

Boekbesprekingen

Tom Lodge, **BLACK POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1945**. Longman, London and New York 1983.

Cherryl Walker, **WOMEN AND RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**, Onyx, London 1982.

South African history in the twentieth century is very largely the consequence of the confrontation between the attempts of the state and the capitalists to impose a uniform system on the country's black population and that population's determination to resist such regimentation, or at least to avoid it and to turn it to its own advantage. In the long term, at least so far, the state has won. Nevertheless, as even a cursory reading of the newspapers over the last few months will make apparent, a continual effort is required by the state to maintain white supremacy in the face of a hostile subject population.

Apartheid, of course, is a national policy. The resistance to it never has been, and this has probably enshred its survival thus far. To a certain extent, this fragmentation is a result of the efficiency of the South African government's apparatus of repression, in isolating the various foci of resistance. Equally importantly, though, the want of African unity has been the result of the variegated experience of South Africa's blacks in the process of socio-economic development, and not the ethnic diversity that the South African government attempts to stimulate. The economy of South Africa is characterized by a considerable degree of regional diversity. In the first place it is a very large country with a relatively thin population and a surprisingly small number of urban conglomerations. (Outside the southern Transvaal there are no more than seven urban areas of any size). This is a consequence of the nature of South Africa's industrialization, based as it has been very largely on mining and the assembly of imported products. The former is naturally restricted in space by geology, the latter to the neighbourhood of the ports. Secondly the wide range of climatic and soil types would have led to numerous distinctive forms of agricultural activity even without the segregationist policies which have meant that the legal relationships between farmers, farm labourers and the land is widely different in the so-called African reserves and in the so-called white-farming areas. In each and every area the measures of apartheid as a whole weigh harshly, but historically they have weighed differently.

To give one simple example, the government's demand that a proportion of cattle be compulsarily slaughtered in order to reduce the danger of soil erosion was long the major ignitor of resentment in the rural areas of the Transkei. Here at least a relatively large number of Africans still had cattle in the 1950s, often bought with the proceeds of migrant labour Witwatersrand Gold mines. Such an issue could have little effect in the far-flung suburbs of Johannesburg, where bus fares, wages, housing restrictions and educational policy, more than anything else, have repeatedly brought men, women and children out into the streets, often to face the bullets of the police and the army.

The political resistance of Africans to the racist policies known as apartheid is the subject of two recent books, one by Tom Lodge mistitled Black Politics in South Africa since 1945 (it deals exclusively with opposition movements and not with those who have exploited the apartheid system in order to exploit their fellow Africans) and the other by Cherryl Walker on Women and resistance. Both books are in many ways chronicles. It is highly important, not just for academic study, but also for the future progress of the opposition to apartheid, that the struggles of the 1950s, 60s and 70s should not be forgotten. Indeed in a number of cases, Lodge in particular has brought to light episodes which were hardly known to anyone but the immediate participants at the time. Running through both books, though, is the single theme that the oppressive measures of apartheid hit different groups in different ways and therefore elicited different responses. One of the results of this is that Lodge's book is highly disjointed, since it covers the totality of African opposition- and the works coherence is not helped by the fact that many of the chapters were originally published as separate articles. It is a book that is difficult to read and requires a considerable knowledge of South African society before it can be fully appreciated, but nevertheless it is absolutely essential reading for anyone attempting to understand modern South Africa.

Women and resistance suffers far less from the problem of incoherence, since the work is restricted to one specific group within the essentially male chauvinist (it is that as well as racist) society of South Africa. Walker concentrates in considerable detail on the campaigns organised by the federation of South African Women against the extension of the Pass laws in the 1950s. It was this measure, more than any other, that was responsible for the break-up of African families by making it illegal in a enormous number of cases for a wife to live in the same

place as her husband. That it became a target for agitation is therefore not surprising, but then, to someone whose sensitivities have not been dulled by an excess of exposure to South African conditions, everything in these two books is a subject for intense indignation. The black resistance generally calls forth admiration. The system against which the blacks are struggling can only be described as loathsome, but this makes it, and South African history in general, all the more vital subject for study.

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D. van Arkel, G.C. Quispel & R.J. Ross, 'DE WIJNGAARD DES HEEREN?' Een onderzoek naar de wortels van 'die blanke baasskap' in Zuid-Afrika, Leiden 1983.

In dit vorig jaar als vierde deel in de reeks 'cahiers Sociale Geschiedenis' verschenen boekje wordt gepoogd een historische analyse te presenteren van de groei van vooroordeel en discriminatie tegen niet-blanken in Zuid-Afrika. Alle drie de auteurs zijn al jaren, zij het de een intensiever dan de ander, met dit probleem bezig en gezien de Leidse achtergrond van deze publikatie hoeft het geen verbazing te wekken dat de theorie van van Arkel hier als een interpretatiekader wil fungeren. Deze 'van-Arkel these', in eerste instantie opgesteld als verklaringsmodel voor het verschijnsel anti-semitisme, kan men trachten toe te passen op de Zuid-Afrikaanse situatie. Van Arkel's anti-semitisme-model, waarin gewerkt wordt met de variabelen 'stigmatisering', 'sociale distantie' en 'terrorisering van de discriminant' kan tot een meer algemeen racisme-model worden verheven, en dan aan de ontwikkelingen in de Zuidafrikaanse geschiedenis worden getoetst. In deze bespreking zal worden getracht de 'Wijngaard' in het grotere geheel van de Zuid-Afrikaanse geschiedenis te plaatsen, zonder al te zeer op de details in te gaan.

In Leiden wordt reeds gedurende enige jaren onderzoek naar de Zuid-Afrikaanse geschiedenis gedaan. Onderzoek en onderwijs m.b.t. deze problematiek, bedreven binnen de vakgroep sociale en economische geschiedenis, hebben in de loop der jaren verschillende perioden tot onderwerp gehad. De auteurs van het boekje zijn echter van mening dat de vroege negentiende eeuw voor de definitieve vastlegging van het rassenvooroor-