

The Alan Paton Centre
& Struggle Archives



The 20th Anniversary of the Alan Paton Centre 1989-2009

Jewel Koopman

When Alan Paton died in 1988, the world mourned his passing. He had become famous internationally for his first novel, *Cry, the beloved country*, published in 1948, and subsequently translated into many languages, from Icelandic and Hebrew to Zulu and Tsonga. This book informed the world about conditions in South Africa, and made people aware of the issues of racial discrimination, crime and poverty. Alan Paton was also famous for his political role in opposing apartheid, as the National President of the Liberal Party of South Africa, which was forced to close by government legislation in 1968. Even after the closing of the Party, and for the rest of his life, he opposed apartheid on a continuing basis, through the many powerful speeches he made and his many other writings.

After his death, memorial services were held in Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town and London, and many tributes poured in. His widow, Mrs Anne Paton, had to decide what to do with the contents of his study. His hand-written manuscripts had become extremely valuable, and the manuscript of *Cry, the beloved country* was bought by Sir Harry Oppenheimer for his Brenthurst Library. Anant Singh, the film producer, bought the manuscript of the second novel, *Too late the phalarope*.

Mrs Paton's daughter, Athene, wondered if the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg had a quiet room somewhere where Alan Paton's books and journals could be kept for study by university staff and students. This idea was the seed sown, which grew into the Alan Paton Centre. When this was suggested to Mrs

Joicelyn Leslie-Smith, the University Archivist, and Prof. Colin Webb, the University Vice-Principal, they leapt at the idea with enthusiasm.

They decided to convert a series of rooms in the University Archives building, an old house at 165 King Edward Avenue, into the Alan Paton Centre. One room was reserved for the reconstruction of the Alan Paton Study. Mrs Paton donated her late husband's books, bookcases, journals, photographs, awards, pictures and memorabilia,

which were arranged in the same way they had been in the study in Botha's Hill. She also donated many valuable manuscripts, including his poetry, short stories and correspondence. These became the core collection of the Alan Paton Centre, which was officially opened on 25 April 1989, by Professor Peter De V. Booyesen, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Natal.

The second core collection of the new Centre was that of the Liberal Party of South Africa. When the Party was forced to close in 1968, Peter Brown and other members feared that if the Security Police got hold of the party's records, they would further harass, imprison and ban other members whose names were on the membership lists. Also, the Party's archives would be destroyed or lost. It was decided to hide these papers away for safe-keeping. They were put into eleven metal trunks, and stored in the basement of the Old Main Hall of the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. This was done unobtrusively, and hardly anyone knew about these trunks or their contents. These locked trunks stayed there for almost twenty years.



The Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives 2009
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On hearing of the opening of the new Centre, Peter Brown and Prof. Douglas Irvine decided the time was ripe to liberate the trunks. They were delivered to the University Archives, where over a period of a few months the documents were sorted, classified and boxed by Joicelyn, so as to be ready for the official opening.

Many other ex-Liberals rallied round and found their own hidden records to donate to the Centre. Peter Brown also donated his own political papers and later those of the Five Freedoms Forum.

By 2009, the Centre had collected over 170 archival collections, including papers from individuals and such organizations as the Natal Midlands Black Sash, PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness), AFRA (the Association for Rural Advancement), and the ECC (End Conscription Campaign). Two other major collections are Prof Gerhard Mare's Natal Room Collection and Prof Magnus Gunther's papers on the African Resistance Movement (ARM). Alan Paton had been very disapproving of this radical wing of the Liberal Party, but the papers were included, as they all form part of the struggle history. These papers were kindly sent by Prof Gunther's widow, Jan de Crespigny, all the way from Canada.

Joicelyn, with the help of Ruth Lundie, Pat Merrett, Norman Bromberger, Jennifer Verbeek, Paddy Kearney and others, started an oral history project called "Recording the Anti-Apartheid struggle in KwaZulu-Natal", which ran from 1995 to 1998. This oral history collection now contains interviews with many people who were opposed to apartheid, whether as members of the LP, the ANC, the UDF, or of organizations such as the Black Sash and PACSA. Another oral history collection is also now housed at the APC, the Sinomlando Project, run by the School of Religion and Theology at UKZN. This is an ongoing project, and contains

interviews with religious leaders on such issues as "The churches' response to the Group Areas Act" and "Women leaders in the church".

In 2002, the Natal Society Special Collections were transferred to the APC on permanent loan. This was because the Natal Society Library was becoming the Msunduzi Municipal Library (now the Bessie Head Library), and it was felt that the Africana, O'Brien, Hattersley and photograph collections would be better cared for and more frequently used as special research collections at the University.



At the Opening of the APC on 25.04.89, Margaret & Jonathan Paton, Mrs Anne Paton, Prof. Colin Webb and Prof Peter Booysen Photo: Natal Witness



Prof. P. deV. Booysen unveiling the plaque Photo: Natal Witness



The Paton family signing the Visitors' Book: Margaret and Jonathan Paton and their daughter Pamela Mills watch as Mrs Anne Paton signs Photo: University Archives

By 2009, after 20 years of collecting, the entire house has now been taken over by the Alan Paton Centre (APC). The University Archives moved to new premises in 2000, and all the other people who had been housed in various rooms have left over the years. The house now includes the Alan Paton Study and stackroom, two other stackrooms for what are now known as the "Struggle Archives", a reading room, a seminar and documentation room, a photocopy room, three Natal Society rooms, two staff offices, a paper conservation room and a display area.

It has really expanded dramatically over the twenty years of its existence to a point where all the stackrooms and other rooms are full. Plans have been drawn up to build a large new stackroom at the back of

the house. The house itself can no longer be altered, due to its age, and the restrictions of AMAFA. This project will cost over R1 million, so fund-raising initiatives will have to be carried out in order to allow the Centre to continue growing into the future.

The 20th Anniversary will be celebrated with a conference on 15-17 July 2009. The full programme for the conference can be seen on the conference website: <http://alanpaton2009.ukzn.ac.za> which is linked to the APC website: <http://paton.ukzn.ac.za>

A Tribute to the Alan Paton Centre

Jocelyn Leslie-Smith

Through the generosity of Mrs Anne Paton who was prepared to donate the contents of Alan Paton's study as well as his document collection to the University of Natal, and Peter Brown, founder member of the South African Liberal Party and friend of Alan Paton, the core donations of the Paton Collection and the Liberal Party Papers were received. The *Sunday Tribune* facilitated the upgrading of a section of the Archives building to house the Alan Paton Centre (APC).



Mrs Anne Paton in the Alan Paton Study, 1999.

Photo: Jocelyn Leslie-Smith

But it was the vision of Prof. Colin Webb that gave the establishment of the APC momentum, and then, as now, the lively enthusiasm and commitment of the staff and the Alan Paton Centre Advisory Committee that played a part in the development and growth of the Centre. Prof. Webb wanted to create a research centre, 'a living instrument' that would 'carry forward the struggle for improved human relations that filled so much of Alan Paton's essentially human life'.

As a Centre for the 'Study of the Literature and the Politics of Conflict and Conciliation', as it was first called, there was a lot of work to be done. Besides the documenting of the core collections which began immediately, so as to make them accessible to researchers, the number of NGO collections, including those of the Natal Midlands Black Sash, the Detainees Aid Committee, End Conscription Campaign, PACSA, and later AFRA, grew steadily.

The political turmoil in KwaZulu-Natal in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and rapid political developments leading up to the first national elections, led to the APC and the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy hosting five workshops on the Maritzburg Campus over a series of weekends. These workshops aimed at promoting political tolerance and electoral education in the Greater Natal Midlands area. Delegates visited the APC during the workshop.

With the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum coming to the end of its sessions the Manuscript Librarian was able to acquire a truck to go up to Gauteng to collect copies of the papers. It was quite a load to bring back to the APC but aroused interest immediately.

1994 was a watershed year in other ways for the APC. A decision was made to embark on the Oral History project 'Recording the Anti-Apartheid struggle in Kwa-Zulu Natal' in order to build up a peoples' archive and to try to document times that were not recorded. With the inestimable help of Ruth Lundie, Pat Merrett, Marie Dyer and Paddy Kearney among others, interviewing and recording began. As Manuscript Librarian I

was able to accompany Ruth Lundie to many of her interviews. This project proceeded apace for just over four years. 112 recordings were made by the end of 1998 and this was one of the most significant and rewarding projects undertaken in the first ten years.

1994 also saw the first annual Alan Paton Lecture by Randolph Vigne entitled 'Namibian Democracy: a Liberal Legacy?'. It was well attended. Randolph Vigne had been researching material at the APC for his book *Liberals Against Apartheid: the History of the Liberal Party of South Africa 1953-1968*.

The Heritage Day Seminars, the first of which was co-hosted in 1997 on the Maritzburg campus, with the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository, initially recounted community histories in and around Pietermaritzburg. In 2008 the Peter Brown Memorial Seminar featured the theme of 'The Freedom Route' being developed in Pietermaritzburg. This Route was then officially launched by the Municipality in September 2008 and includes a visit to the APC.

The first issue of *Concord*, the annual newsletter of the APC, came out in 1997 and featured news of events, lectures, research publications, visitors, and donations.

1998 saw the 50th Celebration of the publication of *Cry, the beloved country* by a series of events including the Paton Film Festival, a Civic Reception, the Alan Paton Tour, and of course the Alan Paton Lecture.

Increased publicity for the APC through its initial website and the gradual access to its collections through the various Registers of the National Archives brought researchers, information requests, and visitors in increasing numbers to the APC. In the last ten years this has dramatically increased. The website has been upgraded, and micro documentation of the collections has made them ever more accessible. Recently the digitisation of the photograph collection, enabling researchers to search the collection without handling the original photos, was a further step forward.

That the Alan Paton Centre has continued to progress steadily through the twenty years of its existence is a tribute to the APC Advisory Committee and to the APC Staff. Under their guidance the first ten years established a solid foundation that could be built on. The second ten years has seen even more rapid development, growth and innovation. May that enthusiasm and commitment present from the beginning continue to be the hallmark of the APC in the future.

Visitors to the APC



Staff of the Alan Paton Centre

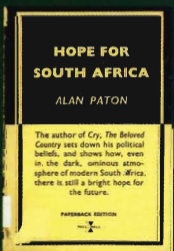
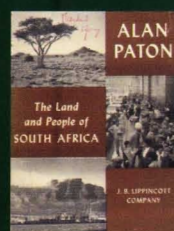
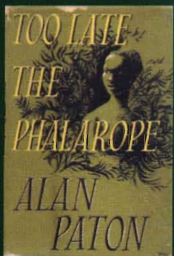
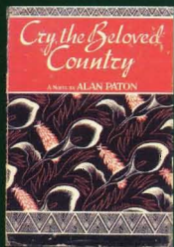


Photo: APC

Joiceelyn Leslie-Smith was the first Archivist/Manuscript Librarian of the Alan Paton Centre (APC), from 1989 to 1999. She initially worked on documenting the collections while still working as the University Archivist.

The full-time post of Manuscript Librarian was ratified only in 1993. Joiceelyn was initially assisted by **Billy Farina**, who was employed in the UN Archives as an Archives Assistant.



Photo: Tony Bruton

In June 1993, **Debora Matthews** was appointed as the part-time APC Library Assistant, and was later promoted to Senior Library Assistant.

She left in August 2002 to move to Johannesburg.



Photo: EJK

Jewel Koopman became the second Manuscript Librarian in July 1999, after Joiceelyn's retirement.



Photo: JK

Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen joined the staff in December 2002 as Principal Library Assistant, the post having been further upgraded.



Photo: ELB

Apart from these two posts, the Centre has also had some contract workers. From 2002 to 2008, **David Buckley** looked after the Natal Society Special Collections on a part-time basis.

Currently, **Sindiso Mkhwebu**, an Information Studies Honours student, is working on a part-time basis on the documentation of the AFRA collection.

The Alan Paton Centre Advisory Committee



Photo: Cathy van de Ruit

The Adcom as it was in February 2009 can be seen in the photograph.

Back row, L-R: Prof. Colin Gardner; Mrs Joiceelyn Leslie-Smith; Prof Mbulelo Mzamane; Mr Praversh Sukram; Prof Mandy Goedhals; Mr Radikobo Ntsimane.

Front row, L-R: Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen, minute taker; Prof. Jenny Clarence-Fincham, Chairperson; Jewel Koopman; Mr Peter Croeser.

Missing from this photo are Prof. John Aitchison; and Mr Jabulani Sithole.

The first Chairperson of the Alan Paton Centre (APC) Advisory Committee (Adcom) was Prof. Colin Webb, Vice-Principal, University of Natal. The first Adcom members were Prof. Douglas Irvine, Dean of Social Sciences; Prof. Terry King, Dean of Arts; Prof. James Lund, Dean of Law; Mrs Anne Paton; Mr Jonathan Paton; Mr Peter Brown; Mr Ian Wyllie; Miss Colleen Vietzen, University Librarian and Mrs Joiceelyn Leslie-Smith, University Archivist.

When Prof. Webb became ill in 1992, Prof. Dave Maughan-Brown took over both as Vice-Principal

of the Pietermaritzburg Campus, and as APC Adcom Chairperson. In 2003/4 the University underwent some radical structural changes due to the merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. This affected the structure of the APC Adcom. Prof. Maughan-Brown left the country and Prof. Ron Nicolson took over as Chairperson. On his retirement, Prof. Jenny Clarence-Fincham became the first woman to be Chairperson. When she left the University, Prof. Donal McCracken, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science took her place as Chairperson.

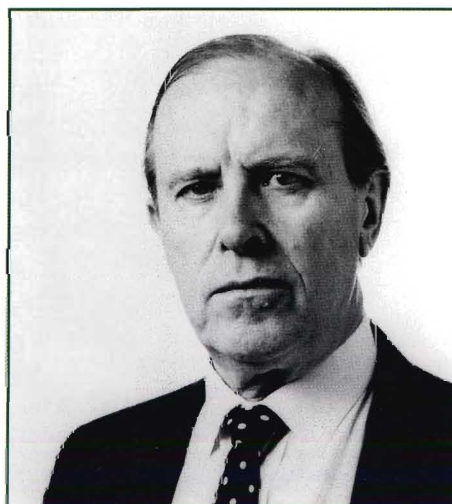
The Alan Paton Lectures 1994-2008

Jewel Koopman

1st	1994	Randolph Vigne	"Namibian democracy: a liberal legacy?"
2nd	1995	Peter Brown	"Alan Paton: the man and the politician"
3rd	1996	Raymond Hoffenberg	"Dilemmas of Principle"
4th	1997	Gopalkrishna Gandhi	"Simply not done: an enquiry into inner and outer restraint"
5th	1998	Helen Suzman	"Alan Paton, liberalism and the New South Africa"
6th	1999	Justice Pius Langa	"Strengthening democracy?"
7th	2000	Donald Woods	"A salute to liberal values"
8th	2001	Archbishop Hurley	"Liberalism and globalisation"
9th	2002	Archbishop Tutu	"Celebrate the beloved country"
10th	2003	Peter Brown, Colin Gardner & Jonathan Paton	"Alan Paton: a celebration of his life" (This was the Centenary Lecture, celebrating 100 years since Paton's birth.)
11th	2004	Trevor Ncube	"Zimbabwe: lessons for South Africa"
12th	2005	Adv. Geoff Budlender	"Transforming the judiciary"
13th	2006	Dr Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela	"The Zuma saga and the problem of moral leadership"
14th	2007	Raenette Taljaard	"What liberalism offers South Africa today"
15th	2008	Prof. John Dugard	"Liberalism, human rights and foreign policy"

The full texts of these Lectures are available from the Alan Paton Centre (APC) and can also be accessed on the APC website: <http://paton.ukzn.ac.za>

The **1st Alan Paton Lecture** was given in **1994**, by **Randolph Vigne**, who had been National Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Party of South Africa, and Chairman of the Western Cape Region. Vigne was banned for five years in 1963 under the Suppression of Communism Act, for his activities in the Transkei, in organizing opposition to the Transkei Bantustan. He was also a member of the African Resistance Movement (ARM). He went into exile in Britain in 1964, where he founded the Namibia Support Committee. He has written widely on South African and Namibian politics and history. He is the author of *Liberals against Apartheid: A History of the Liberal Party of South Africa, 1953-68*.

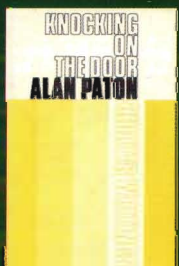
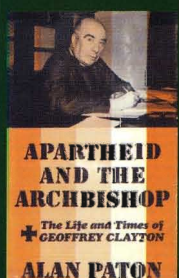
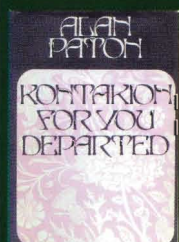
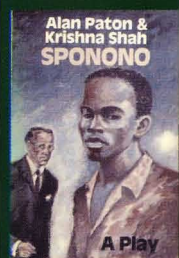
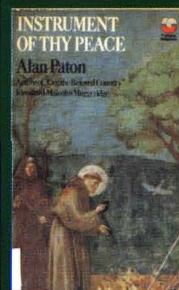
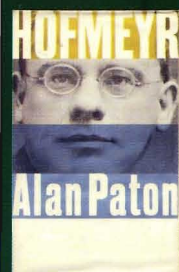


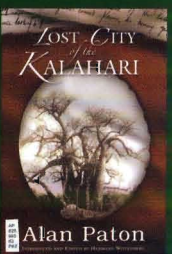
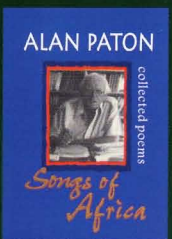
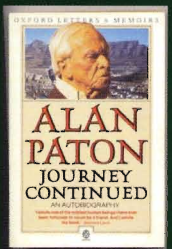
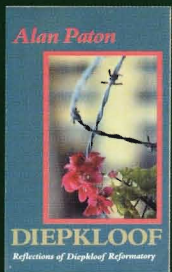
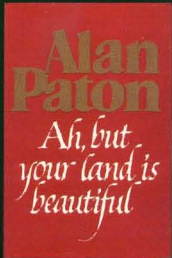
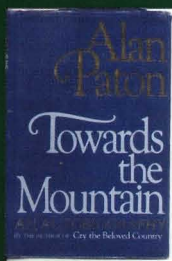
Randolph Vigne
Photo: Simon Wheeler, London

The topic of Randolph Vigne's Lecture was **"Namibian Democracy: A Liberal Legacy?"**. He started his lecture by describing an incident which happened in Windhoek on 14 July, 1960. Alan Paton was asked to address a meeting

by the S.W.A. Political Group. This he did, but he had no idea that three interested Africans, including a newspaper reporter, had not been allowed into the meeting, and that three South African Security Branch members had attended the meeting. When Randolph Vigne had to break the news to him some six months later that he had unwittingly addressed a colour-bar meeting, Paton "spat out, in those famous staccato tones: 'If I had known I'd have walked out and issued the strongest possible protest'". Vigne pointed out that this incident was not recorded either in Paton's autobiography or biography.

It is interesting to note that many of the Lectures start with an interesting or amusing anecdote about Alan Paton. Many of these snippets are not found elsewhere, but give an insight into Paton's personality and add information about his life.





The **2nd Alan Paton Lecture** was given in **1995** by **Peter Brown**, who had been one of Alan Paton's greatest friends and supporters, and who had followed him as National Chairman of the Liberal Party, when Paton progressed to being National President of the Party, in order to spend more time on his writing. Peter McKenzie Brown was banned from 1964-1974. After his banning, he became involved in several organizations, all involved with the opposition to apartheid, or overcoming problems caused by the apartheid government. They included the Church Agricultural Project (CAP); the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), of which he was a founder member; Five Freedoms Forum (FFF); the Pietermaritzburg Dependents Conference and the Liberal Democratic Association (LDA). He also played an important role in the establishment of the Alan Paton Centre (APC).



Peter Brown
Photo: Adrian Koopman

Peter Brown's Lecture was entitled "**Alan Paton: the Man and the Politician**", and it was a very important one in that it was specifically about Alan Paton, by a friend who had known him so well.

Peter Brown made a very important point at the start of his Lecture, saying that the Edgar Brookes Lecture was being used by its organisers to "provide a platform for views which were frequently hostile to everything Edgar believed in and for speakers who were often contemptuous of his views. We must not let this happen here. I hope this event will continue to provide a platform for people who respect the things for which Alan stood, even though they might sometimes not agree with everything he said or did."

The organisers of the Alan Paton Lecture have tried to stick to this principle over the years, inviting speakers who had either known Paton, had been members of the Liberal or Progressive Parties, or admired his views, and held similar opinions. The Lectures have been organized as a combined effort between the Alan Paton Centre (APC) Librarian, the members of the APC Advisory Committee and the Liberal Democratic Association (LDA), all of whom have been Paton admirers, sympathetic to his views and are liberal thinkers.

Peter Brown's first contact with Alan was when Alan came to speak to a group of boys and girls

from Natal schools at a July holiday "Winter School on Race Relations", in 1941. At this time, Paton was the principal of Diepkloof Reformatory. Their next meeting was in 1951, when Alan and Dorrie drove down from Bulwer where Alan was writing *Too late the phalarope*, in order to join a non-racial discussion group at Peter's house. This discussion group, and similar ones in other South African cities, came together to form the Liberal Association in 1953, which developed into the Liberal Party. This meeting was the start of Paton's political career. This fascinating Lecture went on to describe many incidents in Paton's life, and in the fifteen-year-long life of the Liberal Party.

Peter Brown made the point that not only was Paton a great writer, but he was also a marvellous speaker:

"Because of his international reputation Alan's was a voice which could make headlines locally and internationally and there was nobody else in the party who had the same capacity to do so. So he was continually pulled in to speak at major Party occasions."

He also commented: "I cannot think of a single occasion in the 15-year life of the Liberal Party when he refused a request to go to a meeting or make a speech or write an article for it. He used to grumble of course, but what really irritated him was somebody telling him that he was wasting his life and his talent with all the political stuff when he should have been getting on with his writing. This attitude to Alan's political involvement seems to me to show a fundamental misunderstanding of his personality. Having decided to become engaged in a political struggle against apartheid he could not abandon it and remain true to himself, and if he had not remained true to himself the inspiration which went into his writing might well have dried up."

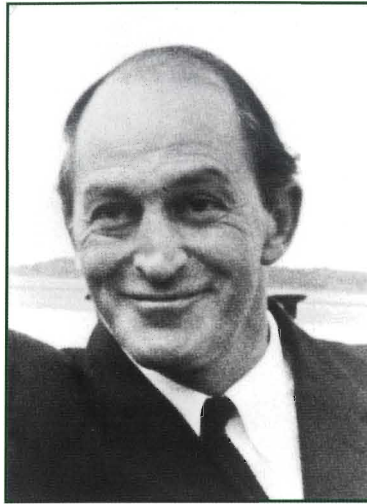
The **3rd Alan Paton Lecture** was given in **1996** by **Sir Raymond "Bill" Hoffenberg**, and was entitled "**Dilemmas of Principle**". He was a close friend of Alan Paton's, and Peter Brown described in his introduction an incident which happened when a group of friends were walking in the Berg. Bill, Peter and Alan were core members of the group which spent every "Dingaans Day" (16th December) staying at Peter Brown's cottage, and walking in the Berg. On one hike, the group of friends, including Alan

Paton, heard a cow bellowing in anguish from a difficult labour. Peter thought that Bill might be able to help, being a medical man. However, Bill put his hands over his ears, and walked away as fast as possible! According to Peter, this was the reason why Bill decided to become an endocrinologist, rather than a gynaecologist!

Bill was an early member of the Liberal Party, was involved with the Defence and Aid Fund, and was on the NUSAS Advisory Board. In 1967 he was banned, which prevented him from lecturing at the University of Cape Town. He and his family then left for the UK in 1968. He became a very eminent physician there, holding the Chair at Birmingham University, and being elected President of the Royal College of Physicians, and President of Wolfson College at Oxford. After his retirement he set up the Chair in Medical Ethics at Queensland University in Brisbane, Australia. He was the personal physician and friend of Oliver Tambo while both men were in exile. In his later years, he visited South Africa often, and made recommendations to the Department of Health about medical training in South Africa.

Bill Hoffenberg spoke about the dilemmas of principle which Alan Paton had with regard to young Liberal party members who had been involved in the ARM episode. Paton was totally opposed to violence, yet he pleaded for clemency for the Rivonia trialists on the ground that they had little choice but to resist by force. He also spoke about Nelson Mandela and the ANC's anguish in having to decide to turn from a non-violent approach to violence, in desperation, after an ineffectual fifty year non-violent struggle.

He explained that although he had joined the Liberal Party in 1953, at Peter Brown's invitation, he had not become politically involved until 1960, when two events had a big effect on him. The first was examining his first torture victim, and the second was Sharpeville. He and his wife, Margaret, decided not to emigrate, as so many of their friends were doing, but to stay and become involved with local liberal organizations.



"Bill" Hoffenberg

Photo: Cape Argus

Margaret became involved in the Black Sash and Kupugani. He became involved in the Defence and Aid Fund which provided legal and other assistance to those who had been charged with political offences, and their families. However, Hoffenberg was banned in 1967, and so decided that as he could no longer play a meaningful role in South Africa, he and his family had no choice but to emigrate, going into exile for almost thirty years.

He went on to discuss the role played by doctors with regard to victims of torture, and medical ethical decisions which doctors have to face. He spoke about the notorious doctors involved in the Steve Biko torture case.

The **4th Alan Paton Lecture**, in **1997**, was given by **His Excellency Gopalkrishna Gandhi**, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, and at that time the Indian High Commissioner to South Africa. His captivating and thought-provoking lecture was entitled "**Simply not done: an enquiry into inner and outer restraint**".

The speaker pointed out that although he had not known Alan Paton personally, his late uncle, Manilal Gandhi, editor of *Indian Opinion* and non-violent crusader for racial justice, had been a friend of Alan Paton's. He said that the two men had in common the quality of decency; they both had a clear idea of what is done and what is, simply, not done. He dedicated his talk to his uncle, Manilal Gandhi.



Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Photo: High Commissioner of India, Pretoria

Gopalkrishna Gandhi's talk ranged over a variety of subjects, including episodes from the Indian epic *Mahabharata*; Pontius Pilate in the *Bible*; the murder of Arthur Jarvis in *Cry, the beloved country*; Chris Hani's murder and Mahatma Gandhi's murder. In all of these cases, he examined the ethical issues involved.

The **5th Alan Paton Lecture** was given in **1998** by **Helen Suzman**, world-renowned as the great champion of single-handed opposition to apartheid in parliament, for so many years, as the sole Progressive Party Member of Parliament. She and Alan Paton knew each



Paton's parents with Alan and Atholl



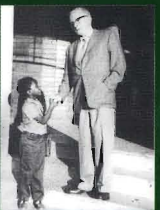
Paton children



Alan and David
10 Myhill Rd.,
PMB



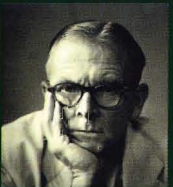
10 Myhill Rd.,
1998



Paton and an
admirer



Paton and his
car!



other well, and respected each other's views. Her topic was "**Alan Paton, liberalism and the New South Africa**". This Lecture was given on an important occasion: the 10th anniversary of Alan Paton's death, and the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Cry, the beloved country*.

At the end of her Lecture, Helen Suzman asked some important questions relating to the New South Africa:

"But finally if I were to judge how Alan Paton would have weighed up the pros and cons of the New South Africa, I believe he would have proclaimed that on the Richter scale of democracy, the overall state of the nation is better than it was 10 years ago. One must remember that corruption and nepotism were also rife in the old South Africa. No one in the new South Africa has to fear being confined by a banning order – such as was endured by Peter Brown for many years – severely restricting his freedom of movement. And no-one in the new South Africa needs to fear that his passport will be confiscated, a deprivation suffered by Alan in December 1970 curtailing travel abroad for some ten years, and thus denying him the honour and recognition he would otherwise have enjoyed. One must weigh the removal of apartheid laws and of institutionalized violations of human rights against all the negative factors of the new South Africa. To him, as to me, race classification, pass laws, group areas, forced removals, detention without trial, solitary confinement under the Terrorism Act and all the hideous violations of human rights in the old South Africa, recently revealed at the TRC, were just as appalling as hijacking and robbery and rape.

Alan Paton would have agreed that there are plus factors today that should be added to the scale – such as free medical attention for pregnant women and children under the age of six, water and electricity supplied to thousands of communities hitherto denied such basic necessities, primary health care available in rural areas...

Finally, Alan Paton would have appreciated South Africa's present standing in the world – no longer a pariah nation – readmitted to the Commonwealth, to the United

Nations, now a member of OAU and a leading member of SADC. He would have blessed the disappearance of economic sanctions and academic boycotts, and the fact that our Head of State, President Mandela, is the most popular and sought-after leader in the world."

The **6th Alan Paton Lecture**, entitled "**Strengthening Democracy?**" was given by **Justice Pius Langa** in 1999. Justice Langa



Helen Suzman

Photo: Helen Suzman Foundation

was at that time the Chancellor of the University of Natal and Deputy President of the Constitutional Court. He is a remarkable man, in that he pulled himself up from an impoverished childhood through the ranks of factory worker, court interpreter, public prosecutor, magistrate and advocate, to become Senior Counsel and then a Judge of the Constitutional Court.

Pius Langa's introduction to the works of Alan Paton was as a schoolchild, when he was awarded a copy of *Cry, the beloved country*

as a book prize on speech day. He was to meet Alan Paton some years later, in about 1975, at a commemoration of Mahatma Gandhi at the Gandhi Settlement in Phoenix, which he attended with Ismail Meer. Alan Paton's function on this occasion was to introduce the guest speaker, who was Chief Buthelezi.



Pius Langa

Photo: Natal Witness

Pius Langa made the point that as young men, those who later found themselves in the fight to achieve democracy, had been influenced by what was being said in Parliament and elsewhere by the "good guys", such as Margaret Ballinger, Edgar Brookes and Helen Suzman: what we do today may have some impact on the future of this country and its people.

Donald Woods gave the **7th Alan Paton Lecture** in 2000, entitled "**A salute to liberal values**". Donald Woods, then the editor of the *Daily Dispatch* in East London, was arrested on 19 October 1977 for having written editorials and speeches blaming the Vorster government for the death of the black leader, Steve Biko. Woods was subjected to banning orders and Security Police surveillance until New Year's Eve, 1977, when he and his family escaped across the border into Lesotho, and

from there to London. This episode in his life was immortalized in the film "Cry Freedom".

Woods reminded the audience that not only had Alan Paton alerted the world to the evils of apartheid through his great book, *Cry, the beloved country*, but that it was through his original idea that the International Defence and Aid Fund was started:

"It began when Alan Paton wrote to his friend, Canon John Collins, asking if Collins and his friends in Britain could help raise funds for the legal defence of South Africa's Treason Trialists, and later for Nelson Mandela and his fellow accused in the Rivonia Trial. John and Diana Collins immediately spearheaded a campaign that was to last until the death of apartheid itself, collecting from all over the world more than one hundred million pounds sterling over four decades which not only provided legal defence for political trials but maintenance for the families of activists, education for exiles and information campaigns to fuel the anti-apartheid movements in all countries overseas.

It is unanimously agreed by all our liberation leaders that without the International Defence and Aid Fund the liberation movements could not have survived as they did..."

He went on to discuss many instances of the major contributions made by liberals to the liberation of South Africa, and to the adoption of the most admirably liberal Constitution in the world.

"Liberalism and globalisation"

was the title of the **8th Alan Paton Lecture**, given by **Archbishop Denis Hurley** in **2001**. Archbishop Hurley was already 86 years old when he gave this Lecture, but was still fit and well. He had been a good friend of Alan Paton's for many years, and had regularly attended Paton's famous birthday parties, and had visited him in hospital shortly before his death in 1988. Archbishop Hurley had the unusual distinction of having spent some years of his childhood on Robben Island, where his father was the lighthouse keeper. He was ordained as a priest in Rome in 1939, and on his return

to Durban in 1940, he was appointed curate of the Emmanuel Cathedral, which role he was to play again after his retirement in 1992. In 1947, when he was ordained a bishop at the age of 31, he was the youngest Catholic bishop in the world. In 1951 he was appointed Archbishop of Durban. He was installed as Chancellor of the University of Natal in 1993.

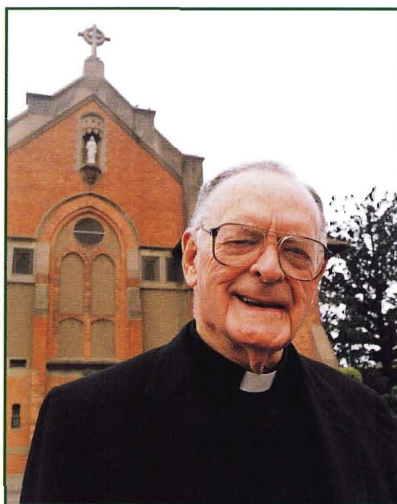


Donald Woods

Photo: Marie-Anna Marais

Archbishop Hurley started his Lecture by paying tribute to Alan Paton. He said that Paton was a dedicated Liberal and a convinced Christian, and that the two did not always go together. His lecture was about economic globalisation, and how bad it had been for South Africa, having caused thousands of job losses, particularly in the leather and clothing industries. He felt that if liberals, humanitarians and religious believers all came

together, they could neutralise economic globalisation, and substitute for it a wide-spread community consciousness. He felt that it was important that this community consciousness be developed in order to overcome global poverty.



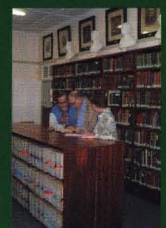
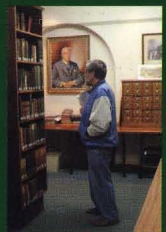
Archbishop Denis Hurley

Photo: Karen Jackman, NU Focus

and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Archbishop Tutu and Alan Paton had had a major previous disagreement, over the subject of disinvestment. Tutu felt that disinvestment would be a good thing, as it would bring the nationalist government to its knees, and force them to change. Paton had felt that disinvestment would be a bad thing, because the poorest of the poor would be the ones to suffer.

Father Trevor Huddleston was the common link





between Tutu and Paton. Huddleston made a profound impression on the young Desmond Tutu, when at the age of 12 in 1943 he first met the Anglican cleric in Sophiatown, where he was Prior of the Church of Christ the King. Huddleston also had to oversee the black school, St Peter's, which played sport against teams from the Diepkloof Reformatory, where Paton was the Principal. Alan and Dorrie Paton became great friends of Trevor Huddleston, and Paton used him as the inspiration for Father Vincent, one of the priests in *Cry, the beloved country*, which he wrote in 1946.

On hearing the title of Archbishop Tutu's Lecture, some people asked "But what's there to celebrate?". Indeed, Archbishop Tutu agreed that the arms deal was inexplicable, the attitude to AIDS was not acceptable, and that accepting the grossly unfree and unfair election in Zimbabwe was a bad letdown. However, in spite of these things, we should not minimize or devalue our accomplishments:

"We need a crash course in history... to be able to see ourselves more properly in context and we need another course in memory, in remembering, for we have shown a quite staggering capacity to forget far too soon for our own good. Someone needs to shake us up and say, 'Hey, have you forgotten so soon?'..."

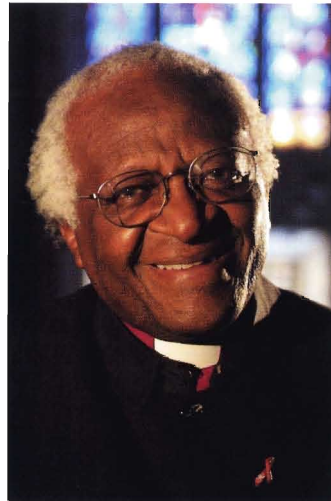
The world admires South Africa for three things – our extraordinary relatively peaceful transition; Nelson Mandela, the icon of magnanimity, forgiveness and reconciliation; and thirdly for the TRC (which) accomplished something unprecedented, unparalleled... Our transition and the TRC are accomplishments which we should be celebrating exultantly."

He said that some of the other things we can be positive about and celebrate are the stability of the country, the world-class accomplishments in sport as a rainbow-nation, a formidable array of writers, a lively and free Press, and a wonderful Constitution which is admired throughout the world.

The Archbishop finished his Lecture by exhorting

the audience to "Engage enthusiastically, participate, debate, argue, help to shape what South Africa should become... We have the privilege of being in on the ground floor in the construction of a new society. It is still nascent, it's still flexible. Be part of the moulders of the future. This is your land, this is your motherland, you are a South African and be proud of it... Your contribution is indispensable. You are wanted here, you are needed here. Let us celebrate our diversity."

Archbishop Tutu received a standing ovation from the audience of three hundred after his speech.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Photo: Archbishop Tutu's Office

The **10th Alan Paton Lecture**, in **2003**, was a special one, as it celebrated the Centenary of Alan Paton's birth. It was entitled "**Alan Paton: a celebration of his life**", and it was given by three speakers: **Peter Brown, Colin Gardner and Jonathan Paton**.

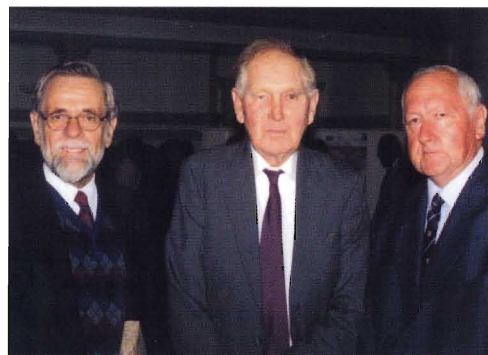
Peter Brown started the Lecture with his speech:

"Alan Paton's Political Life in the Liberal Party of South Africa", which included several anecdotes. One was about Bishop Reeves vanishing to Swaziland in the 1960 Emergency. Alan was asked by the church to go and see what he was planning. The only way to get there was in a light plane, and George Tomlinson, a distinguished RAF pilot during the war, was the pilot. On the way back they were flying into a head wind,

and used far more fuel than expected. Alan was anxious, but George remained relaxed. When they got to about New Hanover the fuel ran out, and George had to land in a mealie field! The two of them then hitch-hiked back to Pietermaritzburg!

Peter Brown finished his Lecture by describing the cost to Alan Paton of his involvement in the struggles of the Liberal Party.

"He was charged with addressing at least one illegal meeting; his home was raided, his car was vandalized in the Eastern Cape; his passport was confiscated. But the biggest price he paid for that involvement was the effect it had on his



Prof. Colin Gardner, Peter Brown and
Jonathan Paton

Photo: Adrian Koopman

writing...He wrote two great novels before he got involved with the LP. I think he would have written several more had he not. I think that this is the measure of what he gave of himself in his struggle against apartheid. Of white South African writers only Breyten Breytenbach gave more. If there were others, in those dark days of the 50s and 60s, I have still to hear of them."

Colin Gardner's speech was entitled "**Paton's Literary Life**". This was a summarized version of the lecture which he gave at the Grahamstown Festival in 2003. Colin Gardner was a friend of Alan Paton's for many years. He joined the Liberal Party in 1957, and by 1964 had been elected to its national committee. When the Party was dissolved because of the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968, Colin had the dubious honour of chairing one of the final Party meetings. Colin is both a political person, and an English academic, having been Professor of English at the former University of Natal, as well as Head of Department and Dean. The main emphasis of Colin's speech was on *Cry, the beloved country*.

The third speech of the evening was given by Alan Paton's younger son, Jonathan, who had been a teacher and an English lecturer. In his speech, Jonathan told some family anecdotes about his famous father. His favourite memories of his father were of travels they had been on together. Alan Paton loved this country, and knew the names of all the birds, the trees, the rivers and the mountains. He bought a big red Pontiac, which was very red, so people used to say it had a Communist exterior, but because it was so roomy inside, they said it had a Capitalist interior. Jonathan's friend, Peter Rodda, made up a rhyme about the Pontiac: "The Paton's car is painted red, I love it not Ngubane said" (referring to Jordan Ngubane, a very anti-communist member of the Liberal Party). It was in this car that the Patons, Alan Paton with his

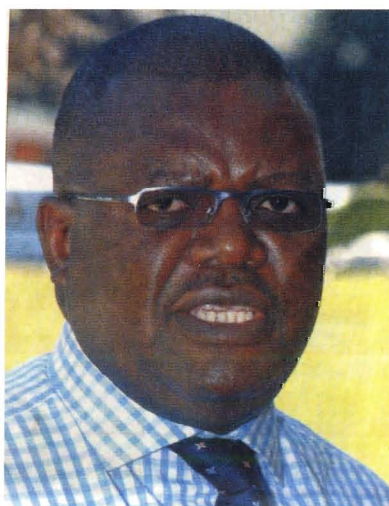
wife and his two sons with their wives, went on a trip as far as the Ruwenzori Mountains and the pygmies in the Congo in 1958.



Prof. Colin Gardner
Photo: Alan Paton Centre



Jonathan Paton
Photo: Natal Witness

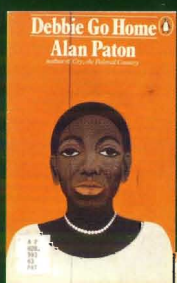
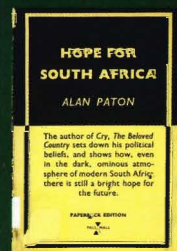
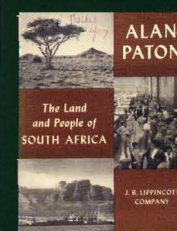
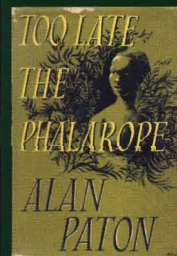
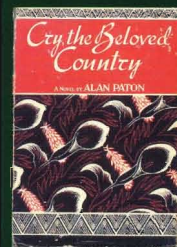


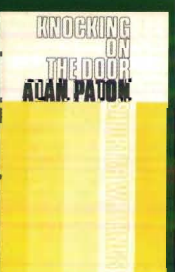
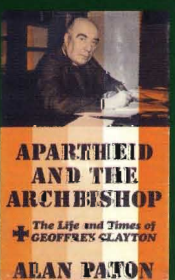
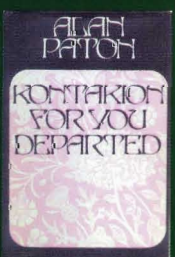
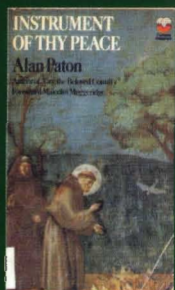
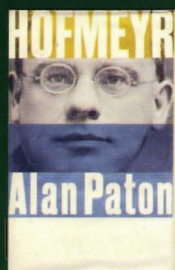
Trevor Ncube
Photo: Natal Witness

In 2004, Trevor Ncube gave the **11th Alan Paton Lecture**, entitled "**Zimbabwe: lessons for South Africa**". Trevor Ncube is a well-known Zimbabwean journalist, having been the Publisher and Chief Executive of the *Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard* from 2000, and then in South Africa, the Chief Executive Officer of the *Mail and Guardian*. Trevor Ncube did not know Alan Paton, but knows Prof. Makgoba, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, very well, as Prof. Makgoba is also the Chairman of the *Mail and Guardian*. Prof. Makgoba therefore introduced the speaker, and also commented on what a pleasure it was to visit the Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University, as it "closely resembles one's vision of what a university should be like".

Trevor Ncube's main message was that it is important for South Africans to be pro-active in order to avoid falling into a situation of chaos as Zimbabwe has done. He feels that farmers should take the initiative, and open discussions with regard to land distribution, so that it takes place in an orderly, gradual fashion, and that those who take over the land are taught how to farm in order to preserve the economy. The same applies to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) – it is essential and should take place soon. The white captains of industry have it in their power to take the initiative with regard to sharing the cake, and trying to ensure that unemployed blacks can be pulled into the mainstream economy.

Ncube was not afraid to speak out about the wrongs of Zimbabwe, even though journalists there are punished for criticizing the government. He said that South Africa is fortunate to have an independent press. Freedom of the intellectual





is what keeps the public going – the ability to stand up and say what you believe, and be able to sleep soundly afterwards. This Lecture attracted many ex-Zimbabweans, who debated the issues for many hours after the Lecture.

The **12th Alan Paton Lecture**, entitled **“Transforming the judiciary: the politics of the judiciary in a democratic South Africa”**, was given by **Advocate Geoff Budlender** in 2005. Geoff Budlender is an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa and a member of the Cape Bar. He was the Chairperson of the Council of the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2005. In 2003 he was named Human Rights Lawyer of the Year by the Cape Law Society. As a young man he had been a student activist and President of the UCT Students’ Representative Council. He was arrested under the Riotous Assemblies Act for putting posters on the steps of St George’s Cathedral, even though permission had been given by the Archbishop of Cape Town to hold a student protest there.

He started his Lecture by saying that the South African Constitution is fundamentally different from the Constitutions of other countries, which reflect the outcome of a change which has already taken place. A key theme of the S.A. Constitution is that the change, the transformation, is yet to come. Part of this change which must take place is a transformation of the judiciary: in demographic terms; in underlying attitudes – it must embrace and enforce the principles of a fundamentally new legal order; and it must be responsive to the goals of the democratically elected government.

Dr Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela gave the **13th Alan Paton Lecture** in 2006, which was about **“The Zuma Saga and the Problem of Moral Leadership”**. This Lecture was advertised as **“Forgiveness and Reconciliation after Mass Trauma: The Moral Imagination”**. However, the speaker decided at the last moment that a topical lecture was

more appropriate. She is the author of **“A Human Being died that Night: A South African Woman confronts the Legacy of Apartheid”** which won the 2004 Alan Paton Award. She is a former member of the TRC Human Rights Violations Committee; an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Cape Town and Senior Consultant for the Unilever Ethics Centre’s African Ethics Initiative at UKZN.



Adv. Geoff Budlender

Photo: Stephen Coan, Witness

“What liberalism offers South Africa today” was the title of the **14th Alan Paton Lecture**, which was given by **Raenette Taljaard** in 2007. Ms Taljaard became the Director of the Helen Suzman Foundation in 2006. She was the youngest woman to be elected to Parliament herself, having been elected as a Democratic Party member in June, 1999, where she remained until the end of 2004.

Raenette Taljaard started her Lecture with a quote from Alan Paton:



Dr Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

Photo: Adrian Koopman

“Liberalism is not a creed of this or any century. It is a generosity of spirit, a tolerance of others, an understanding of otherness, a commitment to the rule of law, an abhorrence of authoritarianism, a love of freedom.” She went on to say that the term ‘liberal’ is often wielded as a swear-word in South Africa today, and as a tool to undermine the credibility of those who fought for the liberation of South Africa on the basis of their own clear

belief in freedom as a fundamental virtue. Although some of the ideals of liberalism may have triumphed in the new South Africa, this is unacknowledged, and liberals are still under fire.



Raenette Taljaard

Photo: Jewel Koopman

Raenette Taljaard stated that she wore her badge as a liberal unapologetically with honour. She stated that there are a number of core challenges that liberals and liberalism face in order to remain relevant and contribute to a national discourse.

These core challenges that liberals face include: “Ensuring that the contributions

of extra-parliamentary liberals such as Alan Paton, Peter Brown and hundreds of others and parliamentary liberals such as Helen Suzman and Colin Eglin and their wonderful contribution to our country's history of liberation will never be forgotten, thereby ensuring an accurate historical record.

Ensuring a lively liberal presence in society broadly and in civil society in particular (beyond the reach of narrow party politics) to remind all of us that there are liberals who presided over our transition to democracy in all organizations, political parties, and in all walks of life in South Africa."



Prof. John Dugard gave the **15th Alan Paton Lecture** in **2008**, entitled "**Liberalism, human rights and foreign policy**". He is an eminent academic, who has been given honorary doctorates by five South African universities. He was Professor of Law at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria in 2008. Before that, he was Professor of International Law at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. From 1978 to 1990 he was Director of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is a member of the UN International Law Commission and a Judge ad hoc of the International Court of Justice. His career started at the old University of Natal, where he was a lecturer in Law from 1961 to 1963. He was introduced by Professor Colin Gardner, who had composed and read the laudation in 1990 when Dugard received an honorary doctorate from the University of Natal.

Prof. Dugard started his Lecture as follows: "I am honoured to have been invited to deliver the 15th Alan Paton Lecture. I knew Alan well. We worked together in the Institute of Race Relations and I met him on social occasions at his son Jonathan's home. The last time I saw him was at his grand daughter Pamela's wedding, when we hosted the reception at our house in Craighall Park.

But my relationship with Alan goes back much further. Like many South Africans of my generation I was deeply influenced by Paton's writings. *Cry the beloved country* was published when I was twelve. It was the first book I read on what used to be called "the South African problem". I still get a choking feeling in my throat when I read the opening lines of this work: "There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo in to the hills. These hills are grass covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it". Soon after I read *Too late the phalarope* and when I became intellectually pretentious, his lives of Hofmeyr and Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton. To me his writings were a blend of the scriptures and Ernest Hemingway. His clipped and economical sentences in the

style of Hemingway had a scriptural quality, in keeping with the seriousness of his purpose.

He spoke too in the style of the scriptures. That is not to say that his speeches were sermons. They were too beautifully crafted and phrased. But like his writings they had a scriptural quality. Good writers are often poor speakers. But not so Paton. He used both the written word and the spoken word to great effect. I have recalled Paton as writer and speaker. But in addition he was for forty years the conscience of South Africa, a man whose commitment to human dignity and racial equality were unswerving. Throughout the dark years of apartheid he was a light, a beacon of hope and a voice of principle and reason."

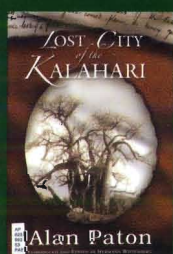
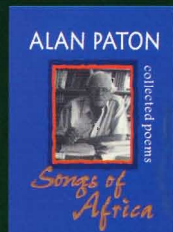
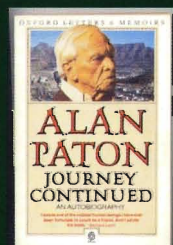
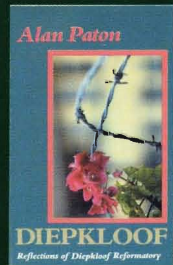
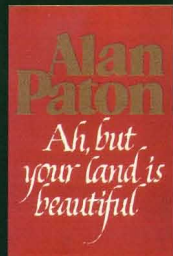
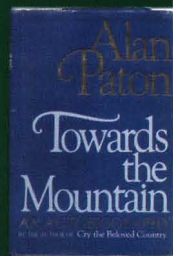
In conclusion, these fifteen Alan Paton Lectures provide an insight into Alan Paton's life and his relationship with some of the speakers, as well as providing a commentary on the current state of affairs in South Africa at the time of each Lecture, and an ongoing appreciation of the concept of liberalism.

Grateful thanks for financial donations received

The Alan Paton Centre Advisory Committee and staff would like to place on record their grateful thanks to the Natal Society Foundation Trust (NSFT) for their most generous donation, which has been used to cover the printing of this 20th Anniversary issue of *Concord*. The NSFT has also generously sponsored three previous Alan Paton Lectures, in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Last year the NSFT also provided three dehumidifiers, which were urgently needed for the Natal Society Special Collections, which are housed on permanent loan at the APC.

Also, grateful thanks go to the Liberal Democratic Association (LDA) for their generosity in donating their remaining funds on closing down, to the APC. This substantial amount is being used for the sponsorship of the Alan Paton Lecture in 2008 and 2009, and will be put towards the APC's 20th Anniversary Conference this year.

Many thanks to Prof. Richard Dale, of Fountain Hills, Arizona, who annually donates a sum to the APC which is usually put towards the production costs of *Concord*.



Alan Paton Today: His Continuing Importance

Colin Gardner

How important an influence are Alan Paton and his work in South Africa today?

The question is a complex one with no simple or obvious answers. It is also a politicised question, since one's assessment of Paton's current status is likely to depend to some extent upon one's political position. It's a question not just of judging how significant Paton and ideas associated with him are in the minds of some or many South Africans today, or within the structures of society, but also of assessing the degree to which the current ethos is one which could be said to offer solid indications of influences which Paton produced, promoted or would have approved of.

There are two further complications. Paton's work falls into two distinct but overlapping categories: his achievement as a creative writer, particularly as the author of *Cry, the beloved country*, and his work as a political thinker and activist. Does this call for a single or a multiple assessment? Then there is the fact that a new ANC administration is at the moment beginning to govern South Africa. Will it tend to stress or suppress what one might call the Paton emphases – the emphases on the rule of law, the freedom of the individual, the open society?

Alan Paton was deeply associated with the Liberal Party of South Africa, which was launched in 1953 and was legislated out of existence in 1968. He was a liberal in the old-fashioned South African sense: a person who was opposed to racial discrimination and believed that all human beings were significant and had inalienable rights. He was sure that traditional white-dominated South Africa needed to be radically changed, but he didn't believe in the use of violence. He saw his liberalism as a natural corollary of his Christian convictions.

As the 40-year struggle against apartheid

unfolded the word "liberal" had a hard time. From the first, of course, the apartheid nationalists denounced white liberals as sentimental and misguided, traitors to their race. But at the same time many people on the left came to feel that traditional liberalism, which relied above all on changing the minds of those whom it opposed, was powerless in the face of an increasingly

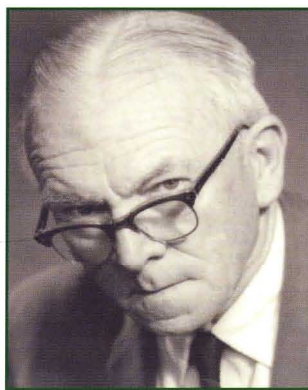
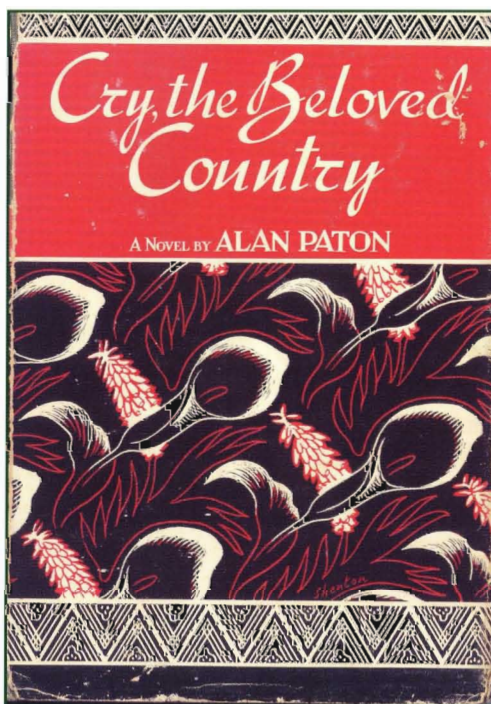
repressive regime. It was in fact often suggested, with some assistance from the Marxist thinking which was fairly prevalent at the time, that liberals, by opposing violence, were wittingly or unwittingly supporting the apartheid regime.

The question was further complicated and confused by the fact that some people who called themselves liberals turned out to be more interested in rather self-regarding economic "liberalisation" than in human freedom. The word that has now become attached to such people is "neo-liberal." With their belief in the overarching

"wisdom of the markets" "liberals" of this sort were regarded with suspicion or hostility by the liberation movements, which obviously favoured rather more socialist approaches.

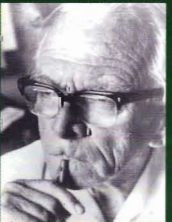
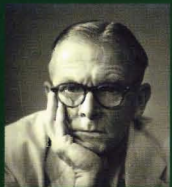
By the time of the transition from apartheid to democracy in the first half of the 1990s, "liberals" were for all these reasons not a popular group among the majority of South Africans. And yet most of the central ideas put forward over the years by true liberals, and by their presiding genius Paton, came to be accepted as constituting the groundplan for the new South Africa.

How did this happen? As *Cry, the beloved country* vividly illustrates, Paton believed deeply in the importance of negotiation and reconciliation as the best way of resolving conflict. During the fierce struggles of the 1980s the Paton prescription often seemed wildly unrealistic, but in the end, with neither the nationalist government nor the



Alan Paton, 1963

Photo: Crown Studios, Durban



liberation movements defeated, negotiation and some degree of reconciliation became inevitable. It has to be said too that, with the collapse of the Iron Curtain, most people recognised that a western-style liberal or social democracy had become the only viable option. The 1996 Constitution that was hammered out in tense but creative circumstances turned out to be a completely liberal one, one that Paton (who had died in 1988) would wholly have approved of.

Members of the old Liberal Party sometimes complain that the role and the sufferings of liberals in the anti-apartheid struggle have been largely ignored by the ANC government. This is not wholly true. It was perhaps inevitable that members of the liberation movements should have focused on their own struggles

and their own sufferings (which were on the whole far more intense than those endured by liberals), but Alan Paton has not gone unrecognised. He has been given more than one posthumous award by the new government. And there have been other signs of recognition. For example, as one drives into Pietermaritzburg from the north one takes Peter Brown Drive, and if one heads for the University of KZN one finds oneself in Alan Paton Avenue. If one veers towards Edendale one goes along Selby Msimang Drive.

Is Paton's influence on the Constitution, and therefore on many aspects of our way of life, implicit or explicit? Certainly implicit, as indeed most influences are. Very few people have read his political speeches and writings, or the constitution of the old Liberal Party. But in a certain sense the real founding document of that party and of modern South African liberalism was *Cry, the beloved country*, the novel of understanding, compassion and reawakening, which is also, as Paton said, a song of love to South Africa. The book is still current, still being reprinted and read. For all the great achievements of Nadine Gordimer and JM Coetzee, Zakes Mda, Sandiwe Magona and Antjie Krog, Paton's classic text is still the country's greatest novel. How often people talk of "the beloved

country"! In that phrase is encapsulated the passion, the aspiration and the humanity (not to mention the prophetic ecological awareness) which give the book its enduring power.

Cry, the beloved country is not the only literary work of Paton's that lives on and continues to make an impact. Some of his fine short stories (a new edition of them has recently been published) are read in schools and have been dramatised

on radio and television. Some of his poems make their way into anthologies. The most notable of these is perhaps "To a Small Boy who Died at Diepkloof Reformatory", with its humane empathy and its critical and self-critical awareness that could be thought of as the very essence of liberalism:

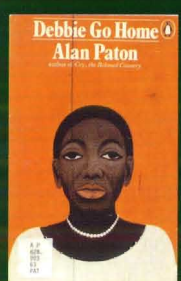
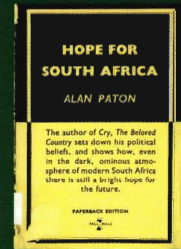
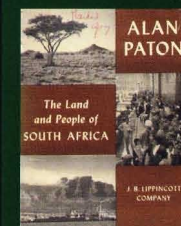
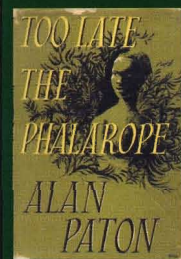
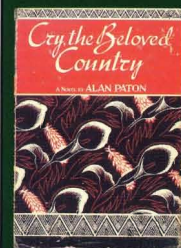


Jordan Ngubane addressing voters at a Liberal Party meeting in the Supper Room, Pietermaritzburg City Hall, 1960s

Photo: Tom Sharpe

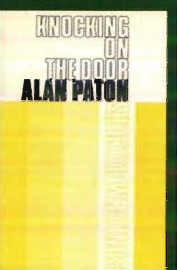
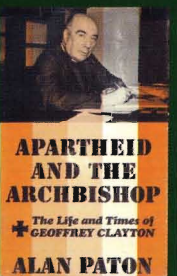
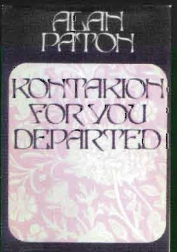
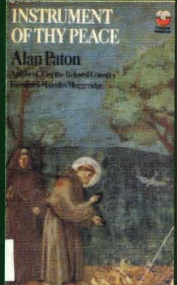
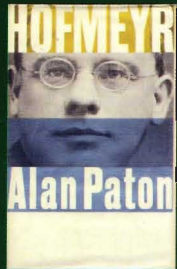
*Small offender, small innocent child
With no conception or comprehension
Of the vast machinery set in motion
By your trivial transgression,
Of the great forces of authority,
Of judges, magistrates and lawyers,
Psychologists, psychiatrists, and doctors,
Principals, police and sociologists,
Kept moving and alive by your delinquency,
This day, and under the shining sun
Do I commit your body to the earth
Oh child, oh lost and lonely one.*

South Africa is a young democracy, moving forward, sometimes groping forward, trying to establish its own distinctive ethos and way of life. The liberal, tolerant, open-minded attitudes that Paton favoured are entrenched in the Constitution and are alive and well within society. But other, illiberal ideas – contemptuous, racist, xenophobic, self-serving, domineering – are there in the mix too, and at times they seem in danger of becoming dominant. Human social life is a constant struggle, as Paton knew – a struggle to make the best ideas and attitudes prevail. It would be absurd to suggest that all of the good and humane notions current in South African society today emanate from Paton and from the liberal tradition. But he and it are distinctly significant.



Prophet or Politician: Alan Paton as Liberal Leader, 1955-68

Randolph Vigne



In February 1955, after only nine months in office, Margaret Ballinger resigned as Leader of the Liberal Party of South Africa. Mrs Ballinger had fought in Parliament for human rights for South Africa's oppressed majority for eighteen years, and outside it for long and lonely years before that. She had become a force throughout the country (Helen Suzman was to acknowledge her as her 'role model'), and her going from the leadership marked the end of the Party's serious parliamentary role, though she, with her few Liberal colleagues in the House and the Senate, kept their 'Native Representative' seats until they were swept away by apartheid legislation.

Her successor was the only other Liberal with a national - indeed an international - name, Alan Paton, who had been, with Leo Marquard, her deputy. Paton had been unhappy with Margaret Ballinger's leadership. He said of her that she 'wanted to fight for the rights of all men and women but [was] not particularly desirous of having all men and women join her in the fight.' Her world was Parliament where, wrote Paton, 'she was one of the outstanding debaters in the House and was regarded as the outstanding Liberal of her time'. She had fought almost alone for too long, however, and had little concern for the views of others in the Party. 'I didn't join the Liberal Party', she told a public meeting in Cape Town, 'the Liberal Party joined me'.

Paton's leadership style and performance were very different. His liberalism was a way of life, its basis a deeply moral one, and he gave his all to the cause. Seasoned liberal politicians, like Donald Molteno, took a different view: 'The trouble with you, Paton', he said, 'is that you think the Liberal Party is a church.' Paton served the party devotedly, at great cost to his career as a writer. It was to enable him to complete his masterly biography of a great South African liberal statesman of the previous generation, Paton's friend J.H. Hofmeyr, that Peter Brown, chairman of the party, saw to it that his post was changed

to that of the newly created, non-executive one of National President in 1958. Brown shouldered his administrative and leadership burdens until 1964 when, with Brown banned, Paton came back into full action as President. Another of that galaxy of liberal intellectuals and national figures, Edgar Brookes, took on the chairmanship when Brown was banned in 1963 and held the fort until the Party was forced to disband, five years later, by Vorster's legislation vetoing non-racial parties.

Paton was seen by Liberals, and the public at large, as the leader throughout its battles against Group Areas, 'black spots' removals, the Bantustan policy and all the apartheid and repressive legislation of the 1950s and '60s. He presided over the



Natal Congress of the Liberal Party, Durban, 1960

Photo: Alan Paton Centre

sometimes painful discussion of the Party's relations with the Congress Alliance, dealing with its suspicious view of the Congress of Democrats, whose idea of democracy was very different from that of the Liberals. This was the height of the Cold War, with a million political prisoners in Soviet 'gulags', and the Iron Curtain unbreached. The Party's withdrawal from the Congress of the People in 1955 he recognized as a disappointment to the pro-Liberal President-General of the ANC, Chief Luthuli and a setback to the Party, held hostage as it was by the Cape conservatives.

The Party had also worked its way through its internal disputes, the most testing of which was the adoption of universal suffrage. Principle took precedence over expediency, and the choice was sometimes hard. An early test was the request by Paton's good friend Chief Luthuli, to stand for Parliament as a 'Coloured Representative', in one of the new seats created when the mixed-race community had been taken off the voters' roll. The national dispute over the Coloured Vote had hardened the lines between Afrikaner Nationalists and the rest of the white population - alienating the disenfranchised irremediably in the process. Paton was able to escape offending the Chief and taking one of

these tainted new seats by his fortunate lack of residential qualification for this Cape seat. Paton in Parliament? He would have found the House no place for his crusade against apartheid and the 'Nat' Government's jackboot repression – and for the 'common society'. Mrs Ballinger, like her successor Mrs Suzman, was a mistress of detail in impeding the passing of the inhuman legislation that made South Africa an international scandal – and a major source of information to the outside world on the Government's evil deeds. Paton painted a bigger picture, and his prominence as leader of a major political party enabled him to display it in a way that imprinted it on the minds of the public. He was a prophet rather than a politician and this was most clear in his attitude to the ultimate goal of the Liberal Party.



Patrick Duncan and Alan Paton at a LP function
Photo: : Roger Carter, Durban

He did not believe that the Party could itself achieve the end of apartheid or the creation of the 'common society' (The term 'non-racialism' – a Liberal coining – came later.) He wrote:

"Did any of our members believe that the Liberal Party would ever get into power? ... I never believed it. I did not join the party in order to achieve power. I joined it because it was my duty."

His duty was to do, as Margaret Ballinger had said, and to 'raise a standard to which all good men might repair', whether that led to political victory or not.

He pointed out that the Party did 'have one member who believed not that we would get into power but that we must'. This was Patrick Duncan, who, with his mouthpiece *Contact*, inspired a considerable number of members, many of them black, to believe as he did. Duncan was banned, left the country and the Party, and fought on in exile with the Pan Africanist Congress, who believed, wrongly, that they could achieve power.

Paton soldiered on, leading a Party that came under heavy attack from the Government, with the Congresses and the PAC banned in 1960. Fifty key Liberals received banning orders, the

most damaging of all to the chairman, Peter Brown, who became a non-person for ten years, and to close allies like Selby Msimang and Jordan Ngubane. It clearly gave Paton a sense of guilt that he had not suffered for the cause as they did. At the end of 1960, returning from an American lecture tour and having received the US Freedom Award for 1960, he was ordered,

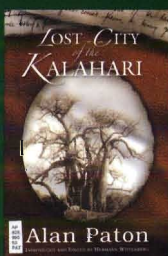
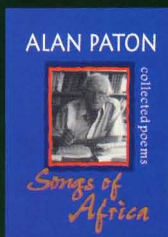
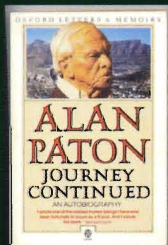
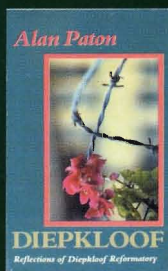
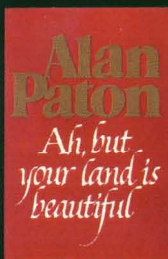
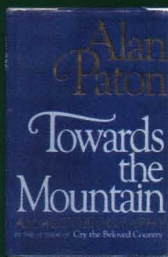
for the second time, to surrender his passport, his offence being that he had used it 'to blacken the name of his country abroad'. He wrote, at the end of his life: "Many people abroad still believe that I have been banned, that my books have been banned, and that I have been in prison. None of these beliefs is true.

The worst thing the Government ever did to me, apart from bringing my country to the brink of catastrophe, was to take away my passport."

Here again was the prophet of liberalism, of the 'common society', not the politician who would have 'strutted and fretted his hour on the stage'. He knew of himself that his words in defence of the oppressed and for the liberal values he cherished would be heard, and, in time, heeded, and that at the head of the Liberal Party they had an extra force.

There remained his sense of guilt that he had not suffered as others had done, though he must have known that his world status protected him from harsher treatment. In his last days, on his deathbed, his great friend and comrade Peter Brown visited him. His mind was wandering and he murmured: 'Am I in prison, Brown?' Asked later by a friend if this was an expression of a need to have suffered,

Peter Brown replied in his laconic, matter-of-fact way: 'I took it to be "Paton's last joke". Perhaps it was both: Paton the Liberal who, unlike his predecessor as Leader, did want to be in the fight with others, and who spoke of his need with a light touch. Could the leader of a party who played the political game to win parliamentary seats, or to placate white South Africa while wooing black, have made a real contribution to the democratic future? It seems very certain that Paton's words and writings made a greater contribution, based as they always were, on principle and not on expediency.



Heritage Day Seminars and Peter Brown Memorial Seminars

Jewel Koopman

The Heritage Day public holiday on 24 September gives organisations which are involved with the preservation of heritage, such as museums and archives, the opportunity to highlight an aspect of heritage, and celebrate it. The Alan Paton Centre (APC) and the Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (PAR) started celebrating Heritage Day in 1997 by holding annual Heritage Day Seminars. The first three seminars were organised jointly by these two organisations.

After 2000, the APC organised the seminars itself, or in combination with other organisations. The PAR organises a function for the Msunduzi Heritage Week, which is also when the APC's seminar is held. In 2005 the name of the seminar was changed to the "Peter Brown Memorial Seminar" in order to honour the late Peter Brown, who did so much for the Alan Paton Centre.

The following seminars have so far been held:

1997 "The role records play in revealing the past"

The speakers were Prof. Charles Villa-Vicencio, Cherryl Walker and Verne Harris

1998 "We are the stories we tell"

The speakers were Raaz Pillay, Mary Tenene and Me 'Mpho Nthunya.

1999 "Pietermaritzburg: some community perspectives"

The speakers were Prof. Paul Thompson, Sibongiseni Mkhize, Jabulani Sithole, Yunus Bayat, Ismael Cassimjee and Leonard Nkosi.

2000 "Nomkhubulwane and virginity testing debates"

The debaters were Nomagugu Ngobese, Prof. Phyllis Zungu, Nelson Ntshangase, Michael Lambert, Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, Dr Neil McKerrow, Phumulele Ntombela-Nzimande and Makhosi Khoza.

2001 "Symposium on names and heritage in KwaZulu-Natal"

The speakers were Prof. Langalibalele Mathenjwa, Louis Eksteen, Prof. Bheki Ntuli, Dr Themba Moyo, Mbali Machaba and Prof. Adrian Koopman.

2001 "Our segregated heritages: a need for understanding"

The speakers were Else Schreiner and Jenny Schreiner.

2003 "Our roots are speaking"

The speakers were Prof. Philippe Denis, Phumzile Mwandla, Vito Reddy, Peter Croeser and Mkhapheni Ngwenya.

2004 "Our women, our heritage: celebrating 10 years of democracy"

The speakers were Dolly Khumalo, Ina Cronjé, Mary Kleinenberg, Alleyn Diesel and Thina Siwendu.

2005 "Peter Brown Memorial Seminar on land issues"

The speakers were Prof. John Aitchison, Richard Clacey, Rauri Alcock, Richard Chadya, Mangoliso Khubekha and Graham Philpott.

2006 "Peter Brown Memorial Seminar on literary tourism in KwaZulu-Natal"

The speakers were Prof. Lindy Stiebel, Prof. Graham Stewart, Carol de Kock, Darryl David, Niall McNulty and Jewel Koopman.

2007 "Peter Brown Memorial Seminar on African archives and heritage"

The speakers were Prof. Adrian Koopman, Prof. Patrick Ngulube, Prof. Sabine Marschall, Dr Dale Peters and Verne Harris.

2008 "Peter Brown Memorial Seminar on the Freedom Route"

The speakers were Rob Haswell, Bunny Bhoola, Abie Wentzel, Chantal Snyman, David Gengan, Dumisani Mhlongo and Di Milford.



An appreciative audience, 2004

Photo: Adrian Koopman



Some of the 2008 participants

Photo: Jewel Koopman



Dolly Khumalo, 2004

Photo: Adrian Koopman

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