

31st Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture

Towards racial justice: Will there be a change of heart?

Alan Paton

Towards Racial Justice

Will there be a change of heart?

By Alan Paton

South African Institute of Race Relations.

The Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé

Memorial Lecture 1979

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THE ALFRED AND WINIFRED HOERNLÉ MEMORIAL LECTURE

A lecture entitled the Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture (in memory of Professor R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, President of the South African Institute of Race Relations from 1934 to 1943, and his wife, Winifred Hoernlé, President of the Institute from 1948 to 1950, and again from 1953 to 1954), is delivered under the auspices of the Institute. Invitations to deliver the lecture are extended to people having special knowledge and experience of racial problems in Africa and elsewhere.

It is hoped that the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture provides a platform for constructive and helpful contributions to thought and action. While the lecturers are entirely free to express their own views, which may not be those of the Institute as expressed in its formal decisions, it is hoped that lecturers will be guided by the Institute's declaration of policy that "scientific study and research must be allied with the fullest recognition of the human reactions to changing racial situations; that respectful regard must be paid to the traditions and usages of various national, racial and tribal groups which comprise the population; and due account must be taken of opposing views earnestly held".

List of previous lecturers:

The Rt. Hon. J. H. Hofmeyr, *Christian Principles and Race Problems*

Dr. E. G. Malherbe, *Race Attitudes and Education*

Prof. I. D. MacCrone, *Group Conflicts and Race Prejudices*

Prof. W. M. Macmillan, *Africa Beyond the Union*

Dr. the Hon. E. H. Brookes, *We Come of Age*

Mrs. A. W. Hoernlé, *Penal Reform and Race Relations*

Dr. H. J. van Eck, *Some Aspects of the Industrial Revolution*

Prof. S. Herbert Frankel, *Some Reflections on Civilisation in Africa*

Prof. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Outlook for Africa*

Dr. Emory Ross, *Colour and Christian Community*

Vice-Chancellor T. B. Davie, *Education and Race Relations in South Africa*

Prof. Gordon W. Allport, *Prejudice in Modern Perspective*

Prof. B. B. Keet, *The Ethics of Apartheid*

Dr. David Thompson, *The Government of Divided Communities*

Dr. Simon Biesheuvel, *Race, Culture and Personality*

Dr. C. W. de Kiewiet, *Can Africa Come of Age?*

Prof. D. V. Cowen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity — Today*

The Most Rev. Denis E. Hurley, Archbishop of Durban, *Apartheid: A Crisis of the Christian Conscience*

Prof. Gwendolen M. Carter, *Separate Development: The Challenge of the Transkei*

Sir Keith Hancock, *Are There South Africans?*

Prof. Meyer Fortes, *The Plural Society in Africa*

Prof. D. Hobart Houghton, *Enlightened Self-Interest and the Liberal Spirit*

Prof. A. S. Mathews, *Freedom and State Security in the South African Plural Society*

Prof. Philip Mayer, *Urban Africans and the Bantustans*

Alan Pifer, *The Higher Education of Blacks in the United States*

Chief M. Gatsha Buthelezi, *White and Black Nationalism, Ethnicity and the Future of the Homelands*

Prof. Monica Wilson, ". . . So Truth be in the Field . . ."

Prof. Marshall W. Murphree, *Education, Development and Change in Africa*

Dr. G. R. Bozzoli, *Education is the key to Change in South Africa*

Dr. E. E. Mahabane, *The Road Ahead*

ALAN STEWART PATON

Alan Stewart Paton is one of the giants of the contemporary political and literary scene in South Africa. His works, particularly *Cry, the Beloved Country*, have won worldwide acclaim. And although his advanced political views have always precluded him from being elected to public office by frightened whites, his opinions on matters political have always been listened to with respect.

Born on January 11, 1903, Paton's early career was devoted to education. Perhaps his most formative years in this sphere were between 1935 and 1948 when he served as principal of the Diepkloof Reformatory for African boys outside Johannesburg.

In the political sphere, some of his most active years were devoted to the Liberal Party, of which he was chairman and later president, between 1954 and 1968, when the Prohibition of Improper Interference Act forbade the existence of racially mixed political parties. In 1960 his passport was removed, and was only restored in 1970 after he was invited to Harvard University in the United States.

Since the publication of *Cry, the Beloved Country* in 1948, he has authored numerous other works, including *Too Late the Phalarope*, *Debbie Go Home*, *Hofmeyr*, and *Apartheid and the Archbishop*. He received the CNA Literary Award for the two last-named works.

Indicative of his literary reputation is the number of universities which have conferred honorary D. Litt on him. These are: Trent (Canada), Yale, Kenyon College, Harvard, Michigan and Willamette in the USA, and Natal, Rhodes and the University of the Witwatersrand (LLD) in South Africa. He also holds an honorary DD from Edinburgh University.

It was only natural that Alan Paton, as one of the greatest upholders of the ideals of the Institute of Race Relations, should be asked to deliver the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture on this, the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

"TOWARDS RACIAL JUSTICE"

Will there be a change
of heart?

Delivered at the 50th Anniversary Conference of the S.A. Institute
of Race Relations, July 3, 1979

by

ALAN PATON



South African Institute of Race Relations
Johannesburg ;
1979.

TOWARDS RACIAL JUSTICE

This is the 35th Hoernlé lecture, delivered on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Institute of Race Relations. The title of the lecture is "Towards Racial Justice", and that indeed could be the title of every Hoernlé lecture. It was for racial justice that Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé lived their lives, lives for which there can be no other description than "noble". But it also has another title: "Will there be a change of heart"? And the reason for that will become clear.

The time is coming when the deliverer of the Hoernlé lecture won't have known the Hoernlés except by their reputation. In 1948 in the foreword to *Cry, The Beloved Country*, Alfred Hoernlé was called the "prince of *Kafferboeties*". The word *kafferboetie* is not heard so much nowadays, but at one time it was the supreme term of abuse that one Parliamentarian could hurl at another. We are bound on this occasion to ask ourselves the question:

Did we get anywhere?
Did we achieve anything?
Did we change anything?

Well, there is one change to record, that in polite circles you don't use the word *kafferboetie* any more. It has in some way become unacceptable to revile opponents for concerning themselves with the welfare of black people. Or perhaps I should say that it has become unacceptable in public.

It was Geoffrey Clayton, member of the Institute, Bishop of Johannesburg and later Archbishop of Cape Town, who made the most trenchant comment on the use of the word *kafferboetie*. He said:

"It has been left to professed Christians in this country to use the word which describes one who treats another man as a brother as a term of contempt. I should like to hear St. Paul's comment on that. And I don't think it is difficult to imagine Christ's comment on it."

Clayton and Hoernlé had a profound respect for each other. Although Hoernlé was not a churchman, he was held in great esteem by churchmen, and his funeral service was held in St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg. In my adult life there were for me three influential figures, Clayton, Hoernlé, and Hofmeyr. Clayton and Hoernlé admired each other. If Hoernlé and Hofmeyr admired each other, it was with what is known as a qualified admiration. If Clayton and Hofmeyr admired each other, it was from a

distance; after all Clayton was a Cambridge man, while Hofmeyr was only Oxford.

All three of these men were involved in the early days of the Institute, Hoernlé the most directly. All three had a gift of language, all three were of high intelligence, all three were devoted to the cause of justice, and especially justice in South Africa. All three were men of heart, but Hoernlé had the coolest mind. I don't like to say the coldest mind, because that could easily give the wrong impression. Hoernlé was not in any way a cold man, but he would call a spade a spade and leave it at that, whereas both Hofmeyr and Clayton would always sound a note of hope that the spade might be used for some useful and moral purpose. This is what Archbishop Hurley did in his presidential address of 1965. Hurley affirmed that no matter how desperate a situation might appear, if the human spirit is involved in it, there is always hope. This is in sharp contrast to the fear that afflicts so many of the people of the modern world, that if the human spirit is involved, there is no hope at all.

Hoernlé expressed his uncompromising view in his presidential address of 1941 in these words:

"My argument is at an end. But custom demands a peroration. Let me say then that I do not believe that our caste society will endure indefinitely. If I am a 'pessimist' it is not because I regard our caste society as permanent; change will come to it and transform it. But I am a pessimist in that **I deny that there is in our caste society either the will or the vision for planning and effecting this change.** Only complacency or self-delusion could lead us to believe otherwise. The changes which will come will be forced on us by world-forces and world-events over which humanity has little conscious control."

But even Hoernlé could not end on so devastating a note. He added:

"Meanwhile I continue to believe in the liberal spirit and try to be its servant to the best of my ability."

He added further:

"There is no spiritual bridge between the dominant and the dominated other than the bridge built by those who, loving liberty for itself, will not be content until it is enjoyed, not only by themselves, but by all those to whom it is now denied."

I shall quote one more example of Hoernlé's uncompromisingness. Those of you who remember the days of the

Second World War, 1939–45, will remember that the rise from obscurity of Adolf Hitler to a position of power from which he threatened the peace of the world, made many white South Africans realise that the arrangements of their own society could not bear moral scrutiny. This was especially true of our white soldiers up north, who learned to know black soldiers in a world where the colour bar made no sense at all. Their eyes were further opened by the Army Education Service, under Colonel E. G. Malherbe, whose second in command was Leo Marquard and whose civilian counterpart in the Union was Alfred Hoernlé, all three of them presidents of the Institute of Race Relations.

Smuts declared on January 21st 1942, at a meeting called by the Institute, that segregation had fallen on evil days. He said he hoped that there would never come a day when white and black "would no longer look upon themselves as . . . fellow South Africans, standing together in the hour of danger." He spoke about the neglect of African housing and the meagreness of African wages; these things would have to be given more attention. "Even if we don't do that in the interests of the Native, we shall have to do it in our own interests, because if we don't there will be something to pay". That reminds one of what Dr. Anton Rupert said: "If they don't eat, we won't sleep". Smuts declared that there was the best feeling between white and black in the new big army in the north, and that this was the forerunner of happiness to come. He concluded that men must give up old controversies, and build a new South Africa to a new pattern.

That was the talk of those days, the new pattern, the New Order. In May 1940 Hofmeyr told 30 000 people at a solemn service at the Wanderers Ground in Johannesburg: "Out of the present travail it is inevitable that a new world order will be born". In October 1940 Bishop Clayton told his synod that there would have to be a new world order. Synod established a Commission to define "what it believes to be the mind of Christ for this land". One of its tasks was to define the next step in the establishment of a new order in South Africa. In 1942 Oswald Pirow led sixteen Nationalists out of Malan's party to found the New Order Party, which had the support of the Ossewabrandwag. And finally on January 19th, 1943 Malan in Parliament called for a "speedy and radical reconstruction" of society, a more equitable distribution of wealth, social security for every individual, all provided that the position of the white and of white civilisation, should be maintained.

And where did Hoernlé stand in all this? In December 1940 the Society of Jews and Christians in Johannesburg held a sym-

posium on the new order. Clayton took part, and so also did Professor J. L. Gray, whom some of you will remember. Hoernlé was blunt and to the point. "Have we any reason to believe that as a result of this present war, a new order in the relations between whites and blacks will come into being? My answer to this question is No."

Smuts once made a famous statement in regard to what was called in those days "the Native question". He said: "We don't need a change of machinery, we need a change of heart". He may not quite have meant that. He may have meant: "There won't be any change of machinery until there has been a change of heart". But Hoernlé did not expect any change of heart.

Although Hoernlé could see no hope for a "new order", he believed that progress could be made in education, health, housing, recreation, agriculture, wages, and medical and dental training. Such things would keep hope alive, until the caste society was destroyed, not by white leadership within, but by world-events from without, or by the Africans "taking their fate into their own hands".

I shall close this discussion of Hoernlé's uncompromising views with a last quotation. Hoernlé told the Institute in 1941, "I have no use for confidence based on illusion or on ignorance, I have no use for a faith which is unthinking, or which can flourish only in the atmosphere of an intellectual holiday". Hoernlé could never have used as a peroration those lines of Arthur Hugh Clough:

*For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain.
Far back through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding, in, the main.
And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light.
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.*

Clayton and Hofmeyr and Churchill could and did quote these lines, but not Hoernlé. As far as I know Smuts never quoted them, but could and did write:

"The holistic Nisus, which rises, like a living fountain, from the very depths of the universe, is the greatest guarantee that failure does not await us, that the ideals of well-being, of truth, beauty, and goodness are firmly grounded in the nature of things and will not eventually be endangered or lost."

And the trouble with that is that if you are hungry, and your wages are low, and your aspirations are high, the holistic Nisus butters no parsnips.

In the 1940s Hoernlé expected no change in the heart of white South Africa. Was he right or was he wrong? Clough said that silently, irresistibly, when all seemed lost, the main would come flooding in. But what main would it be? Would it be Hoernlé's main or Hurley's main? Hurley quoted Belloc:

*Steep are the seas and savaging and cold
In broken waters terrible to try:
And vast against the winter night the wold,
And Harbourless for any sail to lie.
But you shall lead me to the lights, and I
Shall hymn you in a harbour story told.
This is the faith that I have held and hold
And this is that in which I mean to die."*

Well ladies and gentlemen, you pays your money and you takes your choice. These are the great voices of the early days of the Institute. You can have Hoernlé's pitiless logic; or one of Hofmeyr's thundering perorations; or one of Clayton's magnificent sermons, which always sounded not only the alarm, but also the call to duty; or in later days Hurley's assertion that the solution would begin to appear when love began to cast out fear and to alter radically the balance of our values.

What did Hurley mean? The solution of what? The solution of the question that has occupied the mind of the Institute for fifty years, the question that occupies the minds of all of us here, I won't say day and night, but I shall say some part of every day and night. And what is the question? The question is, can black hopes and white hopes be hoped together, on this southern piece of land which commands this extraordinary depth of love from us all? Can black security and white security be realised together? Can the black future and the white future be ensured together, or must the white future finally yield? Will there ever be a change of heart, or does white fear make it impossible? And when you say white fear, you must in justice say white arrogance, and you must say white greed. Are white South Africans like the baboon who will die by the calabash, because he won't open his hand and let go the pips?

All the great figures of our past worked for the change of heart — Hofmeyr, Winifred Hoernlé, the Rheinallt Joneses, Maurice Webb, Edgar Brookes, those patriarchal figures the Mahabanes, William Nkomo whom we lost too soon, Dominee

Johan Reyneke, father-in-law of our Director Fred van Wyk, Leo Marquard, Donald Molteno and B. B. Keet, who gave the only Hoernlé lecture that was delivered in Afrikaans. I shall mention only five living members, offering as my excuse for omitting others that these five are our veterans, Margaret Ballinger, E. G. Malherbe, Oliver Schreiner, that grand old man Selby Msimang, who will be ninety-three this year, and that other grand old man Lewis Byron who will be ninety-seven. It would be unfair to omit Hoernlé himself, because he taught and spoke untiringly, and why do you teach people except to make them better? Why do you speak to them except to help them to a change of heart?

Clayton once accused Hoernlé of having lost hope, and Hoernlé was deeply hurt. He declared that it was enough to make anyone lose hope, to be accused by a person like Clayton of having lost it. But Hoernlé's hope was unbelievably austere. It was that the caste system would not endure, that justice would triumph, even though the heavens fell.

The trouble is that most of us don't want the heavens to fall. It seems too high a price to pay for justice. There is a young man in Cape Town whose name is David Russell, to whom I dedicated my work on Clayton, because I thought, and still think, that he is one of the truest of Christians. David Russell believes that no Christian should talk of losing hope because his trust is in things that abide for ever. That hope is too austere for most of us, and David Russell can cherish it more easily than most because he has no children, he has no possessions, he has, in the good sense, no ambition, he leads the simple life and wants no other. Francis Bacon wrote: "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief". That's a sobering thought, and no doubt explains why some of us didn't make it.

The hope of the Institute is very human. Its hope is to make this country work. Our hope, the hope of the Institute's members, is to avoid that future that is too ghastly to contemplate. Our hope is to achieve a more just order of society, without violence, destruction, and war. I do not think there is one of us who expects such an order of society to be achieved without paying the price of sacrifice and pain and suffering. But we are unable to adopt the view that only violence, destruction, and war, can achieve it. The reason for this is not wholly intellectual: it also has a powerful temperamental component. We are temperamentally averse to violence, destruction, and war. If it could be proved to us finally and irrefutably that only violence, destruction, and war, could achieve the just order, we would be paralysed. Most of us, perhaps all of us, sometimes

hope, and sometimes despair, and sometimes just go battling on. And the hope of some of us is embodied in the Institute of Race Relations. It is essentially an instrument of hope.

I note in passing that the Institute is not a political organisation. It does not take political action to realise its hope. But if you look at the list of the giants of the past, you will see that **without exception** they were men and women who were actively engaged in the affairs of our society. There is nothing to apologise about. If you look at the list of our present supporters, who will all become giants in another twenty-five years, that is, if the ghastly alternative is not realised, you will see that without exception they are also men and women who are actively engaged in the affairs of our society. On the whole that is the kind of person that supports the work of the Institute.

It is, of course, easy to make fun of it all, even to pour contempt on it. We are a lot of do-gooders, blind to the realities of the world. Our work for society is the small price we are willing to pay for the fat-cat life. Worse than that, we are liberals, some of us are even white liberals, who are the lowest type of all. Give us a good old Afrikaner Nationalist, at least you know where you are with him. These white liberals promise you the moon, but all you get is feathers. As for the Liberal Party, that was the utmost end. I was a member of the Liberal Party for fifteen years, until it was outlawed in 1968. The only promises I ever heard were of blood and toil and tears and sweat, and the promises were kept. I paid a lower price than many of my friends, for reasons it would not be profitable to discuss, because we don't really know what they were. But I would have paid a higher price if it had been required of me.

Where it is appropriate I try to be humble, but I do not believe in licking the boots of anyone who calls me a rat. I remember, when my children were young, how we used to enjoy that great comic, Victor Borge. He was talking about Denmark, his home country. He said "We have three sexes over there, male, female and convertible. I was going back to Denmark this summer but now I ain't going. No, once I made up my mind what I was gonna be, that's the way it's gonna be." That is what I feel about being a liberal: "Once I made up my mind what I was gonna be, that's the way it's gonna be." And the man who called me a rat shakes his head and says: "Ah well, he's too old to change now."

What is liberalism? I am sure that Hoernlé could have defined it better than I could, but I'll try. By liberalism I do not mean the creed of any party or of any country. I mean a generosity of spirit, a tolerance of others, an attempt to comprehend otherness, a love of liberty and therefore a commitment to the Rule of Law, a

repugnance for authoritarianism, and a high ideal of the worth and dignity of man.

I have no patience with those who write books with titles such as "The Fallacy of Liberalism", or "The Death of Liberalism", or "Two Cheers for Liberalism". For me, if liberalism were to die that would be the death of the world.

You will know that in this country there is a marked tendency among rulers to set the claims of law and order and the claims of liberty in opposition to one another. It is a false opposition, for in fact neither is realisable without the other. They are reconciled in the Rule of Law, and the Rule of Law is the noblest concept of political man. It is his own check on his own waywardness. No just government can afford to trifle with the Rule of Law, and trifling with the Rule of Law will lead eventually and inevitably to torture and death.

Does anything ever change? Yes, you are safer in detention in 1979 than you would have been in 1977. That change was brought about by the revelation of torture and death. Can you call that a change of heart? Hoernlé would have called it "a change forced on us". The far-reaching decisions of the United States Supreme Court from the 1950s onwards have brought about an extraordinary change in social practices. Is that a change of heart? In 1977 during our visit to Auburn University, a senior Alabamian said to me: "I've still got my prejudices, but thank God my children don't have them." Now what do you make of that? Alas, we don't have a Supreme Court with such authority, and we don't have a Constitution and a Bill of Rights. The supreme authority in South Africa is Parliament, but the supreme authority in the United States is the Constitution. I wish I could say we were heading in that direction.

On this 3rd day of July 1979, what is the state of the nation? I should like to try to answer that. But let me first try to answer the question, how was our nation born? And of course I am using the word nation in a way that is unacceptable to some. The history of our country is a history of conquest. We are not unique in that regard, but there are few countries who can parallel our history of conquest. I hope that our historians, both white and black — of whom there must be some present — will overlook the fact that I begin with that fateful day when *Goede Hoop*, *Dromedaris*, and *Reiger*, dropped anchor in Table Bay. That was April 6th 1652, and Leo Marquard used to say that that was the day when we jiggered up the country. Leo Marquard used a word much stronger than "jiggered". It was a word that he almost never used and it is

the only possible word that does justice to the event, but it can't be used in a Hoernlé lecture — at least not yet.

So began the long succession of conquests: the Dutch conquest of the San and the Khoikhol, the British conquest of the Cape which was made final in 1806, the rise of Shaka more than a hundred and fifty years ago and the creation of the Zulu kingdom, the great dispersion known as the Mfecane, the crushing, the Great Trek and the subjugation of one black chiefdom after another, the defeat of Dingane at Blood River, the destruction of the Zulu kingdom by the British one hundred years ago, the establishment of the Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and the entrenchment of the principle "no equality in Church and State" in their constitutions, the conquest of the Republics by the British in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, which undid the conquest of the Afrikaners and confirmed the conquest of the blacks, and restored the principle of "no equality in Church and State", the Land Act of 1913 which confined black people to the 13 % of the land set aside for them by their conquerors, the passage in 1936 of the fatal Representation of Natives Bill, which inevitably resulted in the abolition of the African vote in 1959 and the abolition of the coloured vote in 1968.

But the greatest conquest of all was a political not a military conquest, in which no gun was fired and no spear was thrown, and that was the conquest of all South Africa in 1948 by the National Party, a conquest that has lasted up to now.

That is our history of conquest. But meanwhile a profound change has taken place in the world. The relationship of conqueror and conquered won't do any more. It doesn't make sense in our modern world. As far as we can see the nations of the western world, of which we are — even though we don't like it — still a part, appear to have given up conquest for ever. Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the European nations have all willingly or unwillingly given up their conquests in Africa.

If Chief Buthelezi today makes some claim on the white government, or on the white people of South Africa, one can no longer say to him; Keep quiet, you're a conquered person. He is no longer a conquered person, he is a South African. Somehow the white people of South Africa have got to learn to live with him and to work with him too. And if the white people of South Africa cannot learn to live and work with a man like Chief Buthelezi, they will never learn to live with anybody, and they will have no South African future at all.

In fact we are living in strange times, for, if we only knew it, we

are living in a country in which conquest must now be undone, when the conqueror must make restoration to the conquered, when the conquered must receive a just share of the fruits of his labour, and a just share of the fruits of the earth, and a just share of the earth too. Those arrogant words; *by right of conquest*, may possibly never be used again except to describe events of the past. *Conquest* has become a dirty word.

If what I am saying is true, then indeed some great change has come about in the world. The Germans, the French, and the British, have been slaughtering each other for centuries. Yet it looks as though they will never do it again. Is this due to one of Hoernlé's world forces over which man has no control, or has there been a change of heart? Is it perhaps possible that the exterior event should not be separated from the interior event in the heart? I visited Germany in 1977, and if there has not been a change of heart there, then I am a useless observer. Yet I must admit that it took a world cataclysm to produce it.

There is something very important to be said about the relation of the exterior to the interior event. The time to act — and even then that may be too late — is when the wolf is howling at the door. But if you wait till the wolf is breathing down your neck, then your negotiating days are over. Hoernlé's world force will soon finish you off.

This metaphor is by no means perfect. It is not wolves who are howling at the door. It is people who are crying out that it is time for conquest to be undone. I once wrote another parable, which some of you have heard, but which I beg to repeat. A man has great possessions, and he lives in a great house, surrounded by his family: and outside the poor and the dispossessed knock continually on the doors, which are barred and bolted against their importunity. And one half of his family says to him: *Father, open the door*, and the other half says to him: *Father, for God's sake, never open the door*. And one day comes the final imperious knock, and he knows he must open the door. And when he opens, it is Death himself who is waiting for him.

I always end this parable with a petition, and I do the same today. **May it not be so.**

In 1953 J. D. Rheinallt Jones was President of the Institute, but when the time came for him to deliver his presidential address he was dying, and it was read for him by his friend Ds Reyneke. Jones concluded his address with a weighty quotation from Arnold Toynbee:

“ . . . the nature of the breakdown of civilisation can be sum-

med up in three points: a failure of creative power in the minority . . . which attempts to maintain by force a position it has ceased to merit . . . an answering withdrawal of mimesis on the part of the majority, and a consequent loss of social unity in the society as a whole."

Jones added the words: "May this warning be heeded not only in South Africa but in Africa generally."

A failure of creative power, a maintaining of one's position by force, the alienation and withdrawal of the ruled: could that happen here? Has it happened already? I don't need to tell you that many people, most of them black, ridicule the idea of a white change of heart; they invite you to ransack the history books for an example of a change of heart in rulers. More implacable are those who say: "Don't worry about a change of heart. We don't need your change of heart. If there's any changing to be done round here, we are going to do it."

Are the white people of South Africa capable of undoing conquest? We are in fact asking Hoernlé's question all over again — the question to which he replied with an uncompromising no. The great obstructing factors are white fear, white pride, white greed, and these three factors operating together produce that inertia which has characterised South African rule these last few years. A lack of will, Hoernlé called it. A failure of creative power, said Toynbee, And why? I think the answer is that the problems have appeared so vast that they have rendered rulers impotent to do anything but maintain their position by force. So the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Defence have become the most powerful figures in society. So also we have the paradox painful to many of us, that so much money is being spent on saving our country from conquest, that there is little left to undo conquest at home. In other words so much money is being spent on defending our country that there is little money left to make it a better country. White South Africa is so preoccupied with her enemies abroad that she does not have the time and the money and the energy to make friends at home. And how does one make friends at home? By improving housing, by providing more housing, by extending and improving education, by improving conditions of work — and that includes wages — by deciding once and for all that if South African industry wants a man's labour it must provide for his wife and children as well, if he has them, by doing all that can be done to respect the dignity and humanity of the man without whom there would be no industry at all. I leave aside for the moment the question as to whether there is enough time left to make friends, or the

even more difficult question as to whether Toynbee's alienation has already taken place.

Has there been any change since the Institute was founded in 1929? I can tell you one. That is Minister Koornhof's decision not to use the bulldozers at Crossroads. Indeed, when in the history of South Africa has a Minister of State sat down and talked to squatters (terrible word) as though they were human beings? It is not so very long since a prominent politician spoke in Parliament of the women and children of squatters as appendages. Bishop Clayton was scathing about professed Christians who regarded with contempt a man who treated another as a brother. One could be equally scathing about a professed Christian who could refer to a man's wife and children as appendages. One must note that there is a common element in both these acts of contempt; the *kafferboetie* is treating a black person as a brother, and an appendage is the wife or child of a black man, never of a white. This contempt is one of the most terrible of white sins. Will it ever be expiated? Is the Minister's action at Crossroads the beginning of the change of heart? Before I try to answer that question I should like to consider further the question of defending one's country against its enemies, a task on which South Africa is already engaged.

Is South Africa worth fighting for? Can young white men go in good conscience to the border, to fight against men who almost without exception are black, and who believe that they have a duty to liberate this country from its present rulers, and in particular from the oppression of its racial laws? These were laws made by the conqueror for the conquered, by the strong for the weak; by the rich for the poor, and — inevitably — by the white for the black.

I make no apology for asking these questions. They are being asked every day by young white people in this country. Nor would I conceal the fact that more of these young people are English-speaking than are Afrikaans. Let no Afrikaner derive satisfaction from that. In 1939 many Afrikaners refused to fight for South Africa, because they argued that General Smuts had involved us in a foreign war, that they would be fighting for their one-time conqueror Britain, and for the British Empire. Just so in 1979 many of our young white people argue that they would in fact be fighting for the National Party, and for the maintenance of those racial laws which many of them find indefensible.

When we go to the border, what do we in fact fight for? Our present Foreign Minister once said in a public speech: "I'll fight to the death for the right to exist, but not for an apartheid sign in a lift." That's a very nice epigram, but it doesn't answer the question. We don't want to know about the sign in the lift. We want to know

whether we can, in good conscience, go to the border to fight for the Separate Amenities Act and the Population Registration Act, and the Mixed Marriages Act and the Security Acts that give the Minister of Justice powers of life and death over the citizens of our country.

I recently saw in a newspaper a picture of the first young Indian South African to become an officer in the Navy. He looked very smart and confident. But I cannot help asking myself: What is he fighting for? Is he fighting for the Group Areas Act? And is the young coloured soldier fighting for the destruction of District Six? And the young African soldier for a system of education that spent on him one-tenth of the amount that it spent on a white child? These are the questions not answered by the Foreign Minister's epigram. One could in justice say that these are the questions evaded by it. Who doubts but that they are questions of the greatest difficulty? They were so difficult that Hoernlé saw no chance of their solution by white South Africans, because he saw no chance of the change of heart. And let us not forget that Hoernlé died before the passing of the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act and the Security Acts. What would he have said now? Would he have said that the passing of these Acts proved beyond the possibility of question that there could never be a change of heart?

Has the Afrikaner Nationalist indeed built for himself a fortress so mighty, so impregnable that he will never get out of it, that it will in fact cease to be a fortress and become a prison, so impregnable that there can be no liberation but by death? And if a young man goes to the border to fight, is he in fact going there to defend a fortress that is indefensible?

I can think of only one answer to these last questions. To some it would seem laughable but it is not laughable to me. I cannot laugh at the anxiety of a young man who goes with a heavy heart to the border, and who must find some moral justification for what he is doing. I am not talking of those young men who have the simple view that they are going there to fight for their country, or the simple view that the real enemy is Communism. It's a comforting view to be able to take, for then one is saved the necessity of confronting injustice in one's own country.

Earlier this year I met a young black man whose home was at Nottingham Road, and who had been sent by his parents to school in Durban, where he matriculated. This was done legally, but when he matriculated, his immunity expired. He is now confined to the area of Nottingham Road, and there is no work for him there. He rebels against working on a farm, and so he does nothing. But if

you are obsessed by the dangers of Communism, you need not consider his case. In fact by considering his case you are furthering the ends of Communism.

There is for a person like myself, and for any young person who thinks as I do, only one decent reason for going to the border, and that is to fight for the chance to make this a more just society. I would go there because I do not want to be liberated by the Cubans and the Russians. I would go there because I want the chance for the white people of this country to liberate their country themselves. That is the reason that many of our young people give to themselves. I don't laugh at this reason, I don't find it laughable. I know young men, some of them close to me, who have gone to the army with a heavy heart, but they go there because they would rather do that than leave their country. They hope that something, some good thing, will come out of it all. You know what they hope for, do you not? They hope for the change of heart. That's what they are fighting for — with the weapons of war — a change of heart. It is the paradox beyond all paradoxes. It is history that has put them into this paradoxical situation. There are times when you, of your own free will and choice, must accept the situation into which history has thrust you, and must strive to use it in a way of which Horenlé was so unequivocally sceptical.

There are people who would treat this reasoning with derision. Many exiles and emigrants would do so. There is no time tonight to discuss the ethics of exile and emigration. One thing is certain, there is no absolute ethics of emigration, only a personal ethics. There is no doubt that many Afrikaner Nationalists, perhaps most, have a contempt for emigration as the refuge of the coward. But if there had been a universal ethics of emigration, there would never have been an Afrikanerdom at all. There is no code by which emigrants or exiles can be judged. But I do judge them when they find the reasoning of these troubled young men worthy of contempt or ridicule. These young men feel it their duty to go to the border, but they wish with all their hearts they could find a less equivocal duty, and they wish with all their hearts that they were fighting for a more just order of society. This feeling of duty is called loyalty, but there is something deeper involved, something that one can only call **love of country**.

What is love of country? It is often called patriotism, though many people are chary of that word, and not only because Johnson said that patriotism was the last refuge of the scoundrel. What is love of country? It is almost impossible to define. What do I mean when I say that I love my country? Do I mean the great spacious beautiful land? Or do I mean the country where I was

born, whose every lineament is dear to me? Or is it the fortune of home and faith and school and university, of living in the land of Hoernlé and Clayton and Hofmeyr and Lutuli and Z. K. Matthews, where I set my feet on a road that I have followed up till now, sometimes well and sometimes not? Or is it the people, diverse and beautiful, from three of the great continents of the world?

I can tell you one thing that my patriotism is not. It is not a love of my country, right or wrong. Nor do I believe that when my country is in danger, there are no rules; for if there are no rules, there is no country worth saving. I do not require any politicians, of whatever eminence, to tell me what love of country is. If I may say so, perhaps immodestly, I wrote about it a long time ago, before many of them had ever been heard of.

In fact, my love of country is the same as the Institute's love of country. That is one of the reasons why I am giving the Hoernlé lecture on this anniversary. To me it is the height of impertinence for any politician, who imagines that patriotism is synonymous with belief in the doctrine of racial separation, to presume to tell the Hoernlés and the Rheinallt Joneses and the Brookeses and the Marquards and the Hellmanns what love of country is. But they **did** do so. Hoernlé and the two Rheinallt Joneses were said to be aliens who dared to come to our country and tell white South Africans how to behave. In its unregenerate days, *Die Transvaler* used to publish with contempt pictures of black and white on Institute and other platforms. In those days it was considered unpatriotic and contemptible for black and white to discuss together the problems and affairs of their country.

In 1957 Dr. Verwoerd decided that it was time to prevent, by law, black Christians and white Christians from worshipping together. *Die Transvaler* commented: "As long as liberalistic bishops and canons, professors, students and politicians can freely attend church and hold meetings and socials together with non-Europeans, apartheid will be infringed in its marrow. It is high time for this to end." It is amazing is it not, that in Christian churches the observance of apartheid was to be exalted above the prayer of Christ that his followers should be one? And yet more amazing was the contorted theologising that was used to prove that separation by law and unity in faith were totally compatible. In fact, if you understood it properly, separateness and unitedness were really one and the same thing.

Do you know that I actually feel a bit mean, reminding *Die Transvaler* of its unregenerate past just when it is trying to do better? Do you know why that is? It's because I am a liberal and liberals are soft-centred, sodden with sentimentality, with a

mawkish tendency to forgive those who have offended against them.

Has there been any change in this field? Why yes indeed. One no longer expresses public contempt over the meeting of black people and white people to discuss matters of common concern. After all, our ex-Prime Minister was photographed with a black lady at a banquet. Cabinet Ministers meet from time to time with black leaders, and one gathers that there is not much pussy-footing on either side. Verligte Afrikaners would today regard with distaste protests against mixed worship. These changes may be regarded as important, or unimportant, according to the point of view. The argument is made again and again, that there is no time any more. That wasn't Hoernlé's objection; his argument was that there was no will to make them. But there seems to be a greater will to make them than when he made his devastating speeches in the early 1940s.

Will there be a change of heart? I must answer to that question: *I don't know*. I cannot do what Hoernlé did, and answer no. There are powerful arguments against the change of heart, and I know them all. Let me say briefly what they are. The depth of white fear, white pride (or arrogance), white greed; the deep human fear of change, which is of course much stronger in whites than in blacks; the lack of time, which is essential to any evolutionary change; the power of external world-forces, which are more hostile to white South Africa than to any other country in the world; the terrible disparities of wages, possessions, and opportunities; the alienation and estrangement of black people and especially the young; the new black hope of liberation, kindled to flame by the liberation of Angola and Mozambique. Of all these things it is the estrangement that is most terrible, especially to people like ourselves, who created the Institute to overcome and to prevent estrangement.

Let me tell you a short story of estrangement. It doesn't prove anything, except that estrangement is not always as total as it seems. It is of the very nature of estrangement that it makes one creep wounded into one's shell, and there the darkness is complete. When Robert Sobukwe's funeral had finally turned into a political demonstration, I decided to go back to the hotel. I can stand many things but I cannot stand to hear the name of W. P. Schreiner reviled. At three o'clock I went to the burial ground and looked at the graves of past Sobukwes. The sun was pitiless and I returned to the junction of the main road and the road to the cemetery. Coming up the main road was the vast procession and I stood bareheaded to pay my last respects, and to receive the jeers

of the demonstrators. They did not see an old white man, hat in hand before the cortege of a black man whom he had known long ago. They saw only one of the hated oppressors.

Then a drop of sweetness. A black woman in a yellow-brown robe asked for a lift to the town. She sat in front, and three of her friends, members of a choir I think, sat behind. She introduced all four by name, and I said my name was Paton. "Alan Paton?" asked one, "I know you". They marvelled that I had come from Durban for the funeral. We parted in a great invocation of divine blessings.

Then a drop of sourness. Ten or twelve young white policemen sitting on a wall. Jeers from one or two. Did they know me? Or was I just a white man who had come to the funeral of a black revolutionary? Or had they seen my four passengers? Jeers from black demonstrators, blessings from black women, jeers from white policemen, all in the space of fifteen minutes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that is our country, that is the country that the Institute has served faithfully for fifty years.

If these powerful arguments are dropped day after day into your ears, you will in the end become impotent. The most dangerous of all is the argument of time, for if there is no time there is no need to do anything at all. You will fall into a state of melancholy. We do not all do that, but we despair from time to time. I once described South Africa as a country where you hope on Monday and despair on Tuesday. You hope on Monday because Dr. Koornhof has reprieved Crossroads, you despair on Tuesday because severe rioting has broken out near Johannesburg. The Institute cannot hope on Monday, and despair on Tuesday; nor can its President or its Director. The Institute is an instrument of hope, and I cannot conclude this lecture without a short discussion of hope.

Hoernlé had no use for "confidence based on illusion or on ignorance". He had no use for "a faith which is unthinking". I presume that he was referring to the hope and faith of people who say: "You'll see, everything will come all right" and in that I would agree with him. I presume also that he was saying that he had no use for a hope that had no grounds. It is quite clear that he could find no grounds for hoping for a change of heart. I find myself unable to declare emphatically that there are no grounds for hope. And if I thought there were none, I certainly would not have accepted the invitation to give the Hoernlé lecture.

I have tonight had a good deal to say about Afrikaner Nationalism, some of it very critical. I do not apologise for this. It would in fact be foolish to do so. It would in fact be foolish to at-

tempt to talk about our future — and that is what we have been talking about — and to avoid discussion of the nature and strength and limitations of the power that rules so great a part of our lives. In 1948 Afrikaner Nationalism set out to build a new heaven and a new earth, which would one day command the wonder of a hostile world. Well it hasn't happened and it isn't going to happen. The attempting of it cost sacrifice and suffering, most of it black. The undoing of it is also going to cost sacrifice and suffering, and most of it will be white. On the face of it, you can hardly imagine a more unlikely proposition.

In my younger days, in fact during the early years of the Institute, I was a great supporter of Afrikaner renaissance. I became, not fully, but highly bilingual, I studied Afrikaans literature and history; in 1938 I grew a beard and went in a wagon flying the Vierkleur to the laying of the foundation stone of the Monument. That was the end of my flirtation. At the Monument I realised that Afrikaner Nationalism was totally exclusive, that its prime aim was not freedom but domination. The acknowledged aim of the Broederbond was that Broederbonders should rule the land, an aim that must have been almost fully realised. That has to be undone. On the face of it, you can hardly imagine another more unlikely proposition.

Some of you find the three-parliament proposal grotesque. I find it grotesque but not laughable, because it is an attempt to undo conquest. It won't work, but at least our Prime Minister has announced that it will not be pushed through Parliament, but will be referred to a select committee. I read that Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha will appear before the select committee. I admire him for his wisdom and his tolerance and his magnanimity.

Has there been any change? Yes there has been a change. National Party Governments are not in the habit of consulting those who are not members of the *volk*. It has in fact been a Nationalist dogma since 1934 that only the *volk* knows what is good for the lesser *volke*.

What is the ground of my hope? I cannot bring myself to believe that the Afrikaner Nationalist, or should I say the leaders of Afrikaner Nationalism, cannot see that Afrikanerdom is at the crisis of its history, a crisis that can no longer be staved off with the gun, a crisis that in fact that will only be deepened by the use of the gun. I cannot believe that they do not see that it is time to bring their triumphal dispensation, which has lasted thirty-one years, to an end. I cannot believe that the people who achieved nationhood after a long and bitter struggle, who faced each crisis with courage and intelligence, who picked themselves up from the dust after the

defeat of their republics, cannot face with courage and intelligence this greatest crisis in their history.

Mind you, they had luck too. Although their republics had been defeated, they took their colour bar into the Union of South Africa, and they entered the Union with an adult male franchise, which enabled them in 1948 to achieve an absolute domination of our country and all its peoples. That was when they started to build the new heaven and the earth, the great edifice that W. A. de Klerk writes about, the edifice that must be dismantled before the conquered Samson brings it crashing down on the heads of his conquerors.

It was, ironically enough, the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 that signalled the end of the British as conquerors, and prepared the way for the Afrikaner to become the conquerors of us all. And let me sound a sombre note; if there is another conqueror, then God help South Africa and all its peoples. That is why conquest must be undone, by us, not by anyone else, I realise that there are people in South Africa who want another conqueror; that's because they hate the one they have now. They say better the conqueror you don't know than the one you do.

The undoing of conquest will necessitate far-reaching constitutional changes. I have not thought this to be the place or the occasion to discuss them, or to suggest what they might be. But the idea seems to be taking root, if it has not taken root already, that constitutional changes cannot be made any longer by white unilateral action. The call for a second National Convention is growing steadily stronger, but this time the Convention must be fully representative of all the people and groups and interests in South Africa.

There appear to be only two main constitutional contenders in the field — universal suffrage in a unitary state, and universal suffrage in a federal or confederal state. I expect the conflict between these contenders to be at times very bitter; the supporters of the unitary state will be accused of aiming at a new racial domination, and the supporters of federation will be accused of trying to preserve privilege and possession.

I do not regard the choice of the one system as more moral than the choice of the other. The choice is a political one; we want above all a constitution that will work. It is my considered belief that in our present circumstances the only way to get a unitary state is by internal revolution and external intervention, and at the cost of the destruction of the economy. I must also record my opinion that the stronger the demand for the unitary state, the greater the white fear becomes, and therefore the weaker the will to change.

It could be said that there is a third constitutional contender, and that is universal suffrage in a constellation or association of totally independent states; in other words the policy still adhered to by the National Party. I don't think that this goal will ever be reached, for more than one reason. But I think that the biggest reason is the virtual impossibility of consolidating the homelands. One benefit might possibly flow from this policy, and that would be that more land would become available for black occupation. But the policy itself merely strengthens the grip of that inertia of which I spoke earlier. It is a policy of travelling towards majestic goals by the taking of minute steps, and the taking of these steps satisfies the conscience that doesn't really want to move at all.

Let me sound the note of hope a little harder. I mustn't sound it too hard or I shall hear a great voice from the past accusing me of taking an intellectual holiday. It seems to me that Nationalist Afrikanerdom is at last beginning to recover from its obsession that it was a kind of master race. I remember Ds Reyneke saying to me nearly thirty years ago: "Paton, don't lose hope. I know my people. They're not wicked." Mind you I think his faith was put to the test once or twice.

The notable Dr. Verwoerd never used the words "master race" but it was implicit in all his legislation. The idea of "master race" has up till now been both implicit and explicit in the philosophy of the Broederbond. But one hundred years after the British destroyed the Zulu kingdom at Ulundi, the head of the Broederbond goes to Ulundi to visit Chief Buthelezi, the executive head of the Zulu people.

I shall risk a small prophecy, very cautiously, because as the Afrikaners say „*die kinders van die profete eet nie brood nie*”. We will not in the future hear so much of the language of the conqueror as we have heard in the past. There are only two possible futures for our country, one a revolutionary future of violence, hatred, and destruction, the other an evolutionary future, which will not be without pain and sacrifice, which will have in the main to be borne by white people. It is their contribution to the undoing of conquest.

As the Institute enters its fifty-first year, it will continue to play its part in its struggle against that estrangement which is the greatest enemy of hope. In the last fifty years, did we get anywhere? Did we achieve anything? Did we change anything? I have no doubt that we did. But if we didn't do anything else, we did our duty. Some people thought that there were times when we should have done it more militantly, and there have been times when I thought so myself. But it is an honour to me, on the occa-

sion of this 50th Anniversary, to have given the lecture which is a memorial to two noble human beings.

If I may quote Hoernlé himself: "My argument is at an end. But custom demands a peroration". My peroration will be very brief. The Institute is an instrument of hope, the hope that we, the people of South Africa, are going to create a more just order of society without paying the extreme price of violence, war, and destruction. Sometimes the hope is strong, sometimes it is not, but it has to be hoped. "Meanwhile," said Hoernlé, and I say it with him, "I continue to believe in the liberal spirit and try to be its servant to the best of my ability."

What more can you say than that?

The Hoernlé Memorial Lectures

The IRR is republishing the text of the Hoernlé Memorial Lectures, a series of talks which started in 1945. The original introductory note to the lecture series reads as follows:

A lecture, entitled the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture (in memory of the late Professor R. F. Alfred Hoernle), President of the Institute from 1934—1943), will be delivered once a year under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations. An invitation to deliver the lecture will be extended each year to some person having special knowledge and experience of racial problems in Africa or elsewhere.

It is hoped that the Hoernlé Memorial Lecture will provide a platform for constructive and helpful contributions to thought and action. While the lecturers will be entirely free to express their own views, which may not be those of the Institute as expressed in its formal decisions, it is hoped that lecturers will be guided by the Institute's declaration of policy that "scientific study and research must be allied with the fullest recognition of the human reactions to changing racial situations; that respectful regard must be paid to the traditions and usages of the various national, racial and tribal groups which comprise the population; and that due account must be taken of opposing views earnestly held."

About the IRR

Since 1929, the Institute of Race Relations has advocated for a free, fair, and prospering South Africa. At the heart of this vision lie the fundamental principles of liberty of the individual and equality before the law guaranteeing the freedom of all citizens. The IRR stands for the right of all people to make decisions about their lives without undue political or bureaucratic interference.