyone finds difficult to assess will be passed on to another member of the collective, for a second or even third opinion, and any writing the members of the collective feel warrants publication will, at this stage, be sent to *Staffrider*.

Apart from offering written responses on a regular basis, the editorial hopes to be able to provide as much face-to-face contact with writers as possible — mostly in the form of workshops — since this is likely to be the most effective way of facilitating growth in the writing skills of members. Experienced and established writers, as well as members of the editorial collective, will be used in the workshops. With this kind of ordered and carefully-run programme, an Eastern Cape publication, of quality writing, could be available soon.

Programme:

5th September 1992

— Editorial workshop

October 1992

— Discourse between members and editorial; monthly feedback to members from editorial.

Quarterly

— Workshops with members and Editorial.

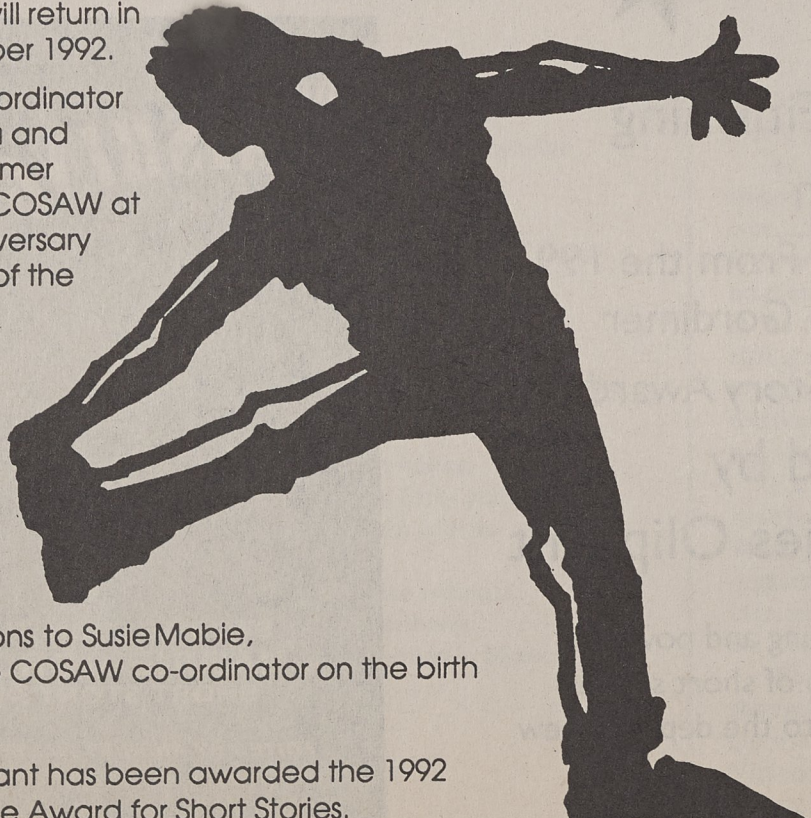
NOTICES

COSAW Members Meetings and Regional AGMs

1. Transvaal-AGM
21 November 1992
2. Eastern Cape-AGM
3 October 1992
3. Western Cape-AGM
26 September 1992
4. Natal-General members' meeting
18 October 1992.

COSAW Members Out & About

1. Vice-President (Publications) KW Kgositsile is presently on a one-year teaching fellowship at Wayne State University (Detroit) as professor of African Literature. He will return to South Africa during July 1993. The COSAW NEC has decided to co-opt Nadine Gordimer as Vice-President (Publications) during Kgositsile's absence.
2. Achmat Dangor (past COSAW Vice-President) is presently teaching South African literature at City College, New York. He will return to South Africa in January 1993.
3. Nise Malange (Vice-President — Projects) has recently returned from an international poetry conference held in Liege, Belgium. As COSAW's delegate, she presented a paper on Poetry and Freedom.
4. KW Kgositsile will represent COSAW at the African-Asian Writers' Conference to be held in Osaka, Japan (27 October to 5 November 1992).
5. A three person delegation from COSAW will meet with the Dutch Writers' Union in Amsterdam (December 1992) to discuss matters of mutual interest — a writers' exchange programme is one key area to be addressed.
6. Although postponed twice already, we are nevertheless confident of hosting Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka during March 1993. He will conduct a series of workshops, participate in panel discussions and present paper in all COSAW regions. Negotiations with Soyinka are continuing — watch press for details.
7. Andries Oliphant, COSAW general editor, has been invited to present a paper at Bad Boll, Germany, at the end of October. He will also represent us at the International Frankfurt Book Fair to be held during the first week of October 1992.
8. COSAW Vice President Nadine Gordimer is presently on a lecture tour in Japan, and will return in early November 1992.
9. Transvaal co-ordinator Raks Seakhoa and Nadine Gordimer represented COSAW at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Mozambican Writers' Association (AEMO) held during August/September 1992.
10. Congratulations to Susie Mabie, Eastern Cape COSAW co-ordinator on the birth of Alic.
11. Andries Oliphant has been awarded the 1992 Thomas Pringle Award for Short Stories.



Address, Fax and Telephone Numbers for COSAW Offices

National Office

P O Box 421007
Fordsburg
2033
Johannesburg
South Africa

4th Floor Twiga Centre
68 Central Road
Fordsburg
Johannesburg
South Africa

Fax: 833 2532
Tel.: 833 2530/1/3



Transvaal Regional Office

P O Box 10024
Johannesburg
2000
Marshalltown

2nd Floor
Ferreira Street
24 Ferreira Street

Fax: (011) 838 2362
Tel.: (011) 836 9594/5



Natal Office

Room 2,
6th Floor
Bigden House
505/7 Smith Street
Durban
4001

Fax: (031) 307 2926
Tel.: (031) 305 6583



OFS Office

P O Box 32
Welkom
9460

20 President Building
Room 111
Cnr. Bok & Melck Str.
Welkom

Fax: (0171) 357 4025
Tel.: (0171) 357 4025



Eastern Cape Office

P O Box
Korsten
4431
Port Elizabeth

Room 15b
Co-op Centre
52 Perl Road
6014 Korsten

Fax: (041) 43 4187
Tel.: (041) 43 4187

Western Cape Office

P O Box 418
Athlone
7764

1st Floor
Metropolitan Life Building
Cnr. Aden and Tembe St
Athlone
Cape Town

Fax: (021) 696 8366
Tel.: (021) 696 8405



GLOBE PRINTERS FORDSBURG JOHANNESBURG