



The Alan Paton Centre
& Struggle Archives



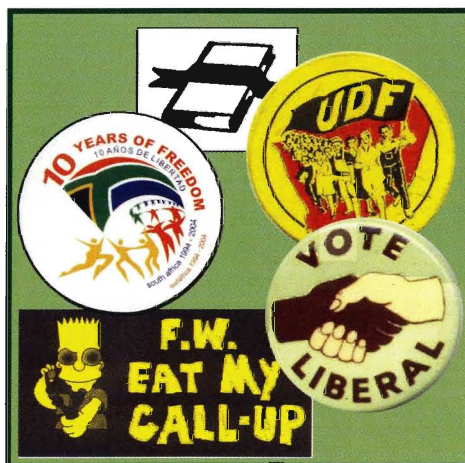
EXPANDING THE STRUGGLE ARCHIVES: A request for donations of archival papers and photographs

The Alan Paton Centre is now 15 years old. It was started the year after Alan Paton's death, when his widow, Mrs Anne Paton offered Mrs Joicelyn Leslie-Smith, the University Archivist at the time, journals from his study. These were received with enthusiasm

Joicelyn, and with Professor Colin Webb, the Principal of the Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of Natal, the idea of the Alan Paton Centre was born. Further donations of items from Paton's study were given, including his books, furniture, awards, his correspondence, unpublished manuscripts, and finally his poetry and short story manuscripts. This wonderful donation formed the core of the collections at the Paton Centre.

Shortly before the opening of the Centre, the next core donation was made, in the form of the archives and papers of the Liberal Party of South Africa (LP). When the LP was forced to close down in 1968, after the Prohibition of Improper Interference Bill of 1966 was passed as the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968, some of the former members decided that in order to protect themselves and their colleagues from the interference of the Security Branch, the papers and archives of the Liberal Party should be hidden, rather than being either destroyed or used against them. These papers were hidden in various places throughout the country, in trunks, cases and boxes in attics, basements and garages. Peter Brown, with the help of Professor Douglas Irvine and others, unearthed these papers, and presented them to the Alan Paton Centre. Joicelyn rushed to have them documented in time for the opening, and managed to have the first arrangement and descriptive list in place by the opening on 25 April 1989.

After this, many more historically valuable donations were made. Some related directly to Alan Paton, such as the papers of members of the Paton family and of old friends and associates. Other donations related directly to the Liberal Party, such



as the papers of other LP members, and of other LP provincial divisions, including the Transvaal, Cape and the Free State papers – the latter donated by the sole white LP member in the Free State, Jean van Riet.

A third group of donations consisted of what are now known as the "Struggle Archives". These papers are from organisations and individuals who were involved

in the struggle against apartheid in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, and include the Natal Midlands Black Sash, the Pietermaritzburg Detainees Support Committee (DESCOM), End Conscription Campaign (ECC); Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) and the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA).

The APC is now attempting to highlight these Struggle Archives, as many people are unaware that they are housed at the Centre. This will be done through highlighting individual activists, opponents and organisations through the use of posters, pamphlets, publications and displays.

We would also like to expand the Struggle Archives by requesting donations of material from those of you who were involved in the struggle in any way, whether as individuals, or within an organisation. We also welcome relevant photographs, to add to our growing photograph collection, which is currently being digitised. The aim is to build as complete a picture as possible of resistance to apartheid, particularly, but not exclusively in the Natal Midlands.

If you would like to donate your papers, photos, posters, videos or tapes on any of the topics covered by the Centre, please contact Jewel Koopman, Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Private Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Tel: +27 (0)33 260 5926; Fax: +27 (0)33 260 6143. E-mail: koopmanj@ukzn.ac.za



TRIBUTE TO PETER BROWN

COLIN GARDNER

The Alan Paton Centre – staff, Advisory Committee and friends - bade a sad farewell to Peter Brown, who died on 28 June 2004. Peter was known to us all as a great stalwart of the Liberal Party, and of the struggle against apartheid; a great supporter of the Alan Paton Centre and of many other causes which he felt were worthwhile; and a quiet source of strength and encouragement to many. We will miss him greatly.

The following is an extract from the eulogy given by Colin Gardner at Peter Brown's Memorial Service, held in the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity, Pietermaritzburg, 9 July 2004:

We are gathered here this morning to honour Peter Brown; and to show our love and admiration for him; to celebrate his life and what it has meant to us; and to grieve and rejoice with Phoebe, and with Christopher, Gina, Vanessa and Anton, and with the younger generation Grace, Cameron, Alistair, Antonia and Peter; and also to give a concrete human expression to the community of Peter's family and friends, and to that larger community which has formed around Peter's life and values and his glowing example of a life well lived.

A number of newspapers, both in South Africa and in Britain, have sketched his life and paid handsome tribute to him. Perhaps one might say at this point that as a person who has often been called "one of the unrecognised heroes of the liberation struggle" he has been given a good deal of recognition. And that is of course exactly what he deserves – though the anxiety lingers that perhaps, like many others, he has been rather more honoured in death than he was when he was alive.

As for those of you who have come to this ceremony from greater distances – and we are very pleased and grateful to welcome you here – you have come because you are friends of Peter's and know exactly who he was and what he had done.

I should perhaps qualify that last statement. I don't think any of us knew exactly what Peter had done. He had the means to help causes and to help people,

and he offered assistance to a prodigious degree. And his gifts and donations were always quiet, and very often anonymous. Only last week I was offered two further examples of Peter's generosity – one to a struggling business person, another to a progressive municipal cause in Pietermaritzburg in the 1980s, which was just about to throw in the towel when a quiet donation from Peter made things viable, cheered people up, and helped to bring about the beginning of the roll-back of apartheid in this city, the results of which we are now able to enjoy.

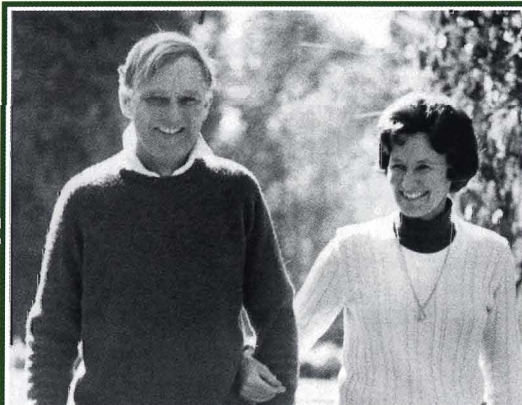
That quietness, that unobtrusiveness, that entire lack of swagger, that seeming absence of interest

in questions of reputation or glory: all this is surely at the very centre of what Peter was in himself, and what made him such a wonderful and challenging role model to all those who came into contact with him. There was a kind of perfection about Peter: he did the things that he did because he felt that they were the things that needed to be done. There seemed to be no ulterior motive in him.

I believe it to be true that he acted freely and with untrammelled generosity. And, on behalf of us all assembled here in this Cathedral, I pay tribute to Peter for this quality, for this perhaps is the greatest of the gifts that he gave us.

I want to try to say something about Peter's other qualities, qualities which radiated outwards from this central core of unostentatious generosity and goodness. I'd like too to try to place his qualities within the context of his existence, of the kind of man he was and the kind of life he led.

It is a kind of convention in tributes to married men who have achieved things to end with a sincere reference to their wives. Well, I want to break that convention by bringing Phoebe in at this point. Everyone recognised that the relationship between Phoebe and Peter was a very special, strong and joyful one, a true marriage if ever there was one. In such a situation each partner is profoundly affected and influenced by the other. We know then that



Peter and Phoebe Brown after Peter's release from political detention in the old Pietermaritzburg Prison, July 1960

Photo by Natal Witness

Phoebe is most intimately related to all that I have said, and in many respects was no doubt the joint cause, the acceptor, the confirmer and the loving strengthener. Phoebe is a modest and private person, and may not have expected or wanted me to say this. But it had to be said.

To shift our focus back to Peter, though with Phoebe always there in the frame beside him. Peter was a farmer – and a very good farmer. None of the obituaries that I have read have mentioned the fact that he was for example a breeder of prize Hereford cattle. Some of the people who met Peter at political meetings or meetings of other kinds regarded the fact that he was a farmer as irrelevant or even as something of an embarrassment. In South Africa over the years the farming community hasn't had particularly high reputation in left-wing political circles. But in fact Peter's being a farmer, his allegiance to the soil and his sense of the soil, was an important aspect of what made him what he was. Farmers are apt to be practical men, people who live largely by a well-educated intuition and by an intelligent common sense, people who go for concrete results.

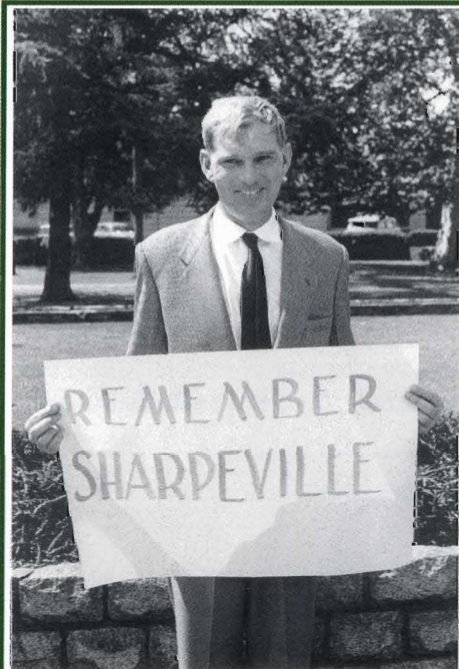
Peter was like that. Of course he thought and read deeply and developed a large sense of the South African and the global

human community of a kind that most farmers never have the time or the inclination for. But one sometimes remembered that he was a farmer in his slight though always kindly impatience with interesting and challenging theories, many of which have circulated in the last few decades – theories which seemed well worth developing for their own sake but which didn't necessarily have, or even aim to have, any specific tangible effects.

What is more, not being an academic – which many of the people he worked with were – he wasn't passionately contentious, but preferred a cool, open-minded, judicious attitude to subjects of discussion. The letter by David Evans in Monday's *Witness* gives a lovely brief account of Peter chairing heated debates within the Liberal Party: "He was, I thought, an excellent chairman of the party with its diversity of race, class and ideology. Tolerant

without being soft, he understood both right and left of the party rather better than they understood each other, dealing with us all with good humour and a nice dry wit, the latter qualities undoubtedly helping him through detention and banning."

But perhaps I have been taking some time before arriving at what many would consider to be Peter's greatest quality, though it is clearly tied up with the other features of him that I have discussed. Certainly it was the quality or attribute which made him stand out in the South Africa of the early 1950s. This was the fact that he was a natural liberal and democrat, a person who took for granted without any fuss or rhetoric that all people are equal, that every South African has the same kinds of needs, hopes and fears.



Peter Brown holding a placard, Cenotaph Gardens, Church St., Pietermaritzburg. 1960 Photo by Tom Sharpe

In 2004 that may seem a rather lame point to come as a kind of climax in a eulogy. So what? Doesn't everyone take that for granted nowadays? Perhaps they do, though some perhaps with varying degrees of discomfort or hypocrisy. But it is true: we have arrived at a state of society where democracy and fair play and mutual decency have become the expected or desired norm. It is people like Peter Brown who have shown South Africa the way to such attitudes.

In the early 1950s such views were, certainly among the white community, extremely rare.

Holding on to such views involved withstanding the quiet or not-so-quiet pressures of one's peers and the sinister pressures exerted in various ways by the government. But Peter always stood firm and was fearless. One gets the impression that the government of the day was particularly hostile to him precisely because he was so obviously a sensible, sound, sane, extremely nice person. And a polo-playing farmer to boot! That was difficult to take; that was frightening. The government was intelligent enough to think that it could deal with strident students and a few passionate professors and the occasional angry worker. But Peter Brown was something else. So, in many respects, was the whole Liberal Party.

The government had other reasons for fearing Peter, for sensing in him some of the first faint rumblings of the beginning of the end of apartheid. As I have

said, he wasn't just a proponent of liberal values, and he wasn't just adept at chairing meetings. He believed in getting things done, and he was good at getting things done. With his farmer's experience of the Natal Midlands he knew more than most people about evictions of farm workers and what were then called "black spot removals". He was outraged by these indications of apartheid and of crass selfishness, and he set about mobilising the African victims of these oppressive measures. Because of Peter the Liberal Party in Natal became more black than white. His superb command of the Zulu language was crucial to this enterprise. Other people helped him of course, particularly fellow liberal Africans like Elliot Mngadi and Mike Ndlovu and Christopher Shabalala and I remember a Mrs Ntombela, but the thrust and a large part

of the hard work came from Peter himself. This was real grassroots stuff. This was the real thing. What Peter preached, I may add, was not revolution but something hardly less potent: resistance. A refusal to have one's property and possessions moved, or, if and when refusal became impossible, a total refusal to acquiesce in an act of inhumanity. It was all about humanity.

I am tempted to go on with the story of this aspect of Peter's life – how, when after ten dreary years of banning he became a free man again (and by that time of course the Liberal Party had been destroyed by government decree), he looked around at the evictions and forced removals scene, found that the outrages were continuing unabated, and set about creating AFRA, the Association for Rural Advancement, a body dedicated to justice for rural workers – a body that is alive and active at this moment. While this was happening Peter was also working with the Dependents' Conference (helping the families of political prisoners), and the journal *Reality*, and the Church Agricultural Project at Msinga, and other things. In the years since 1990 he had put a great amount of energy and imagination – and money – into sponsoring and assisting with the training of African farmers.

What was Peter's attitude towards religion? Many of his friends were active believers – of Christianity, of Islam, of Hinduism. The most notable of these explicitly believing associates was of course his great friend Alan Paton. Peter once told Liz Pitman that he was "of course a Christian", but his Christianity was I think of what one might perhaps call a general kind. He didn't go to church every Sunday to hear the reading of the Gospel. But he lived his life in accordance with the Christian Gospel in a way that was a perpetual challenge to his more specifically believing friends

One point I must make is this. Peter was always, throughout his life, a positive person. There was a great deal to be depressed and despairing about in the apartheid days, but Peter never let things get him

down, he was never pressed into negativity. In the days of our new democracy, too, Peter like most other people found many things to be disappointed by or anxious about or critical of, but, as far as I have been able to judge, he remained broadly optimistic, grateful for the good things in our society, and always looking towards the future.

The last thing I want to say is no mere extra point. I have spoken very largely, I am aware, about the Peter that the world knows and celebrates: Peter the political animal. Peter the unobtrusive philanthropist and the effective activist. But Peter the person, Peter the everyday man whom one met as host or companion, is what many of us remember too. A man of great warmth and charm, of great dignity and gentleness, always thoughtful about and interested in other people, able to be relaxedly at his ease with a very wide range of friends, at his happiest when smiling or laughing, often ragging his friends but ready to appreciate and enjoy all of life's beauties and pleasures. Peter was able to move quite quickly and effortlessly from joking to serious concern, and then, when it seemed appropriate, back to joking again. Peter's laugh – often a bit challenging, always kindly, always full of life's richness – Peter's laugh is what I would like to end with.

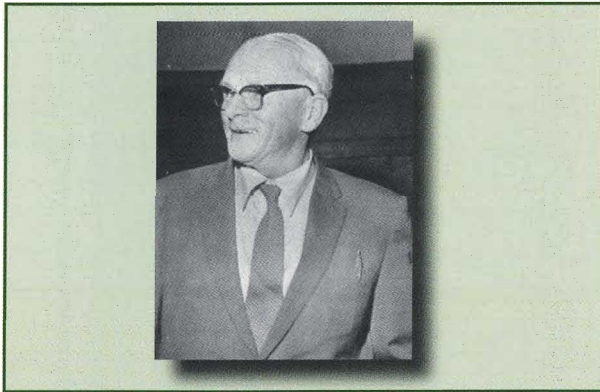


Peter Brown after receiving his Certificate of Commendation at the Civic Honours Award Ceremony in the Pietermaritzburg City Hall, February 2000.

Photo by Adrian Koopman

The Photograph Collection of the Alan Paton Centre

It is no surprise that the first photograph documented at the Alan Paton Centre on 17 June 1993 is this photograph titled 'Dr Alan Paton in the 1950s':



The photograph, taken by a *Natal Witness* photographer, is one of an extensive collection of images reflecting all aspects of Alan Paton's life: with family and friends; participating in the Liberal Party of South Africa; on set with Zoltan Korda at the making of the 1951 version of *Cry, the Beloved Country*; as recipient of various awards; and as the subject for exquisitely taken images by photographer Constance Stuart Larrabee.

However, the Alan Paton Centre's photograph collection extends beyond pictures of Alan Paton and includes a variety of topics ranging from the various Liberal Party congresses and functions held throughout the country while the Party was flourishing; visual documentation of so-called 'black spots'; the nurses, patients and surrounds of the hospital at Nqutu where Drs Anthony and Maggie Barker were working; and the Black Sash; to photographs, donated by individuals, which form part of their collections of papers recording their contributions to the struggle against apartheid. To date, more than 1,200 photographs have been documented and digitised, with a large remaining number to go.



Forced removals/
Brown Collection

Black Sash/
Kleinenberg
Collection

Barker
Collection

The extensive nature of the photograph collection required us to reconsider the method of numbering photographs. While adhering to correct archival practice, a system was devised to make photographs more accessible to users, and to store them according to their subject, which also facilitates access. This system allows for easy browsing, particularly since the process of digitising the collection has progressed considerably. Users can consult an index containing a thumbnail digital reproduction of the actual photograph, accompanied by relevant documented details. Users can also browse the CDs containing digitised images. This process allows the actual photograph to remain safely in its enclosure in the stack room, and hence remains protected not only from harmful UV rays emitted from natural and artificial light but also from damage resulting from unnecessary and incorrect handling. Should a user wish to have a copy of any photograph, those not protected by copyright can be downloaded onto a disk or e-mailed.



Weiner
Collection

Liberal Party
Collection

Black Sash/
Kleinenberg
Collection

The curator of photograph collections is often caught between taking proper care of the collection and making the collection available to users. Photographs require special preservation and care, and permanent damage can easily result from handling them and exposing them to the atmosphere. Digitising the photograph collection has therefore offered a solution to this problem and proved to be a valuable method of preserving photographs and negatives. It is hoped that the process of digitising will be completed soon, and that the collection as a whole will form an invaluable tool to researchers in a variety of fields.

Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen

**“Zimbabwe:
Lessons for South Africa”
11th Alan Paton Lecture, 6 May 2004**

Prof. Mike Cowling, Trevor Ncube, Prof. M. W. Makgoba and Prof. Ron Nicholson
at the 11th Alan Paton Lecture

Photo by Adrian Koopman

“As long as there are people walking around uneducated and unemployed, they are a threat to South Africa.” This was one of the fears expressed by Mr Trevor Ncube, Chief Executive Officer of the *Mail & Guardian*, when he gave the Alan Paton Lecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Pietermaritzburg Campus on 6 May 2004. He emphasised the importance of providing adequately for the masses, with regard to education, employment, health and land reform, and of maintaining freedom of expression.

He pointed out that for twenty years in Zimbabwe, nothing had happened with regard to land reform – neither the government nor the farmers took any action. Members of the ruling party were rewarded with farms, and became wealthy landed gentry, but had no inclination to farm. However, land was not distributed to the ordinary people, which led to a crisis situation. Ncube feels that now is the time for white South African farmers to take the initiative, and to open discussions with regard to land redistribution, so that it can take place in an orderly, gradual fashion, and that those who take over part of the land are taught how to farm, to preserve the economy.

Trevor Ncube feels that black economic empowerment (BEE) is essential, and that it should take place soon. “It is fundamentally important that the blacks of South Africa are

given a piece of the action” before they try to grab it. BEE should not be used as it was in Zimbabwe, as a means of rewarding followers of the ruling party, and side-lining independently-minded black entrepreneurs. Again, he feels that 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.

He spoke of the dangers of a two-thirds majority government, and of how too much power can create a demagogue. South Africa needs patriotic opposition to balance the ruling party. He feels that white South African intellectuals are staying away from debate, and that it is important not to allow the development of a culture where one feels it is not safe to speak out. On the African continent, the media is usually seen as an enemy, as the opposition. 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.

He finished his speech by saying that South Africa is the jewel of the continent, and that the success of South Africa is what determines whether other blacks in other parts of Africa can walk with their heads held high.

Jewel Koopman

“International Anti-Apartheid Movements in South Africa’s Freedom Struggle: Lessons for Today”

COLIN GARDNER

This was the name of a conference hosted by the Documentation Centre and the Campbell Collections of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and held at the ICC in Durban in October 2004.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) was a remarkable phenomenon. Most people who have lived in South Africa for many years are aware that the AAM existed, that it ran campaigns and demonstrations and organised boycotts, and that it played a significant part in the demise of apartheid; but I think few people have stopped to ask themselves what the AAM involved, what it amounted to.

Various commentators have described it as one of the most significant social movements of the twentieth century and as by far the largest instance of international moral consensus since World War 2. South Africa gave birth, in the concept and practice of apartheid, to something that was so totally unacceptable, indeed so evil, that morally alert and active people from all over the world worked together to oppose it.

Needless to say, the dynamics of this vast Movement were complex. Everyone agreed that the essence of apartheid – the belief that races were to be treated differently and unequally, and that white people should make the decisions – was wrong. But there were varying attitudes to the armed struggle of the liberation movements, and in western governments and in some AAM members the support of the iron curtain countries for this struggle was a cause of anxiety. Within the AAM itself there were, inevitably, different tactics and approaches, and in each country the AAM had to try to insert itself into, or else to override, the specific features of national debates. In a few countries factions appeared within the AAM. Meanwhile the apartheid regime, with its army of undercover agents, worked consistently but ineffectually to destabilise the whole organisation.

One of the striking facts that emerged from the papers and discussions at the conference is that the AAM not only managed, especially in the end, to have a crucial influence on South Africa and its government and policies – and this was, after all, the very aim of the AAM – but also, perhaps surprisingly, that it succeeded in producing many creative results within the countries in which it operated. The mere fact of mobilising people to

support a serious cause in a distant country was an act of empathy and civilisation. People were learning and were being taught to be citizens of the world. They began to realise that there were larger moral issues than the questions of national taxes, education and health care that often dominated their local political debates.

A speaker from the Norwegian Lutheran church said that her church’s position in society had been totally changed by the AAM: suddenly the members of what had been a rather conservative church found themselves strategising with radical politicians. A speaker from New Zealand told us that the great debate about the Springbok rugby tour had been the biggest event in recent national history. We were given insights and perspectives from speakers from various US and British AAM organisations and from representatives, some of them speaking on behalf of their governments, from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland (the Nordic countries were very prominent in the various manifestations of the AAM), Russia (which as the USSR had been very significant), the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, India, Mexico, Australia. There were speakers too from Namibia and Mozambique, both of which also gained from the support of the AAM. Finally there were a number of South African speakers (I was a minor one) who described various campaigns both outside and inside the country.

It isn’t often that a huge movement meets the sort of success that the AAM was able to rejoice in. (At the same time everyone was aware that South Africa still has huge hurdles to overcome.) This success made the conference ask: Can’t we remobilise in order to face some of the challenges that confront us today? Would it be possible to take up the AAM reins in the fight against bullying economic globalisation and unilateralism?

The consensus at the end was that no, one could not resuscitate the AAM fifteen years after it ceased to operate. But one could learn a great deal from it. One could learn about solidarity and tireless organisation and diplomatic contacts. We now have the added advantages of e-mail and the internet. But nothing can take the place of dedication, imagination and selfless hard work.

(Adapted from an article written for *The Witness*, 21 October 2004)



WOMEN ACTIVISTS, PAST AND PRESENT

Nalini Naidoo

Women who fought for democracy in South Africa, many of them now retired and settling down to a quieter life, rubbed shoulders with women who have become movers and shakers in post-1994 South Africa, at a Heritage Day celebration organised by the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives recently.

The function included reminiscences of the past and a critical assessment of the current status of women in South Africa, the theme being: "Our Women, Our Heritage: Celebrating 10 years of Democracy".

The talks represented a continuum of activism on women's issues. Mary Kleinenberg spoke about the Black Sash, presenting both the sad and funny moments of their protests in Pietermaritzburg. Dr Alleyn Diesel told the story of Durga Bundhoo, whose tiny size belies the major contribution she has made to changing the lives of not only women but the poor of the city. The three other speakers were Ina Cronjé, Dolly Khumalo and Thina Siwendu, who agreed that women have come a long way in terms of their position in South African society – but they still have far to go.

Kleinenberg, herself an anti-apartheid activist who continues her work as a trustee of the Black Sash, recalled a march in the Edendale Valley in the nineties to protest against violence in the area. Members of the Black Sash were frog-marched into a police van and accused by the police of stirring up the local women and instigating a march.

"The crowd was furious and started banging on the van, calling for our release. The situation got critical when the police threatened to shoot at the crowd with live ammunition. Those of us in the van managed to persuade the women outside to disperse," she said.

She recalled their many silent protests when they held weekly placard demonstrations on issues such as the abolition of capital punishment, the invasion by the SADF into neighbouring countries,

torture and deaths in detention. The police were always close by, trying to intimidate the women by taking down their names and addresses, making comments about where they lived and worked and photographing and videotaping them.



Ina Cronjé, Thina Siwendu and Dolly Khumalo at the Heritage Day function

Photo by Nalini Naidoo

The Black Sash continues today, running advice offices and doing advocacy work such as helping poor people with legal issues and to access grants. Kleinenberg said that in 2002 they fought a successful legal battle to

change the Social Assistance Act to release back pay of up to R2 billion to millions of pensioners. More recently, together with other NGOs, they have taken up the campaign for the implementation of a universal Basic Income Grant (BIG).

Alleyn Diesel, who is an Honorary Research Fellow in Religious Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, has recorded Durga Bundhoo's story. She said Bundhoo carried the mantle of the Indian Women's Association, which founded the first Indian high school for girls in the city and started many welfare groups like the Indian Child Welfare Society. Together with her husband, Dasrath, she has been at the forefront of many struggles against injustice. She fought against the Group Areas Act, protested the poor quality of council houses in Northdale and, whenever she could, worked for peace and reconciliation. This included offering the security police tea and eats whenever they visited the Bundhoo household.

She told Diesel that her finest hour was when she led a group of sari-clad mothers to stop a situation from turning ugly at the Esther Payne Smith High School in the eighties. This was a time of student protests. She stood between the police, their dogs and the school pupils and appealed to the youngsters to go back to their classrooms. From there she and the mothers escorted the children to their homes.

A smiling Ina Cronjé, KwaZulu-Natal Minister of Education, told the gathering that it was great to be back among friends. She outlined the situation in her own department, which she said highlighted issues of gender that still needed to be addressed. "Over half of the children in school are girls, 51% to 49% boys, and the vast majority of teachers are women, but the majority of principals are men, particularly in our high schools," she said.

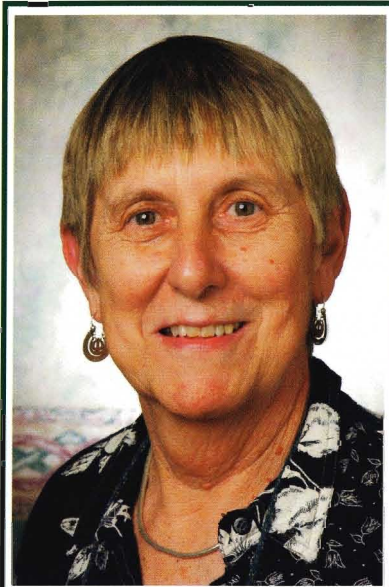
Cronjé added that there were no women in the executive of the Education Department and meetings of senior officials were like a gathering of a boy's choir. "The influence men bring to education is disproportionate considering their numbers. Education needs changing attitudes and recognition of the contribution being made by both men and women."

She asked what message was being sent to children in the classroom when all the seniors from the Education Department are men. She said even in the elected representative council of pupils, there are more males in leadership positions. Similarly, women are the majority on school governing body committees but when it comes to the role of chairperson, men dominate. "The only way this comes about is that women are voting for men. Is this because they believe that men do a better job? This is an internalised oppression," Cronjé added.

She said that the burden of HIV/Aids falls on women and girl children and that violence against women was one of the worst things she has had to deal with since becoming Minister of Education.

Cronjé added that she tells her teachers that they can make a fundamental difference to changing attitudes and being role models. "This is why my chief objective is to look at gender representivity. I know I have many talented women in my department and they have not been given the opportunity to come to the top. I can and I will do it – we owe it to ourselves."

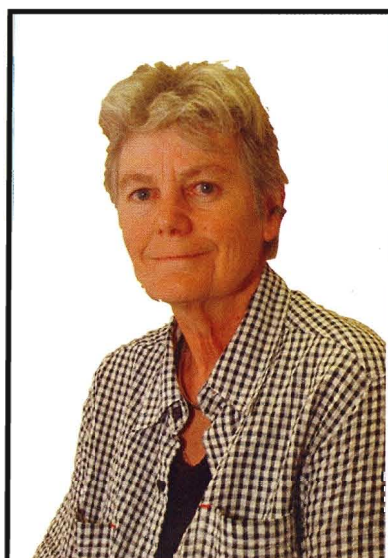
Dolly Khumalo, director of Heritage and Museum Services in KwaZulu-Natal, said that while the new democratic order created space for women in government, women have to congratulate themselves on their own emancipation.



Mary Kleinenberg

"We did not enter government by default or through the back door," she said. She added, however, that in placing more women in Parliament, we must be careful that we are not just playing a numbers game. "Some women who are put into Parliament don't necessarily drive the gender issue," she said.

Khumalo said that women in leadership positions also find that they have to work thrice as hard as their male colleagues. "It is not yet uhuru for women – the higher you get, the colder it becomes. You can face situations where your contributions to meetings are trivialised and you are labelled by gender stereotypes. When women try to do their jobs they are seen as aggressive rather than assertive, nagging not persistent, and bitchy instead of proactive."



Dr Alleyn Diesel

Photo by Natal Witness

She said women need the support of other women, and they also need to move to a position where they are mentoring one another. "I am not advocating a war of the sexes, but recognition that we live in a patriarchal society and still have a long way to go before we become more gender sensitive."

Thina Siwendu, a lawyer who was recently elected KwaZulu-Natal Businesswoman of the Year, said she believes the key area that needs to be worked at is relations

of power between men and women.

"At some point men and women need to start learning a new language about power. Women have to start learning and re-learning that they can be trusted with power. We need to build support among ourselves and organisations that address gender issues need to speak with one voice," she said.

(Acknowledgements to *The Witness*, 28-09-2004)

A HERO OF EXCELSIOR

COLIN GARDNER

To those who remember the late 1960s, the little town of Excelsior in the Free State was chiefly distinguished as the place which briefly hit the world headlines when a number of its leading white male citizens, all pillars of the National Party and church apartheid establishment, were charged under their own cherished so-called Immorality Act. The case so embarrassed the government that in the end the charges were all suddenly dropped. The incident forms one of the factual bases for Zakes Mda's striking novel, *The Madonna of Excelsior*.

Farming just outside Excelsior, and chuckling at the fate that these arrogant dominating men had brought upon themselves, was an Afrikaner of a very different sort: Jean van Riet, the lone Free State representative of the non-racial Liberal Party.

On 4 December 2004 Jean van Riet turned 100. Today I celebrate his admirable and interesting life. I am able to do this partly from my own knowledge of him but partly also because I have been able to listen to four taped interviews with him sponsored by and housed in the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives.

Van Riet's father was a lawyer. He fought against the British in the Anglo-Boer War, but after the war he was in favour of reconciliation and supported Botha and Smuts. He served for a while in both the Free State and the new Union parliaments. Young Jean was born in Thaba Nchu, but went on to Grey College, where he was influenced by one of his teachers, the great liberal Leo Marquard, and became a friend of Bram Fischer's. His family expected him to become a lawyer, but he tried the law for two years and couldn't stand it. So he went farming. This was in the early 1930s.

He was an intelligent, enterprising farmer, and saw the importance, in the often dry Free State, of dams. He built a huge dam on his farm, and set up an irrigation system. Before long he was prospering, and he was later able to buy other farms. He was predisposed to be liberal towards his workers, but

the injustice and exploitation practised by some of his fellow farmers pushed him strongly towards devising fair and humane ways of functioning within the generally lop-sided South African set-up.



Jean van Riet on his farm "Barolong"

One of his first moves was to build wooden houses for all his workers; later he was able to build solid, fairly roomy brick houses. He set up a school, which, since none of the nearby farms had such a luxury, soon had 160 pupils. But perhaps his most innovative scheme was to pay to his workers over and above their fairly generous wages, 5% of the money earned by the farm. This of course provided the workers with an incentive, and indeed made them to a small degree co-owners of the farm. His workers were enthusiastic, and were

given more and more autonomy; before long all the hiring and firing was done by them. Van Riet also established bursary and pension schemes.

Needless to say he had many battles over his school with the Bantu Education authorities during the grim apartheid years. They refused to give him any subsidy and tried to close the school down.

To bring things up to date. The farm is now run by his son John, who has maintained all of his father's ways of doing things. But with one difference: the sharing scheme has become slightly more of an incentive scheme, operated by the workers themselves; hard work is rewarded, and a person who slacks has points deducted.

All this was pretty remarkable in South Africa, and especially so in the crusty conservative Free State. In the 1940s local Nationalist farmers became increasingly hostile to him, and at one point they called a special well-attended meeting to decide what to do about him. He took the wind out of their sails by insisting on attending the meeting himself; a further deflation came when a policeman assured the meeting that what van Riet was doing, however unconventional it was, was not illegal. In these years he also took a firm anti-Nazi stand. As soon as Hitler invaded Russia, van Riet proclaimed to his surprised and indignant Nationalist fellow farmers

that the dictator was doomed, as he had made the same mistake as Napoleon.

It isn't difficult to imagine how much local indignation he caused when he became a member of the Liberal Party during its life from 1953 to 1968. He was harassed, his house was searched, his passport was confiscated for some years. How did he endure all this, in such isolation? Two of the things that kept him going were an irrepressible exuberance and amiability (those who set out to hate van Riet must often have found it an uphill struggle) and a steady confidence that his liberal views were right and would win through in the end – as of course they have done.

I must beware of picturing van Riet as an obsessed or agonised missionary. In a remarkable way he has managed to live a fairly normal and even comfortable life. He has taken everything in his stride. He was not naïve: he knew that the Nationalist government would be very dangerous, and one of the farms he bought was in Botswana, and he described it as a political bolt-hole. But for all that he had a warm family life, though he is now widowed; he loved sport, and played some forms of sport skilfully; he went on frequent fishing and occasional hunting expeditions; and he even managed to travel and see something of the wider world.

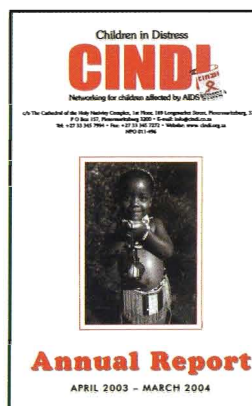
It could be argued that in his combination of firm non-racial attitudes and successful agricultural entrepreneurship Jean van Riet is a model South African. Let us applaud and honour him.

(Adapted from an article written for *The Witness*, 2 December 2004)



Photo by Alistair Nixon

Recent Archival Donations



Many thanks to Yvonne Spain and Stellar Zulu of the Children in Distress Network (CINDI), for depositing their archives with the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives. (APC&SA) This addition to the collections reflects the new struggle taking place in South Africa – no longer against apartheid, but against HIV/AIDS, and the devastation it causes to people's lives.

The APC&SA was very happy to receive the collection of papers on Non-Racial Sport in Pietermaritzburg which was donated by Mike Hickson, and augmented and arranged by Christopher Merrett. These papers contain material on the Aurora Cricket Club, as well as on the Maritzburg Cricket Union and other cricketing bodies; publications on non-racial sport, and press-cuttings on sport in South Africa, 1979-91.

Many thanks go to Mrs Saras Chetty for the manuscript of her as yet unpublished book: "The people's man: A.S. Chetty: My memoirs as the wife of a veteran stalwart". Her papers also include further documentation on her husband's life, including his prison diaries written whilst in political detention, his banning orders and photographs. This brings the number of archival collections at the APC&SA to 161.

The oral history collections were expanded by the deposit of further tapes and transcripts from the Sinomlando Project – many thanks to Prof Philippe Denis and the Sinomlando team. These interviews are on such topics as the Charismatic Churches in KZN; Black Consciousness and the Catholic clergy; Young Christian Workers; and the Lutheran Churches' response to forced removals.

The original Alan Paton Collection was expanded when Mrs Anne Paton brought 24 books originally from the Paton study in Botha's Hill, returned by her daughter, Athene von Herschberg, now living in the USA. Jonathan Paton very kindly donated a portrait of his father, painted by Cliff Brown.

Other donations were ANC posters from Franco Frescura, Matthew Stevenson's book *Letters of Transit*, SAIRR publications from John Morrison and the document conferring the OBE on William O'Brien, donated by Dr Nevil Quinn. Many thanks to all the donors.

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VARIETY OF RESEARCH TOPICS

With the growth of the Struggle Archives, the addition of the Sinomlando Oral History Project and the Natal Society Special Collections, a wide range of potential research topics is now covered at the Alan Paton Centre. The following list represents some of the various research topics which have been studied and queries which have been made over the last year:

From the Alan Paton Collection:

Alan Paton's poetry
Early unpublished works
Articles and addresses
Correspondence
Cry, the Beloved Country
"Lost world of the Kalahari"
Photographs for portrait to be painted
Posters to be made on AP's life
History of reformatories
Literary tourism of AP's homes

From the Liberal Party Collections:

History of the LPSA
African Resistance Movement (ARM)
Digitisation of collection
Peter Brown
Ralph Aitchison
Jean van Riet

From the Struggle Archives:

Black Sash
Durban Strikes 1973
10th Anniversary of Democracy
Old KZ Legislature
Jenny Schreiner & the Yengeni Trial
Nomkhulwane Festival
Political history of Sobantu
Marie Dyer & Bunty Biggs interviews
Drs Anthony & Maggie Barker
Dr Motala
Harry Gwala
Bonginkosi Feeding Scheme
Daphne Tshabalala
Selby Msimang
Archie Gumede
Church & Apartheid history
Buthelezi & white SA business
Christian NGOs & peacemaking
Wages Commission 1974

From the Natal Society Special Collections:

History of Natal Museum
Widow Retief's kitchen
Colenso sermons
History of cricket in SA
Anglican church in Nyasaland
Bayeux tapestry
Women's patriotic war work WW1
Geology of Durban harbour 1839
Adverts on trams in 1900s
John Dunne
Union Castle lines
History of cotton & maize in Natal
SA War
Christian missions in S. & W.Africa
Lobola
Polygamy
Shembe/ John Dube

Jewel Koopman

VISITORS FROM FAR AND WIDE!

Over the last year the Alan Paton Centre & Struggle Archives has been pleased to welcome visitors and researchers from far away, as well as local visitors, researchers and students. Some of the most notable visitors from far away were Magnus Gunther, from Canada; Drs Carolyn and Howard Mowbray of the Barker Memorial Trust, from the UK; Ron and Robyn Lewis from Washington, USA ; and Profs Richard and Doris Dale from Arizona, USA. Some AAM Conference delegates also visited the APC&SA – Peter Limb and his wife, from Michigan State University and the South African H-Net; Hilda Varela, the author of a Spanish book on South African history, from Mexico City; and Randolph Vigne, author of a book which was researched at the APC, *Liberals against apartheid*, from the UK. We also had visitors from Australia and Belgium, and from other parts of Africa, including Ghana and Ruanda. Rev. Philip Laryea from Akropong-Akuapem in Ghana was researching other Centres for advice on the setting up of a Centre in Ghana for the famous musician, Ephraim Amu.

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