

BERLIN ANTI FASCIST RALLY 9 Sept 1990

racialism - nationalism / chauvinism / xenophobia / No Issue
SA's - wrld experts on practice o racial discrim;
But past yr - new resurgence i othr countries, unexpectd ways.

1) SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSP - RACISM & FASCISM

Assaults, racial hate remarks - i most countries.
But to impose racial discrimin o major scale, to
institutionalise, requires imposition o a type o F.

In contemporary times, reveald mst clearly i SA.

Huge body o law erectd to impose racial structures &
separation on SA society.

Thn implementation demands further laws & restrictions
o ever-increasng ferocity & intensity; laws depriving
people o all legit rights o speech, protest, assembly;
laws o censorship & control over press, media; preventg
filmng, photos, or any reports o actions o police or people.
(TV pix disappear). Laws tied to operation o admin o law
itself. LEADG FINALLY TO ABROGATION O LAW ITSELF.

So tt total app. o State & all infra-structures bcome
active agents o racialism - frm clerks to judges.

FINALLY - S O E - at 1st fr 1 yr, renewed, then again -
UNDER WHICH ALL LAWS SET ASIDE, GIVNG MILITARY & POLICE
~~GARTE BLANCHE~~ ANY WAY THEY CHOOSE, NO ACTION CN B TAKN AGAINST

TOTAL POWER

Ths, thn, fascist state, & ths wld hve bcome permanent
condition o life i SA if dismantlng o Ap hd nt begn. Ths
is why 1st demand o ANC ws fr liftng o SoE.

So it startd i SA wth racism, & finishd wth ~~forme~~ fascism.

2) SIMILAR PATTERN IN EUROPE

Startg wth chauvinism, a form o R basd o hatred o othrs, whethr a minority or majority.

Prosperous Europe opens doors to migrant labour frm poor Europe - needs their labr, bt denies these workrs any status or rights i country where they wk. - Bantustans, migrant labr - families left bhind - only wantd frtime they cn wk fr u.

We see expressions of hate & contempt for 'those others'

Yestrdy it ws t Jews, ^{Gypsies} today it's these othrs - chauvanism, a form o R, o exclusiveness o R expression, grips people; soon they insist o new laws - & it ends up as in SA.

The tendencies are here among you, t pattern bgins.

GERMANY for t GERMANS - bregners out!

3) LAWS & SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As in Germany in past & SA today, R/F once established, are not easily wpd out
Imposition o R gives rise to F, bt also existence o F gives rise to R & this bcomes embeded nt only i a nation's structures, bt also i minds o its people.

If u thought outlawng Nazi Pty, disbandg F orgs, trials & punishmnts o leadg exponents & agents o F brings an end to F & R - ths is nt true.

Elemnts tt gave rise to F, particularly t racial basis, remain, to emerge & flourish once more when time ripe.

NT JUST QUESTION O LAYNG DOWN LEGAL CODES.

4) THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RALLY.

Hence ths necessity, fr a constant re-assertion, re-statemnt, re-education, o t basic principls tt mst guide humn rleations: *There are no 'racially inferior' peoples*

TT NO PERSONS WORTH MAY B JUDGD BY COLOUR O SKIN, LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK, BY THEIR RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL CUSTOMS.

TT NO EXPRESSION O R CN B TOLERATD.

~~Camus - the allegory o t plague.~~

A continuous, constant process; depends on every single persn takng a stand - depends on yr constant vigilance, depends on u nevr standg back when u see or hear any attack on othrs, nevr excusng sch acts, nevr sayng: they're only youngsters, they'll grow out o it. You need good laws, bt u cant destroy t ~~bacillus~~ by law.

Unless u, t public, stand up & oppose, speak out, against all forms o oppression & discrimination, it wll grow & grow.

In diff & uncertain future facng u citizens o Germany, take lessons, bt also strength, frm t past. We old ones livd thru wht are simply pages o history to mst o u. 40 yrs ago we said Never again! U mst pluck lessns frm past, they wll give u strength, understandg, purpose, fr future.

My presence here testifies to an understandg & care tt crosses seas & disregards national frontiers.

U are the ones who can determine wht kind of society youve will have. You have the strength 7 t power.

THE MEANING OF AMANDLA!

- 1) FIRST MET NM when came to Jhbg to study law - tall, handsome, shy, rather remote, awkward wth diff races with whom nosocial contact i Transkei.
- 2) WORKED WITH HIM durng turbulent 50s & early 60s - young militants, ANC Yth L, came to occupy mst prominent positions i ANC - new policies.
- 3) KNEW HIM UNDERGROUND, whn at night wld meet wth othrs i rooms, places, scattered thru Jhbg, & saw him, whn meetngs over, go by himself into night, straightbackd, to sleep each night i diff bed, far frm wife & home.
- 4) WATCHED HIM IN COURT every day durng long Rivonia trial, horrors & boredom & tensions; heard famous declaration o principles fr which he hd livd & fought & fr which prepared to die.
- 5) SILENT, UNSEEN, BCOMES WORLD HERO

Nevr to my knowledge a phenomenon like NM. Charismatic leaders who bcome spokesmn o their country's struggles - Gandhi, Mao, de Gaulle - bt built positions by leadng struggles ovr yrs.

NM ws not there, fr more thn ¼ century nt seen. Nthg he said, no former speech, cld b printd, t only pix o him out-of-date photos o a young man who no longer existd.

Hw did h bcome, nt simply metaphor for hs own country's beliefs, bt a symbol o t struggle fr justice thru out wrld? A leadr lockd inside a prison cell, a leadr wth no disiples, no troops - a leader unseen?

Hw ws it, shut away fr 27 yrs, silenced, isolatd, unseen, hs personality burst out o R I, hs name bcame known wrld-wide; streets, parks, places - honours frm Universities, & SA's, nt born whn he went to jail, or babies, proclaimed hm as their leadr - t wrld's mst famous pol. prisonr.

6) THE PERSONALITY O T MAN.

NM hs exceptional attitude towards pos o leadrship.

Blievs leadr is someone who has reponsibilities & duties, not status. Therefore, once i pos. o leadr he always tk greatest respon. on own shoulders.

Secondly, he believes i collective decision-makng. He nevr desired to impose own views (hs views o own) bt blieves i necessity to wk as a collective.

Ths concept nevr left hm, frm t days b4 h ws imprisond - as lawyrs, etc, will testify - to long yrs o incarceration itself, whn regarded by all RI prisonrs as their leadr & spokesman, bt never actd without joint consultation.

Exceptional quality, takng personal responsibility, hs been characteristic frm beginng. Frm time whn 'black man i white man's court' challengd judge's right to try him, to Riv trial - preparad to die, no appeal if death sentence, To very end, whn offered freedm 3 yrs ago on terms, refusd Imagine, aftr 25 yrs, strength o charactr, self-denial, longing fr liberty & home, to say

I wll nt b releasd on yr terms, live i Transkei, renounce my orgs policy tt u call violence. Othrs can accept, not me.

It is cumulative effect o ths extraordinary character, free o bombast, self-assertion or pride, tt hs impressd itself o troubl'd world.

AS it did on fellow-prisonrs, on all who came in contact, on warders, prison officials o all ranks, finally on Pres himself. FR without NM, I think there wld b no rapproshment i SA today (refusal to act without ANC)

15th August 1990

Dear Nelson,

I have been asked to speak at a big anti-fascist rally and festival to take place in Berlin on the 8th & 9th September.

The organisers very much wanted some manifestation of yourself, and have written to ask if you could send a message to the rally.

I promised that I would send this personal note as well, to assure you that it is an important effort to combat rising racialism and narrow nationalism in Germany today.

Our Chief Rep in Berlin knows, and approves.

I hope you will be able to find time to send a message; it will mean a great deal to them. You have become for them a symbol of steadfast, unyielding courage in the face of the most extreme racial system in the world. I know it must be difficult, sometimes, to be a symbol! But this is the role placed upon you, and I know that you can sustain it with honour and pride.

Back here in England, I am working on material for a book about the exile experience of South Africans. By the time it is published, exile will be over, I hope, for many of them, but a record of our diaspora needs to be made. How much I hope to speak to you again one day!

I send my love and greetings to you and Winnie.

Hilda Bernstein

1. CULTURAL CREATION in 1st place does not arise independently, nor can operate independent of political circumstances:
Dependent on:

- * availability of time and place ('room of one's own still valid concept)
 - * of money for materials, eg HM & musical instruments
SA artists use pencils, crayons, cardboard rather than etchngs, lithographs tt demand expensive metals & presses; natural resources eg straw, clay in countryside, industrial waste in towns. Maybe said to contribute to originality & liveliness o wk, bt also manfiests inseparability of culture & politics; in other words, ths in itself contributes to content of work.
 - * availability of access to education, bks, paintgs to ability to study history o art, to read classics - all t constrictions o Bantu education coupled wth poverty, lack o bks, exhibitions, etc
2. CONFLICT IS BETWEEN WHT DEMANDS SOCIETY MAKES & HOW THEY SHLD BE MET.

NG: 'Responsibility is wht awaits outside the Eden of creativity' - t wrld calls creative wkrs to account. T creative act is nt pure even b⁴ being set down - while being formed i t brain it carries responsibility fr wht precedes cognition fr t class representd i t genetic, environmental social & econmi^o terms whn one is born of one's parents.

'Politics is nt a choice an artist makes about content - it's part of life's circumstances'

Nt peculiar to SA situation - altho moral issue is peculiarly potent. Subjects always 'imposed' on artists by their contemporary societies - religious, mythological, historical.

3. CREATIVE IMPULSE & PROPAGANDA - may arise i
1st place frm purely agit-prop demands - slogan
scrawld on a wall, a crudely made postr. Bt
many postrs are truly wks o art - at wht stage
in wht way, cn u draw a line btween wht is art
& wht propaganda?

/ths doesnt obviate need fr refinemnt, excellenc
a study or mastery o tecniques. Nor does it
eliminate conflict wthn t writer, artist.

Pallo Jordon (CASA keynote address)

. . . a special word to the family of South African artists and cultural workers, both those in the frontline trenches of the struggle at home and those who have been forced into exile to pursue their craft. The ANC does not ask you to become political pamphleteers. There are a number of those, although we need more. The ANC does not require poets to become political sloganeers, the walls of South Africa's cities testify to our wealth in those and the mastery we have of their craft. While we require propaganda art, we do not demand that every graphic artist and sculptor become a prop artist. We would urge our artists to pursue excellence in their respective disciplines - to be excellent artists and to serve the struggle for liberation with excellent art. But let us remember that the future imposes grave obligations on us all - artists and non-artists alike.

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