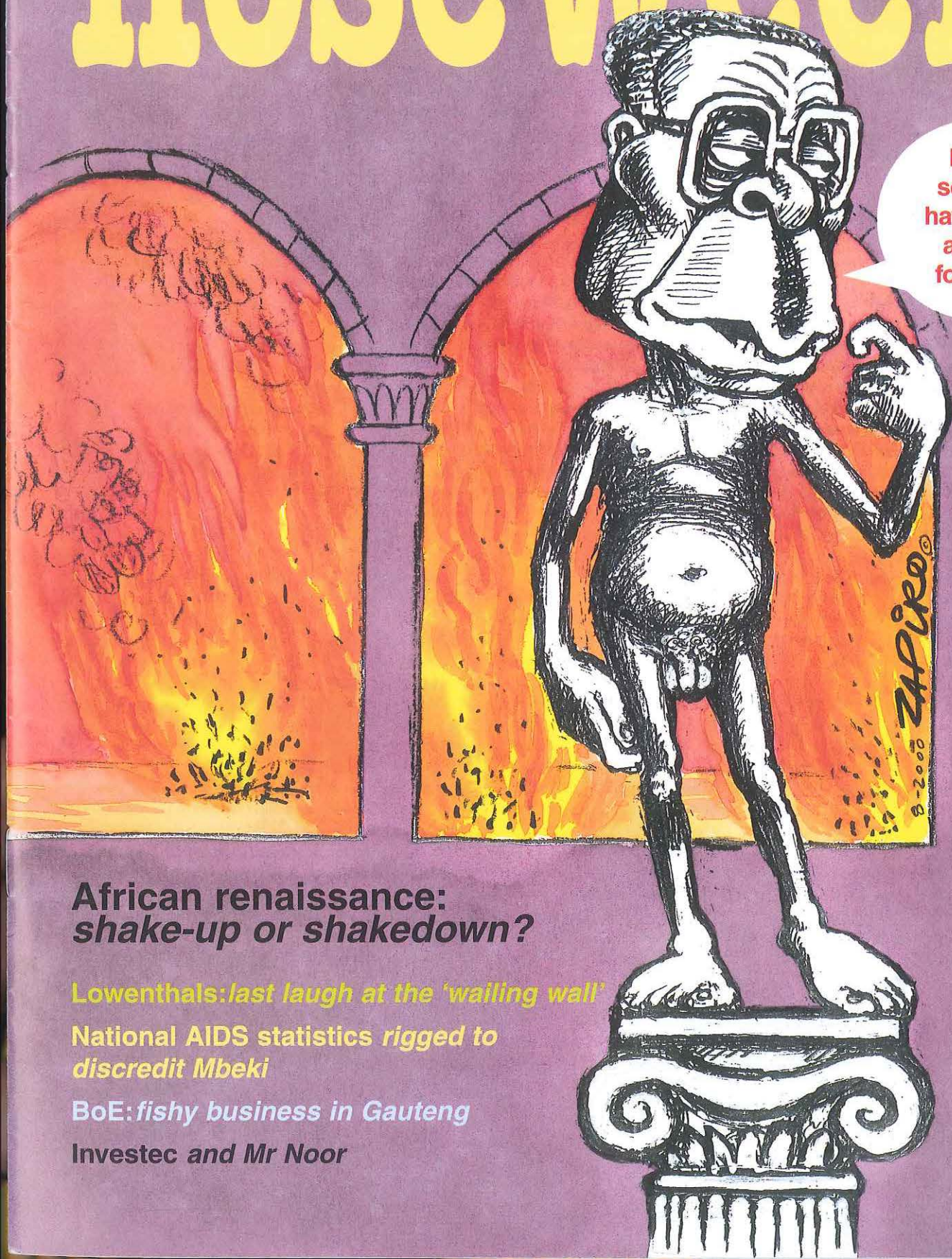


news you're not supposed to know August 2000

Issue 30

noseweek

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Hello soldier, have I got a farm for you!

**African renaissance:
shake-up or shakedown?**

Lowenthals: last laugh at the 'wailing wall'

**National AIDS statistics rigged to
discredit Mbeki**

BoE: fishy business in Gauteng

Investec and Mr Noor



Advice for a new-found love

YOUR MAGAZINE FEEDS MY SENSE of righteous indignation and – by contrast, of course, with the rogues featured – makes me feel close to perfect. I love it!

I willingly pay the price, but for general readership it is expensive. May I suggest a way to bring the cover price down? How about a list of the rogues featured in your articles (something like a moral credit rating) but next to each name could be a (large) sum of money, upon payment of which the name would be removed from the list? While this might make your magazine rather bulky, it would perform a useful public service.

ANTHONY ABBOTT, McGregor

Great idea! See the index of names in noseweek on our website at www.noseweek.co.za (Price list available on application. Ha-ha, only joking.*).

Sorry, quality never comes cheap.

*P.S. It has been rumoured, however, that those who take 10 or more subscriptions for friends are rewarded with anonymity. Who knows? – Ed.

Dianne Feinstein

WE ARE EXTREMELY UPSET ABOUT your references to Di Feinstein (*The Black Haredi*, nose29). Where do you get your information? Di has always been a trusting, honest extrovert with a wonderful giving nature. It is no secret that she supported the ANC long before it became 'fashionable' and had to hide behind covers for very obvious reasons at the time.

She got involved with the wrong 'Jew' in her late 20s when she 'dafke' opened the first multiracial nightclub, the Kraal, in Claremont. For this she still pays a price. But 'unsavoury'? We don't think so.

The fact that she took three black kids under her wing was also unacceptable to the 'community'. We remember [name withheld] not allowing her daughter, Heidi, to sleep over at Di's house because Thobela (two years old at the time) bathed in the same bath as her daughters. She held down two jobs to support her extended family.

She loved animals, old folks and kids. We remember her picking up a tortoise that had been run over on High Level Road and taking it to Dr Fries for care. She visited old folk at Highlands House whose families didn't bother with them. She is the only person we know who took orphans out of Nazareth House for the weekend.

You call her dishonest? Because some people didn't approve of her beliefs and because she never fitted into the kugel mould?

Di's life took a drastic turn when she and Stan fell victim to Schmucl Deri and his father's scam. We met Schmucl in her home. One of us said we didn't like the look of him and her response was, 'How can you say that? He's a very clever boy and the son of a rabbi. I've met his father in Paris, such a nice man.' So she was wrong. But how come so many 'smart' men in the community believed him and that's acceptable?

Friends in Camps Bay tried desperately to protect Di, her kids and her grandson from all the really scary threats. How can you question her leaving the country? Di had no choice. It's our loss.

FROM A BUNCH OF SEA POINT, CLIFTON AND CAMPS BAY KUGELS

THIRTY-SIX PERCENT INTEREST ON a dollar investment, when the going rate was 6%? Could Schmucl Deri's victims have been that gullible?

DAVID KRAMER, Johannesburg

Hansie and Tim Noakes

HOW IRONIC THAT NO LESS A PERSON than Prof Tim Noakes should join the Hansie bashing brigade, branding him among other things a 'genetic rogue'. Does he mean that the Cronjes carry some kind of rogue gene that is passed from father to son? If this is his intention, Tim Noakes should be wary of the old adage about casting the first stone. Readers may be interested to know that his father amassed a fortune sanctions-busting for UDI Rhodesia. A British subject, he was obliged to live a life of sheltered luxury in Cape Town as a fugitive from British justice. Noakes snr is long departed but his son, the beneficiary of ill-gotten gains, imagines he can pontificate about Hansie's pedigree?!

NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD

Christo Wiese and FW de Klerk

In mid-1995 FW de Klerk and I chatted at Nice airport, France. He said he was avoiding a diplomatic arrival because he was on a private visit. Christo Wiese and his father-in-law, Japie Basson, were at the airport to meet the De Klerks and they spent a few days together cruising the Riviera in a privately chartered ship, at the small charge of US\$25 000 a day.

Perhaps this was Christo's small thank you for all FW did to silence *Rapport* on the Lanzerac issue? It fits in with your story!

NAME WITHHELD, Port Elizabeth

Allan Boesak

I SHOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE your views on why the Allan Boesak affair dragged on for so long.

KATHLEEN M HALL, Rondebosch

See noses 11 and 13. Years of training in the Dutch Reformed Church helped him master a preaching style designed to lend a tone of religious authority to any text. As many of his Afrikaner nationalist masters so ably demonstrated, it can be used to confuse masses of people. Like them, he used it for 'the right cause at the right time'.

Finally, he shared some of his spoils with people in high places, who believe Boesak broke only one rule worthy of punishment, the so-called Eleventh Commandment: 'Thou shalt not get caught'. – Ed.

Paddy Policansky's will

YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT THE LATE MRS Policansky and how our director, Peter Davis, benefitted under her will (nose28) makes Peter look bad. The truth is quite different. The Davis family knew Mrs Policansky for 17 years before she died (aged 83 and not 94 as stated). To quote Peter: 'We were regular visitors. She was the first to visit my wife when our first child was born 15 years ago. She treated my wife like an adopted daughter. I believe her relationship with us brought joy to her life because, by choice, she did not have many friends.'

No self-respecting attorney should manipulate a client, but there is surely nothing wrong in a client appointing her friend as attorney and allowing him to benefit under her will? We are avid noseweek readers. Please don't let your standards slip.

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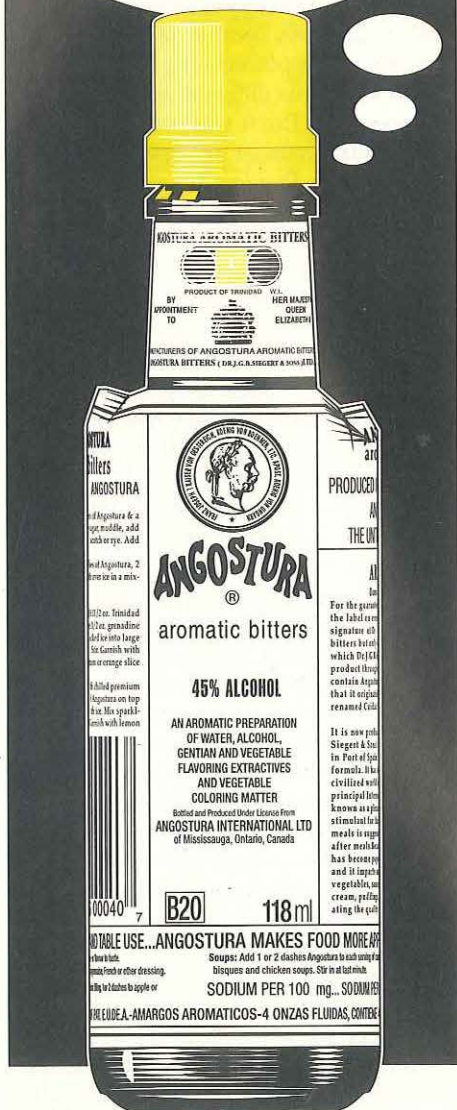
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dear reader

SURPRISE, SURPRISE! HERE WE ARE again with the usual – but always surprising – package of typically South African madness and mayhem. Whatever else might be said about it, South Africa remains the most stimulating, fascinating and engaging place for the brave and bold to be. For the too sensitive and faint-hearted, there's always New Zealand. Sheep apparently don't bite.

Not only do we aspire to produce the best magazine in South Africa, we want you to be proud to be one of our regular readers and supporters.

Our only fear is that you should be disappointed in us. Which is why we commissioned Research Surveys to compile the questionnaire you received with your last issue. Their brief was to find out, in general terms, who our readers are – and what you think and expect of us. After all, it is said that we're known by the company we keep.

Your response was so magnificent – RS said they needed 250 responses to do a worthwhile analysis; we got close to 700 – that it gives me great pleasure to share with you what we learnt from the survey.

According to RS, our readers are a pretty illustrious and well-informed bunch (as if we ever doubted it!), the backbone of our economy: 58% are directors of companies; 9% engineers or architects; 9% lawyers; 8% bankers; 7% business consultants; 6% medical doctors; 5% accountants; another 5% are in media and advertising, and an equal number are in marketing and insurance.

More than 90% read every issue of noseweek cover to cover (55% read the *Financial Mail*; 26% *Finance Week*; 15% *Style* magazine); 81% have access to the internet, 73% enjoy reading and half have satellite TV. More than 40% listen to Cape Talk Radio or Radio 702; a third listen to ClassicFM or Fine Music Radio – and 6% read *Private Eye*.

Nearly half are interested in wildlife, while fully half regularly travel abroad.

They read noseweek for our exposés, our courageous journalism, our inside line on information and our commitment to truth – in that order.

Now for the down side: 64% of our readers are bothered a lot – or at least a little – by our irregular publication. Our response: it bothers us most of all. We are now determined to do something about it – with your help. We have launched an appeal to our readers to help raise the capital we need to employ more senior

journalists. That, it seems to me, is the only way to generate a sufficient flow of quality copy for regular publication, become viable – and remain independent.

If you are willing to help, please call us!

Only 16% of our subscribers are women. As soon as we have the funds, we'll be doing something about that, too. All people who can read and have the vote need noseweek. Finally, 5% of our readers said they were sometimes upset by our lapses of taste. Sorry. Maybe it's a good way of reminding you that we're just human.

NOT-SO-YOUNG, NOT-SO-GIFTED – AND DEAD WRONG!

All those who doubted the wisdom of President Thabo Mbeki's vigorous entry into the HIV-AIDS debate, should read the following story – and think again.

The questions being asked by Mbeki, we still believe, call for considered, well-researched answers. Regrettably, many participants in the AIDS arena appear to feel compelled to play to the mass audience as if they were the latest recruits to *Gladiators*, that popular but cheap bit of TV buffoonery.

Witness the recent presentation by Professor William 'Wits Blitz' Makgoba, president of the SA Medical Research Council, to the AIDS advisory panel set up by President Mbeki.

According to the *Sunday Times* – and it must be right, because he rushed to tell them himself – Prof Makgoba 'stunned the panel into silence' (*bham!*) by presenting it with two graphs representing deaths in South Africa recorded in 1990 and in 1999.

According to the graphs, the total number of deaths had increased from 63 500 in 1990 to 174 500 in 1999 (*bham! bham!* Wits Blitz has the Idutywa Induna looking dazed). Most horrifying of all: the number of men in the age group 25 to 30 who died

goto

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for all the names that have
appeared in
noseweek
plus lots more!

was up from 3000 in 1990 to 15500 in 1999! (*Gadoef!* He's down, he's down!) Deaths amongst females in the same age group were up from 1500 to 12800 (*Aaah*, he's out for the count!).

Makgoba told the panel that the increase could be attributed directly to HIV/AIDS. 'A major war would be the only other thing that could explain the high numbers of young men and women who are dying in our country,' he said. (Wits Blitz raises his arms to receive the crowd's cheers!) It was all very horrifying and exciting.

But none of it was true. Like *Gladiator* contests, it was all choreographed for effect.

The MRC had only weeks before been granted access to the Department of Home Affairs's unprocessed figures for the years 1996 to 1999. The MRC hurriedly did its own breakdown, by age, of the 1999 figures – using its own methods – and then compared them with the official statistics for 1990 that were published by Stats SA, South Africa's official statistical service.

On Sunday 9 July, hours before President Mbeki was to open the International AIDS conference in Durban, the *Sunday Times* reproduced the graphs prepared by the MRC on its front page under the dramatic headline 'Young, gifted and DEAD'. The figures, the newspaper declared, 'put an end to the debate raised by dissident scientists on whether AIDS was causing a dramatic increase in deaths in South Africa'. The newspaper named the Department of Home Affairs as the source of the devastating statistics.

What the *Sunday Times* presumably didn't know is that it had been used to publish a grotesque piece of propaganda that was calculated to mislead the public and embarrass the president.

The day after publication, the Department of Home Affairs anxiously rushed to cover its back. A senior official, Mr Eugene Kritzinger, directed an urgent request to Stats SA to provide professional comment on the graphs and analysis published in the *Sunday Times*. He already had a fair idea what was wrong with them.

Two days later Stats SA gave the department a confidential critique of the comparative death statistics published in the *Sunday Times* and of Makgoba's claims as quoted there.

Firstly, Stats SA pointed out what had to have been obvious to the Department of Home Affairs from the start: the figures for deaths in 1990 were for the 'old' (largely white) SA, which excluded the entire populations of the then 'Bantu homelands'.

Informed sources within the department say that the process for including deaths in the former homelands only started in 1996

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– and that 1998 was the first year when the process was sufficiently advanced to produce reliable national statistics.

The 1990 graph, therefore, represents the typical pattern for a largely white, middleclass, urban – and older – population: a gradual increase in the number of deaths through the age groups, with the largest numbers dying in old age.

It excluded the mass of black rural poor, whose fertility pattern is quite different to that of their wealthier urban white, 'coloured' and Indian compatriots. A much, much larger proportion of the black population – said to be over 60% – is under 18. And their average life expectancy has always been significantly lower than that of their better-off compatriots of other races.

Naturally, when they were re-incorporated in the national statistics (as in the 1999 graph) the total number of deaths was much higher and the pattern changed. For a start, the total population being accounted for is significantly larger than

From Ashley Cooper's Loo(d) Cartoons



that accounted for in 1990 in the official statistics for 'old' South Africa. Secondly, since black people now form the vast majority of citizens of the larger, 'new' South Africa, their different pattern of deaths has a profound impact on the pattern of deaths for the overall population.

A dramatic increase in deaths in certain age categories was to be expected in the 1999 graph, both because of the absolute increase in population being accounted for and because of its different age spread and life expectancy. But it was not only true for deaths in the younger age categories: close readers of the *Sunday Times* graphs will have noticed that they also show nearly three times as many people dying over the age of 80. (Is professor Wits Blitz suggesting that they, too, are dying of a sexually transmitted virus?)

Stats SA politely points out in its confidential memo that 'a more meaningful comparison would be of the rate of deaths per thousand people in each age and race category, rather than of the totals.

In addition, in the black community a significantly larger number of young people die of unnatural causes such as violence and accidents. A stunning 27% of South African males, Stats SA reports, die of accidents and other violent causes.

In all, Stats SA concludes, the 1999 pattern of deaths presented by Prof Makgoba and dramatically reported by the *Sunday Times* is, in fact, 'not a new profile'.

The Department of Home Affairs' response? A dry little press release (which the *Sunday Times* did not bother to report) that stated: 'Although the department is fully aware of the serious nature of the AIDS pandemic in South Africa, panic should not be created among members of the public through selective, and sometimes incorrect, use of statistics.'

Which is, apparently, what the MRC has done: create panic through the selective and incorrect use of statistics. Prof Makgoba's timing suggests he also hoped to embarrass and discredit President Mbeki.

As head of the MRC, Prof Makgoba is supposed to be our most senior medical scientist. We trust he will not continue in that post for much longer.

The funny thing is that no-one at the much celebrated International AIDS conference noticed even the obvious flaws in the graphs or questioned Prof Makgoba's interpretation of them. They have simply been absorbed into the myth that passes as 'AIDS science' in South Africa today.

No wonder President Mbeki feels impelled to step in and to bring some scientific rigour to the issue. If he doesn't, who will? n

Last laugh at the 'wailing wall'



Picture: FAT Weekly

THERE HAVE BEEN THOSE WHO, over the years, have felt aggrieved at Johannesburg stock brokers Lowenthal and Company. At one stage Lowenthals even gained a certain notoriety for bringing companies onto the venture capital sector of the exchange that would shortly afterwards take a nose dive. Indeed, a wall of plaques inside the Lowenthals offices listing the companies it had brought to the exchange was for a time commonly referred to as the 'wailing wall'.

Not that long ago Lowenthals felt called upon to remind their critics that venture capital is high risk capital – and high risk means high risk. The latest to be rudely reminded of that fact are none other than Lowenthals themselves. But then, it is also said, the JSE is not for crybabies – which might explain why they have said not a word about their unfortunate experience. In addition, Norman Lowenthal (pictured above) was chairman of the JSE at the time. Imagine the embarrassment!

Lowenthals' troubles started in June 1998, when one of their brokers, Hennie le Roes, received a phone call from Nedbank share dealer Mohamed Moosa. Moosa placed an order for a large number of shares in medical equipment company Mouldmed. It was logical for him to approach Lowenthals, as they had been Mouldmed's sponsoring broker. In other words, they had presented Mouldmed to the investment community, implicitly endorsing the company's charms like a dowager presenting a debutante to society. This, in retrospect, might have been ill-considered in view of who the Mouldmed founders, directors, controlling shareholders and 'consultants' were. But more of that later.

Over the next few weeks Moosa continued to place orders for large numbers of Mouldmed shares. In just two weeks his presence in the market drove the share price up from R1 to around R4. In total he purchased about 10-million Mouldmed shares at an average price of about R2.90.

As soon as he stopped buying, however, the price reversed course, dropping quickly to R2.60 and then to about the R1 level.

Lowenthals had to settle each Monday, as always, with the JSE clearing house for the full amount of their purchases. They duly did so. However, when they in turn looked to their client for settlement, they encountered a small problem. They could not quite work out who their client was supposed to be.

Moosa was a Nedbank trader and he had placed his orders from the Nedbank floor, but the purchases had not been for the Nedbank account. Institutional share orders are always supported the following day by written confirmation. There had been no such confirmation. Instead, the R29m worth of shares seemed to have been for Moosa's personal account.

But Moosa seemed strangely reluctant to fork out the R29m. No, he said, he hadn't been buying for his own account. He thought everything had been arranged between Chris Coetzer, the active and forceful Mouldmed director, and Ronnie and Norman Lowenthal – at least that was what Coetzer had told him. So, when Lowenthals allowed him to carry on buying

– without security – he assumed everything had been arranged.

Houston, we have a problem.

Lowenthals were now the reluctant owners of ten million Mouldmed shares that had cost R29m and were rapidly falling in value. And Mouldmed was not the kind of share to be stuck with. Stock exchange analysts Huysamer Stals had recently issued a highly sceptical report headed 'Why to avoid Mouldmed', recommending that their clients sell Mouldmed shares. The report mentioned that the Theron family – 'well-known for the involvement of Vloog and Gert Theron in the Kubus milk culture scheme' – was among the main beneficiaries of the trust that controlled the majority of Mouldmed shares.

What the report didn't say was that the real driving force behind Mouldmed was Gert Theron snr, former resident of Saford Penitentiary, Arizona, and the very fellow Lowenthals had so obligingly led onto the dance floor of the JSE, powdered and puffed and ready for action.

Gert snr could not be a director because of his criminal convictions. But, says ex-national sales manager Charles van Rooyen, 'No decision was made at Mouldmed without Gert snr's OK.'

Chris Coetzer was a disciple of Gert Theron and was frequently heard to boast, 'Gert makes the plans, I execute them.'

Gert snr has various convictions for insolvency contraventions and, in 1987 was jailed in Arizona for his role in exporting the Kubus scam to the US. His partners in that notorious con included elder brother 'Dr' Frans 'Vloog' Theron, and the milk scheme's originator, Adriaan Nieuwoudt.

The American charge sheet in that case could serve as a template for what subsequently happened with Mouldmed, still a listed JSE company. The defendants had, according to the charge, *unlawfully, willfully and knowingly devised a scheme and artifice to defraud various investors ... to obtain from said investors sums of money*

Above: Former JSE chairman Norman Lowenthal's firm lost R29 million – but dared not complain.

Below: Gert and Eeufesia Theron made millions



Picture: Rapport

by means of false representations, omissions of material facts and fraudulent promises, well knowing that said representations and promises were false when made and well knowing that omissions of material facts were being made.

As part of the scheme the Theron and friends created various corporations, supposedly independent of Kubus, that did business with Kubus, thereby lending it an air of legitimacy. One of these was a cosmetic company called Cleopatra's Secret. While there was a cosmetic product [*sic!*], it was by no means the real secret of the business.

In the 1980s noseweek editor Martin Welz spearheaded the investigations into Kubus – also in the US. When he challenged Niewoudt about Kubus, asking him in Afrikaans, 'So, it's just a *foefie* [sham]?' Niewoudt replied, with a grin, 'Yes, but then life is just a *foefie*.' An admirable attitude in some respects, but frequently tragic for those innocents – like poor Ronnie and Norman Lowenthal – who get sucked into the orbit of Adriaan Niewoudt's old friends and partners.

Yes, you say, but how and why did Lowenthals come to allow a Nedbank trader to run up an account of R29m on his own behalf?

We don't know the answer. But we do have a pretty fair idea of what happened to Moosa.

Moosa had been spotted in Durbanville meeting with Chris Coetzer at Mouldmed's headquarters on a number of occasions. Around the time of the share purchases Coetzer was phoning Moosa frequently at Nedbank. Not quite as often as Banjo Cassim would phone Hansie before a Pakistan test match, but still, many times each day.

The Theron and their minions do, of course, specialise in getting people to do things that they will later bitterly regret. It's an art they learnt at the feet of the *capo di tutti capi* of sales scams, *Holiday Magic* inventor Penn Patrick himself.

Coetzer, we have reason to believe, was dangling in front of Moosa a prospective megabucks deal between Mouldmed and 'a Russian consortium'. The Ruski's were supposedly poised to purchase not only the distribution rights for Mouldmed products in Russia, but also some 15-million Mouldmed shares at a price of about R3.50 each. Moosa was made to understand that to pull off the lucrative deal – and Moosa would surely share in the profits – the share price needed to look a lot more lively over the critical period than the lacklustre R1,00 it had sunk to.

Fanie Grove, head of the Lowenthals office in Bloemfontein, who had originally

brought Mouldmed under the wing of Lowenthals, was flown first class to London at Mouldmed's expense. There he was wined and dined and treated like a prince of the financial world. Grove, we understand, phoned Moosa at one stage from London to tell him that he would shortly be meeting the Russians, and that the deal was on.

If Moosa had indeed been buying on Coetzer and Grove's instructions – under the impression that Lowenthals were fully apprised of the situation – it would raise all sorts of questions about insider trading.

Not to worry. The Russian deal apparently fell through at the last minute. That's where Lowenthals' sorrows began.

At least some of the shares bought on Moosa's instructions came from trusts whose beneficiaries were members of the Theron and Coetzer families.

The sale of the trusts' shares was supposedly restricted in terms of a pool agreement managed by Lowenthals. Earlier this year Judge Traverso of the Cape high court found that more shares had been sold out of the Oxford Trust (the Theron's know a reputable name when they see it) than was allowed in terms of the pool agreement. The judge concluded that 'an additional share certificate was obtained by fraudulent means by an agent of Mouldmed' in order to do it. Obviously the con-men were using every trick in the book.

In addition to their trusts holding the controlling shares, Theron family interests

were represented on the Mouldmed board by the new generation: F C Rust Theron and Gert Theron jr, offspring of Vloog and Gert respectively.

To lend additional respectability to the board, there was also that golden-oldie of past Theron escapades, in the form of Professor Ryno Kriel, pride of the University of the Orange Free State. He was chairman of Mouldmed at its listing.

His checkered business career has involved much misfortune for other people. In the 1970s, after bankrupting his father's successful tyre business, Prof Kriel became a partner in a business selling franchises for a Taiwanese mini-car. Appropriately named Uniqmark, it had many franchises to sell – but no mini-cars. In the 1980s he re-emerged as 'banker' for Kubus in South Africa, and one of its 'consultants' in America. After Gert snr was released from prison and returned to SA in 1988, Prof Kriel again joined him in a business, this time selling franchises for pills and cosmetics made from water weeds – yet another sadness. A year later he joined the Theron brothers in an international franchise scheme, Buyers Network Unlimited, which, unfortunately, proved very limited.

Prof Kriel nevertheless became president of the Free State Chamber of Commerce. For a while in the early 1990s he was even president of the National Occupational Safety Association.

Another Mouldmed board member, curiously, was Prof Dan Ncayiyana, editor of the *SA Medical Journal* and vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town. Prof Ncayiyana told us that he was only a board member for about six months and resigned when he became uneasy about the information that the board was receiving.

Prof Ncayiyana sold his shares when he resigned. The two professors had received a relatively pitiful number of Mouldmed shares for their services. According to the prospectus Prof Kriel had 250 000 shares, Prof Ncayiyana had a mere 30 000. The Theron and Coetzer family trusts, which had been allotted shares at a fraction of a cent each, owned almost 70 million Mouldmed shares at listing. Considering that the company listed at R1.20 and, at their highest, the shares traded at R4, the scam undoubtedly generated tens of millions of rands for the two families.

The Theron and Coetzers are smiling. Both have moved into new, multi-million rand homes. But, sadly, their gains are the Lowenthals' losses. Lowenthals have a massive headache. Mouldmed shares are now trading at between five and ten cents.

On the JSE there will, no doubt, not be a dry eye when the tale is told.

Mouldmed chairman Ryno Kriel has a prize history himself



Picture: Volksblad

The Prof and unkept promises

SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS ABOUT Mouldmed are contained in court documents lodged earlier this year at the Cape high court. It's alleged that Mouldmed carried on business fraudulently and that a sophisticated price ramping operation was carried out, enabling the 'insiders' to make huge profits.

It was vital to the scheme, it is alleged, that press coverage be manipulated to create a promising image of the company, which bore little relation to reality.

When Chris Coetzer was interviewed by financial journalist Alec Hogg on Radio 702 in July 1998, Hogg asked him about the large purchases of Mouldmed shares through Lowenthals. Coetzer shamelessly told listeners that he suspected that 'institutional analysts who carried a lot of credibility' had seen the value in Mouldmed and were scrambling to 'get on board'. Coetzer knew very well it had nothing to do with 'institutional buyers'. The real buyer – Mohamed Moosa, who would later claim he had bought under Coetzer's direction – was sitting in the studio with him!

Part of the scam entailed fooling auditors Deloitte and Touche into confirming, in April 1998, that a deposit of £5m had been lodged with a UK firm of accountants, in fulfilment of the first step of an agreement with a supposedly independent inter-

national medical supplies company. In fact, it was a hoax along the lines established during the Kubus scam. The international medical supplies company was simply a shell under Coetzer and Theron's control. The money had merely been temporarily deposited by a third party into an auditing firm's bank account – for a fee.

There were some who, at one time, genuinely believed in the business potential of Mouldmed. It was their investments of money, time and effort that gave the company its original cloak of legitimacy. They were, however, themselves quickly to run up against a barrier of broken promises.

CHARLATANS TALKING BULLSHIT

One unfortunate Spaniard, señor Carlos Perez, marketing director for Mouldmed in Spain, was eventually driven to write to Theron in July 1998: 'I have been working hard and putting my name on the line for Mouldmed España ... Gert, you and Chris are a couple of charlatans [*charlatans?*] talking bullshit all the time ... Yes, you may laugh ... I am writing and contacting your sponsoring broker, your auditors and reporting accountants ... but the real problem is going to hit you straight in the face. I must tell you this, so when it happens you know who ... was behind.'

But threatening the Thérons is merely playing them at their own game.

'There are obviously serious misunderstandings between you and us,' Gert Theron coolly replied. 'Unless a written apology is received within 48 hours, we will hand this matter over to various police departments for immediate prosecution (Spanish police, Interpol, Scotland Yard, OSEO in South Africa, the Special Investigations Branch for Business Sabotage, and the Spanish government). We will back up these investigations and prosecution with substantial resources.'

Another who suffered through his dealings with Mouldmed was former Stellenbosch University engineering professor, Vos Hattingh. Prof Hattingh, a well-known lecturer and pioneer in the field of aeronautical engineering, left the university in 1992 to start his own company, Creative Engineering (Creo).

Prof Hattingh's brother, Frikkie, was the financial director of Mouldmed and father-in-law of Chris Coetzer. In 1996 Frikkie suggested to Coetzer that he contact Prof

Hattingh to discuss the development and production of what was to be Mouldmed's flagship product, the Prostaflor, a device for the early detection of prostate problems.

The negotiations that ensued resulted in an order being placed with Creo in January 1997 for the manufacture and supply of 4 000 Prostaflor machines.

Mouldmed took a 41% stake in Creo (in exchange for shares, not cash) and announced in its prospectus that Creo had acquired the sole manufacturing rights to all products developed or acquired by Mouldmed. Not, on the face of it, a bad deal for a small engineering firm.

Prof Hattingh worked day and night to engineer and produce the first batch of Prostaflors. Shortly after the first 1 200 machines had been supplied and paid for, however, Coetzer told him to hang on – Mouldmed wasn't quite ready for the next installment as ordered.

A year later nothing had changed and Creo was in financial difficulties. Eventually Prof Hattingh decided to sue Mouldmed. 'We had a deal, it'll take five minutes in court,' he assured his anxious wife and family. While waiting for the allocation of a trial date, he was telephoned by the new financial director of Mouldmed, Brian Davidson, who requested a meeting. As an afterthought Davidson added, 'Can I bring Oom Gertjie along?'

'Oom Gertjie' turned out to be none other than Gert Theron, who walked into the meeting, Prof Hattingh later told his family, wearing a cowboy outfit – hat, buckle and boots. [*Echoes of his time in Arizona? – Ed.*] He dominated discussions, trying to get Prof Hattingh to drop his case.

Hattingh knew all about Gert Theron, Alwarvo and Kubus. Up until that point he had held steadfast to the idea that Coetzer had simply been too bold in his projections, and that all would be well in the long run. Once he saw Gert, he was no longer under any illusions about Mouldmed's promises.

Meanwhile, things at Creo had become so bad that, in February 1999, when Prof Hattingh heard that his case was unlikely to be heard for some time, he placed the company in liquidation. About a week later he was diagnosed with brain cancer, which his family believes was a result of the anguish and stress of his dealings with Mouldmed. In April this year he died.

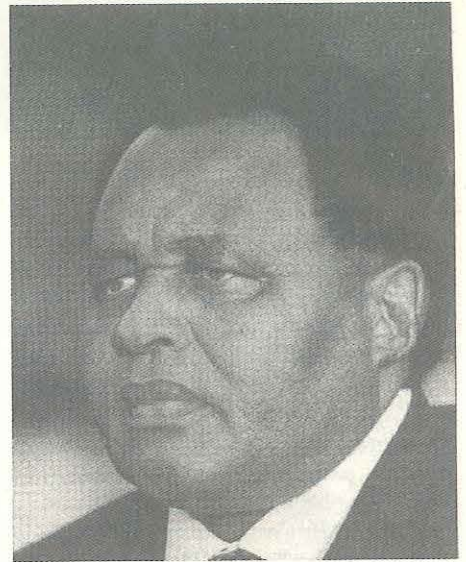
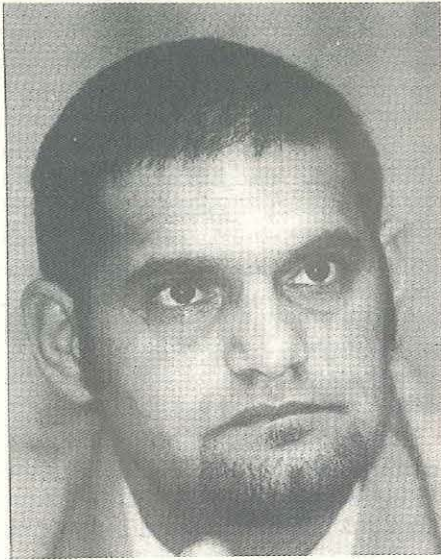
'My father was the first to uncover the truth about Mouldmed,' says Prof Hattingh's son, Johan. 'He wrote in 1998 already to the JSE and the FSB. Neither have done anything about it.'

Come to think of it, why has Norman Lowenthal not had Mouldmed suspended? Need one ask? *n*

Professor Vos Hattingh. His family believe he died of stress brought on by Mouldmed.



government
business



shake- up or shaiakedown?

LAMBI RASOOL, ONE-TIME OWNER of a motor repair shop on Albert Road in Durban, has earned a special place in the history of the African renaissance by fathering four talented sons. They are called Mo Shaik, Younis Shaik, Shamin Shaik (otherwise known as 'Chippy') and Shabir Shaik. But more about them anon.

African Renaissance is a new name for the old dream of African liberation first expressed 40 years ago by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah. It aspires to the return of power and self-respect to the people of Africa; to freedom from foreign domination, and from demoralising poverty and ignorance.

Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe, too, claims to be pursuing that dream when he invites his people to 'take back their land'. Yet the result is a 60% inflation rate, bank overdraft rates of 70%, mass unemployment and looming starvation.

Mugabe's campaign was designed to distract attention from the corruption in his government which has reached such disastrous levels that it is only thanks to President Thabo Mbeki's generosity with South African taxpayers' money that he has managed to avert full-scale rioting on the streets of Harare and Bulawayo.

When in early June, Uncle Bob reached out to Hansie Cronje, offering warm words of encouragement, we wondered: what could have inspired this extraordinary show of solidarity?

One of Uncle Bob's close friends is, of course, John Bredenkamp, notorious Rhodesian arms dealer now resident in Berkshire, and said to be worth R4.4 billion.

Bredenkamp controls Masters International, a company that manages the financial interests of several well known international cricketers, rugby players and golfers.

Mugabe and Bredenkamp are deeply involved in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in return for which they have claimed their share in the DRC's fabulous mineral wealth. (The diamond area in the Congo has some 10 000 Zimbabwean troops stationed around it.)

The war now involves no fewer than nine African nations, and has been dubbed by some political analysts 'Africa's First World War'. It has destroyed the economy of the DRC, a country the size of Western Europe; hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and millions more made homeless.

John Bredenkamp is President Mugabe's main arms procurer and has provided arms, helicopters and pilots to the Congo.

So, how are we to understand Mugabe's words of caution to Hansie - 'My brother, this Satan, we must all watch out for him'?

Mugabe promptly added 'What is even more sad, is that it wasn't even much money. It's a pity, a real pity'. All very confusing - and telling.

In South Africa the dream of an African renaissance finds expression in the government's black empowerment programme.

Yet what are we to make of the continuing crises and scandals surrounding the allocation of the third cell-phone licence, the arms procurement programme, the

allocation of mining and fishing concessions, and the privatisation of state assets ... ?

'Empowerment' can easily become a smoke-screen for corruption. One need only look back 50 years at Afrikaner 'empowerment' to see that.

When the National Party came to power in 1948, Afrikaners, too, lacked both capital and skills. All they had to 'trade' was their political power or influence. While poor and less educated Afrikaners could trade their votes for free schooling and jobs in the public sector, many in the new governing elite had bigger ambitions - they wanted to be rich. They could not favour Afrikaner mining, industrial or construction companies with government contracts - because there were no such companies. But they could use their influence to determine which non-Afrikaner companies got government contracts - for a fee. Those with influence and connections quickly constituted a new 'ten percenter' class, who took up residence in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria or the hills around Stellenbosch and Bellville.

The same conflict between public and private interest which arose then, is today threatening the African dream.

Is black empowerment a legitimate transfer of capital and top jobs to worthy members of the previously disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities, or is it plain corruption - a political elite abusing its power or influence to enrich itself at the expense of the masses?

Corruption is the only rational explanation for the government's decision to buy R30 billion worth of hi-tech weaponry -

*Top left: Chippy Shaik
Top right: Joe Modise*

warships, warplanes and helicopters – from Germany, France, Sweden, Britain and Italy. So says the Coalition for Defence Alternatives (CDA) whose distinguished membership includes Archbishop Tutu, the S A Council of Churches, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, and the Quaker Peace Centre. They may be right.

An investigation by the British police into allegations that British Aerospace – a major participant in the arms package – paid R40 million, via a Swedish union, to 'sweeten' South African trade unionists who might otherwise have opposed the deals, has been called off. Why? The UK parliament has passed an Act which makes it a crime for Britons to pay bribes to get foreign business. But Prime Minister Tony Blair has delayed having it signed into law by the Queen. As long as he holds off, it is not a crime. No crime, no police investigation.

The major part of the arms package was negotiated by the previous minister of defence, ex- MK chief Joe Modise. But when he resigned last year, most of the deals had not yet been concluded – except for the submarine deal with a German consortium, which Modise signed just days before leaving office.

In private life, Mr Modise emerged as the new chairman and major shareholder of Conlog, a company with extensive interests in the overall armaments package. He is said to have bought his shares in the company for R40 million – which he apparently was able to borrow, interest free, from a friend in Germany. For reasons which remain obscure, this friend chose to send the money via Mozambique to the bank account of Kingsgate Clothing in Durban, rather than directly to Mr Modise's own account. Kingsgate Clothing is controlled by a certain Mrs Shaik.

Although this information has been known in government circles for some time, there has been no official response. The chairman of the Defence Portfolio Committee, Parliament's watchdog over defence matters, is Ms Thandi Modise, daughter of the former minister of defence.

We must assume that President Thabo Mbeki does not propose applying gunboat diplomacy in his dealings with our neighbours, or that we should act as America or Europe's surrogate policeman in Africa.

In short, no-one has it been said that we want an *offensive* military capability.

Against whom, then, do we need a fleet of frigates and submarines and squadrons of the most modern fighter jets to defend ourselves? *America!* was one of the more desperate suggestions made by a defence spokesman, when trying to justify the deals to a parliamentary select committee.

Another reason was that we need long-

range aircraft and warships to find and catch pirate trawlers in our vast and valuable fishing waters. But how can that be a real concern when we don't bother to impound those illegal trawlers that regularly sail into our ports to refuel and refurbish, before heading back to the plunder?

On a more general level, it is argued that all countries that cherish their independence must, even in the most peaceful of peace times, maintain a defence capability. One never knows what the future holds. Once lost, the skills and technology required for an effective defence force could take years to re-establish.

But what if the threat to the security of the state is not some theoretical future one, but the real and immediate threat posed by poverty and massive unemployment?

In order to make funds available for the new weapons purchases, the government has reduced the number of soldiers in the SANDF from 130000 to 70 000, adding tens of thousands of men, trained only in the use of guns, to the ranks of the unemployed. How can that possibly make sense from a

BOESAK'S GIFT TO MANUEL

national security point of view?

And it's not just the troops who lose out: French arms supplier Thomsons has already contrived (using its local subsidiary ADS with its 'empowered' black partners to do the dirty deed) to have CCII, a local hi-tech company that has spent years developing a sophisticated information system to the SA navy's specifications, excluded from the deal – in favour of a dated French system they could not sell elsewhere.

A bit of history to ponder: In 1977 the UN imposed an arms embargo on South Africa. PW Botha's government immediately planned a massive – and dirty – programme to procure hi-tech armaments. A senior economist, Dr Robert Smit, was one of the few in Nationalist ranks who dared point out that black unemployment posed a much bigger threat to the Afrikaner state. The huge amounts the Botha government planned to spend on hi-tech weapons, a nuclear programme and other capital intensive projects should, he said, rather be spent on low cost, labour-intensive projects.

Privately, Smit told friends that he was aware of corruption in top government circles. He also feared that Israel and America had a huge vested interest in South Africa's weapons programme. Within weeks he was murdered by professional hitmen, who have never been identified.

Over the next ten years President Botha and friends spent an estimated R130 billion on arms procurement. Family was as big in

the old SA as it is in the new: Botha's eldest son was a major arms procurer, while the Chief of the SADF, Admiral 'Boozy' Biermann, saw both his son and his son-in-law set up in the trade, where they profited handsomely from the arms programme.

Things did not go quite so well for the apartheid state. Instead of procuring its survival, the arms programme bankrupted the it, contributing significantly to its demise.

Much of the old culture survives in Armscor and its satellite companies. The 'old' South Africa spent R2 billion on developing the Rooivalk attack helicopter. Not one was sold. Yet, in 1998, new defence minister Joe Modise was persuaded to spend another R100 million on the project. Hopes for the Rooivalk are now pinned on sales to Algeria ... where our hero Lambi Rasool's son, Mo Shaik, has recently been appointed South Africa's ambassador!

Which brings us to our tale about the brothers Shaik. In the early 1980s, Mo and Younis Shaik were students at the University of Durban Westville, where they fell under the spell of those old stalwarts of the Natal Indian Congress, Pravin Gordan (today Commissioner for Inland Revenue), Younis Mohamed and Goolam Baker.

(Shortly thereafter Baker left for Cape Town, where he inspired the revolutionary likes of Trevor Manuel and Cheryl Carolus. So inspired them, in fact, that in 1985 they wrote to ANC headquarters in Lusaka to report that they thought Alan Boesak had his hands in the cash box. Trevor, at least, has since become more indulgent and forgiving – since Alan used some of his donor funds to buy Trevor a motor car, that is. Alan did, sort of, remind Trevor of this on his way to jail ... but we digress.)

The Shaik's mentor, Goolam Baker is today Chief of Policy Coordination & Advisory Services in the President's office).

In 1981 Mo travelled undercover to Swaziland to make contact with the ANC underground. Upon his return to Durban, he recruited his brother Younis to help him set up a new ANC intelligence network.

Among the friends the Shaik brothers recruited for their network were Shaheen Bawa (today head of technology at Cell-C) and Abu Omar Jacob (today deputy head of Government Communications and Information Services in the Presidency).

In 1985 Mo and Younis Shaik were detained by the Security Police. But in 1988 Mo was back in business with a new spy operation for the ANC. It was code-named 'Vula' and third brother, Shamin Shaik – better known as 'Chippy' – was to play a starring role.

Chippy managed to get a job as draughts-

continued on page 25

BoE's fishy business with The Codfather

BANKERS – CAUTIOUS, UPRIGHT pillars of rectitude – have long been considered the moral cornerstone of any economy. So, when they start acting like opportunistic profiteers, people get nervous. That's why the actions of the controlling directors of BoE over the past few years have been such cause for concern. And why we shout 'Hold it!' when Christo Wiese sails off in a nice big lifeboat, leaving hundreds of innocent shareholders huddled on the deck of a liner he has helped steer for the rocks.

The crew tends to take its cue from the captain: in this case it's the crew at the Sandton branch of BoE Private Bank who have decided to put self-interest before ethics.

The unfortunate client they've abandoned at sea is Mr Jolyon Simpson, a restorer of veteran cars who, in November 1995 sold his Sandton home to the Edenburg Trust, which was created for the purpose by property developer George Sinovitch.

Sinovitch's idea was to build restaurants on the Rivonia Road property – for which he needed finance. He was able to raise a first bond of R3.5m from BoE for the purchase, but this was not enough to cover development costs. So Simpson agreed to lend him R1.25m for a short period. This amount was to be secured by a second bond on the property.

Eight months later, Simpson was pressing Sinovitch for repayment. The project was still incomplete, but Sinovitch informed Simpson that BoE was prepared to help him further. However, said Sinovitch, BoE wanted to be the only bondholder. They would pay Simpson the value of his bond, cancel it and then take a further bond over the property themselves. Attorneys Kilbournes of Johannesburg were to handle the registration of the new BoE bond and the cancellation of Simpson's bond.

Simpson was delighted. He spoke to Ms Pippa Heath at BoE, who confirmed the arrangement. Simpson's attorney, Brian Martin, phoned Kilbournes, where Ms Sonja Jonker confirmed that she was the conveyancer and that instructions had been received for his bond to be cancelled and for him to be paid out its value.

Sinovitch delivered the document that Simpson was required to sign for cancellation of the bond, to his home. An attorney's messenger collected it, signed, a two weeks later. Simpson's attorney had his original



bond document delivered to Ms Jonker.

Thereafter Simpson repeatedly inquired from her as to when he would be paid out. Months later she informed him that BoE had changed their mind and had decided not to take over his bond after all. When he asked for the document he had signed to be returned to him, Jonker told him it had already been destroyed – not to worry.

Angry and disappointed, he went to see BoE's regional manager for property finance, Keith Adams. Adams said that he



was aware of the negotiations that had taken place to take over Simpson's bond, but was otherwise noncommittal.

In the meantime Sinovitch had given Simpson a set of postdated cheques to cover repayment of his bond. They all bounced. When Simpson sued him, Sinovitch dragged matters out with a defence based entirely on lies. In February 1998 Judge Southwood found Sinovitch's defences to be 'demonstrably false and without merit' and marked his disapproval by ordering Sinovitch to pay costs on the higher attorney and client scale. Sinovitch still hasn't paid.

Simpson then went to court to get a writ of execution. Again Sinovitch dragged matters out with an unsubstantiated defence. This time Ms Justice Lucy Mailula ordered Sinovitch to pay penalty costs. He hasn't paid those either.

A puzzling aspect of the financial wrangling, which continued into 1999, was that the restaurant complex was thriving. Sinovitch's own Codfather restaurant and other trendy restaurants that had opened on the site were, in fact, so popular that Sinovitch found himself embroiled in litigation with the Sandton Town Council over the question of parking facilities. Restaurants on the site had more than double the number of seats approved by the council.

(In one of his affidavits to court, Simpson declared: 'Sinovitch told me that he purchased air tickets during 1996 for employees – two or three couples – to Europe as a payoff to obtain the original consent use.')

Simpson had heard that the restaurants were collectively doing a turnover of over R1m a month. He had reason to believe that Sinovitch had received substantial sums of money from various sources. But he paid none of his creditors. Instead he had proceeded to open a number of additional restaurants at various venues as far afield as Cape Town and London. One of Sinovitch's former employees, Phillippe Fryder, reported to Simpson that he had overheard Sinovitch arranging for someone to assist him in moving a large sum of money out of the country.

In August last year Simpson learnt that, without any notice to him, BoE had had Sinovitch's Edenburg Trust placed underprovisional sequestration – and had had their favourite liquidator, Arno Cronje,

left: Jolyon Simpson, latest BoE victim

appointed provisional trustee of the estate. Sinovitch had, apparently, also failed to repay his debt to BoE.

But then BoE discovered it had a problem: Sinovitch was opposing the sequestration and BoE was having difficulty proving its case, making it unlikely that the court would confirm the sequestration on the return date at court. It was only then that BoE saw fit to advise Simpson of the state of play. They needed his help.

Simpson already had a judgment against the trust, which was all that was needed to get a final sequestration order – if he supported BoE's court application.

BoE was not using Kilbournes as its attorneys for the sequestration case. The new attorney, Mr AA Berlowitz, told Simpson that it would be in his interest to support BoE's case. BoE, Berlowitz said, intended to convene an inquiry in terms of the Insolvency Act to explore fully Sinovitch's dealings, as soon as it obtained confirmation of the sequestration. Simpson was persuaded. He provided BoE with copies of his documents and signed an affidavit supporting the case.

On 4 November last year BoE's attorney wrote to advise Simpson that a final order had been obtained against the trust. Sinovitch had once again been ordered to pay costs on a penalty scale. Attorney Berlowitz concluded his letter with the assurance that he intended to 'now set up a meeting with the trustee to arrange an inquiry'. A week later Berlowitz again wrote to assure Simpson that he was setting up a meeting with the trustee 'specifically to hold an inquiry'.

But in December, when Simpson's attorney called trustee Cronje to press for a progress report on the inquiry, Cronje said vaguely that he was 'still awaiting instructions in that regard'.

And then he dropped his bombshell. In fact, he said, he was surprised at Simpson's eagerness for an inquiry, since 'in any event it did not appear that Simpson would receive anything out of the insolvent estate'. The reason? Why, said Cronje, Simpson's bond had been 'back-ranked' to rank after BoE's two bonds. As a result, not only was it unlikely that there would be enough money over to pay Simpson once BoE's bonds had been paid but, if he persisted with his claim, said Cronje, Simpson could end up having to pay for the sequestration plus the costs of any inquiry, if it was held.

Simpson and his attorney were astounded. So BoE had granted Sinovitch a third bond in 1996 after all! And had somehow managed to have it ranked equal with their first bond – without paying Simpson's bond!

Details of BoE's additional loan, it now

emerged, were contained in the original application to sequester Sinovitch's trust: a 'letter of grant' dated 1 August 1996. In it BoE had agreed to advance a further sum to Sinovitch's trust, against registration, by the bank's attorneys, of a bond ranked equal to their first bond. But the letter also appeared to confirm Simpson's understanding of the deal originally proposed to him: it stated that 'any existing bond over the property is to be cancelled simultaneously with the registration of this bond'.

Simpson had, of course, not been paid out and, as far as he knew, his bond had not been cancelled. Instead, it had mysteriously been relegated to third in line – without his knowledge or permission.

His attorney, Brian Martin, did an urgent search at the Deeds Office. There, attached to BoE's later bond registration, he found a document, purportedly signed by Simpson before two witnesses (one of them Ms Jonker, the conveyancer appointed by BoE), in which he apparently had agreed to the relegation of his bond to bottom ranking.

Simpson was shocked. He had not signed any such 'waiver of preference'. Why on earth would he ever have agreed to such a deal? One look at it and he declared that the signature was a forgery.

'A FREEHAND SIMULATED FORGERY'

He tracked down BoE's former attorney, Mrs Elizabeth Kilbourne. She said she had closed down her legal practice and her files were stored in archives. Ms Jonker had been a conveyancer employed in her firm.

By the end of January Kilbourne had retrieved her file from the archives. She called Martin and informed him that she could find no 'strange features' in it. But when Simpson's attorney asked her for a copy of the file, she refused, saying she did not feel she could reveal 'too much information' without the consent of her client, BoE.

On 1 March Yossi Vissoker, an expert graphologist, examined the contested document found in the Deeds Office and declared the Simpson signature a forgery.

Confronted on 9 March this year, Ms Jonker admitted that Simpson had signed no documents pertaining to any bond in her presence – a legal requirement. She had, in fact, she now declared, never in her life set eyes on the real Mr Simpson.

Ms Jonker, who is presently employed in SAAirways legal department, undertook to discuss the matter further with Simpson's legal advisers the next day, once she had had the opportunity of looking at Kilbourne's file. She did not do so and has not returned messages since.

Days later Cecil Greenfield, an examiner

of questioned documents whose opinion is frequently sought in the courts (see nose25), confirmed Mr Vissoker's finding. Based on his own detailed analysis, Greenfield declared: 'The disclaimed signature is a freehand simulated forgery.'

BoE is the controlling creditor in the insolvent estate. It has refused to instruct the trustee to conduct an inquiry. Not only had BoE promised Simpson – when they were desperate for his support – that they would do so, BoE's Mr Adams had declared in his affidavit to court when seeking the sequestration order that this was the main purpose of the sequestration.

Clearly finding out the truth now no longer serves BoE's interests. Its later bond, as presently registered, stands to be declared invalid if it is based on a forged document. By special arrangement with their friendly trustee, Cronje, BoE has for several months now been hastily collecting rentals from various of the restaurant tenants in direct settlement of the dicey bond debt.

In March they insisted that the trustee proceed with the sale of the property to satisfy their bonds. When Simpson objected, BoE confidently denied that their additional bond was invalid. 'The bonds currently registered are the true position. There is no question of your having been misled with regard to the back-ranking of your bond,' attorney Berlowitz brazenly declared on their behalf. How could BoE be so sure? Why, said BoE, *Mr Sinovitch* was prepared to declare – under oath – that he 'clearly recalled' that Simpson had signed a waiver of preference in 1996! The same Mr Sinovitch who judges of the high court have found a dishonest witness three times in a row.

The sale went ahead and the property was knocked down to property broker Peter Stephenson – fronting for a consortium that includes the notorious Mr Sinovitch! – for R5.4m. And then, when, as usual, Sinovitch had difficulty coming up with the money, BoE's trustee accommodated him by dropping the price to R4.7m. At that price Simpson will get nothing.

And if BoE is wrong? Well, they say, then Simpson can sue them for damages. If he's got the money and the patience to battle in the courts for the next ten years, that is.

So, BoE Private Bank, that once respected institution, is happy to rely on a forged document to hang on to money to which, in all probability, it is not legally entitled. But then, maybe, having suffered billions in losses thanks to Christo Wiese, Phil Biden and Bill McAdam's expertise, BoE needs to hang onto every cent it can.

● For developments at BoE / Monex / Boland Bank, see the stop press column on our website at www.noseweek.co.za n

THE NIGHT IN AUGUST 1982 THAT Professor Anthony de Crespigny – a Nat appointee on the President's Council – fled South Africa, few people knew about it. His wife knew that he was going to London, but it's doubtful if she knew he was not going to return. His colleagues on the President's Council, at the time South Africa's second chamber of government, certainly did not know. His former colleagues at UCT, where he had been head of the department of political science, did not know. Even the family maid did not know.

But, while apartheid South Africa's National Intelligence Service was not watching Professor de Crespigny, there were two men in the service who had expected him to run even sooner. They had interviewed him in Cape Town on 28 July, five days before he took flight.

Over a fairly congenial lunch at the Town House Hotel, De Crespigny had been confronted with certain information that NIS had painstakingly collected during the previous two years. Some of it was neatly typed out. He was given a copy to read at his leisure. When he had read it, and failed to offer his co-operation, the NIS men knew, and he knew, that there were a limited number of choices open to him. He could complain to the press that he was being harassed. He could complain to President PW Botha, or to the chairman of the President's Council, Alwyn Schlebusch. (But they, too, may have demanded his co-operation.) Or he could run. In the event, he ran.

Exactly where he went first is still not clear. While it was popularly believed that he went to England, he might have gone anywhere. He certainly could not be found in England for some weeks – although he did call the London office of South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN), publishers of the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Times* to announce that he had resigned from the President's Council. As soon as the government made the contents of his letter of resignation public, he told them, he would issue a statement.

The first report about De Crespigny's resignation and departure from SA appeared in the *Rand Daily Mail* on 20 August. In it Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development, confirmed he had received De Crespigny's letter of resignation the previous day. The newspaper also quoted the professor's wife, Rose Marie, as saying that her husband had returned to England 'for personal and family reasons'.

Two days later the *Sunday Times* alerted the country to the fact that there was something distinctly odd about the matter.

Anthony de Crespigny

The spy
who
never
told?

FULLY COATED OPTICS



His colleagues on the PC were quoted expressing astonishment at his sudden emigration, while Rose Marie compounded the mystery by refusing to say why, after having lived in South Africa for 10 years and having acquired citizenship, he had left the country. She would also not say where he was staying.

In true SA style, the clincher came from the family maid: she told the *Sunday Times* that the professor had told her he was 'just going to Johannesburg'. She added: 'The poor madam doesn't want to go to England, but what can she do? He phoned and told her he was staying and she must go with the children.'

This would lead *The Argus* the following week to speculate that pressure must have been brought to bear on the professor. He could still not be traced for comment.

On 8 September 1982 the *Cape Times* reported rumours that De Crespigny had been questioned by security officials – and demanded that the government explain what was going on. To which Schlebusch now responded, saying he had received a letter from De Crespigny in which he'd stated he was resigning for 'pressing personal and family reasons'.

Just then De Crespigny surfaced in London – to deny that he was a spy!

Nobody had suggested any such thing until then. His friend and UCT colleague Peter Collins declared that it was absurd to suggest that De Crespigny was a spy. He said that De Crespigny did have continuous contact with diplomats at the British

embassy, but this did not mean that he was a spy! The *Guardian* in London summed up matters by saying that De Crespigny had triggered off reports in South Africa that British Intelligence had penetrated and tried to destabilise the SA government.

Suddenly remembering the professor's earlier undertaking to explain matters once his letter of resignation was made public, the *Sunday Times* called him – only to be told that he had changed his mind. If the SA government did not want to comment on the reasons for his resignation, then he, too, did not wish to do so.

Weekend Argus columnist Van Hunks followed with 'some hopefully informative thoughts' on the matter: he noted that De Crespigny was 'a close personal friend, political fellow-traveller and a long-standing professional colleague of Dr Dennis Worrall'.

Dr Worrall had been chairman of the constitutional committee of the President's Council. It was Dr Worrall, he wrote, who had flown up to Pretoria, while he was still on the President's Council, to find out from NIS why their agents had been interrogating his friend. 'It is inconceivable,' Van Hunks continued, 'that Dr Worrall would have gone to all the trouble had he not been concerned about the interrogating. And he could only have been concerned if such concern had been conveyed to him by Dr de Crespigny.'

Van Hunks was right, of course. The NIS officers had not wanted to threaten De Crespigny. They had only wanted him to

Randolph Vigne

Good spies
always
follow the
money



share some of his memories with them, because he was not just an ordinary man.

Wittingly or unwittingly, for a brief spell in the early 1960s, Anthony Richard Champion de Crespigny was the director of a company that owned a ship and an aeroplane that were used to transport tons of explosives for use in a secret war aimed, as the NIS men saw it, at destabilising the government of the Republic of South Africa.

His note of resignation, we can now reveal, was quite straightforward. He simply demanded that NIS lay off him. Unless this was guaranteed, he wrote, he was not going to return to SA.

No such guarantee was forthcoming and he never returned. *n*

'Valuators of international and even local politics should pay more attention to the ultimate source of the cash which makes political activity possible. Ideologies, professed or real, may, it seems, be largely ignored.'

THAT IS A DICTUM SUBSCRIBED TO by wise intelligence analysts everywhere. NIS analyst Piet Swanepoel quoted it at the head of his unpublished report on the De Crespigny affair.

But, until the early 1970s, South African intelligence slavishly adhered to the belief that all extra-parliamentary opposition to the National Party government, and especially illegal and violent opposition, could be traced to Soviet designs of expansionism in Africa. The ANC, it was argued, was a tool of the SA Communist Party, which in turn was a tool of the Kremlin.

This argument failed to take into account that the ANC was not the only, or even the major, extra-parliamentary group involved in political violence. (In fact, many in the ANC were not in favour of violence. Dr Albert Luthuli, long-serving president of the ANC, remained in favour of nonviolent protest, even after his organisation was banned in the wake of the Sharpsville tragedy.) It also did not take into account that most black people, even those who had never heard of the ANC, were unhappy about the host of discriminatory measures that soured their lives, and might have followed anyone with the funds to raise an anti-apartheid flag.

In the mid-'70s, some NIS analysts did, however, begin to develop a more critical view. They not only started subjecting the evidence of 'communist activity' to closer scrutiny, they collected and re-evaluated evidence about the possible activities of non-communist groups. Prominent among these was the secretive group that had been first in the field with violence against the government in the early '60s: the National Committee of Liberation (later renamed the African Resistance Movement, and thereafter known as NCL-ARM). NCL-ARM's membership included several prominent members of Alan Paton's – definitely non-communist – Liberal Party.

NIS had, some years earlier, obtained a copy of one of the first reports submitted by a leader of NCL-ARM to the person or organisation that had funded its activities in SA and abroad. When re-assessed in the '70s, the document appeared to suggest that in the early '60s the Russians were playing second fiddle when it came to supporting violence against the apartheid state. Remarkably, all the evidence pointed to US and British intelligence – and certain big business interests – as being the more probable sponsors of the earliest incidents of political violence and sabotage in the black liberation struggle.

There are a diversity of reasons why those intelligence agencies and certain business interests might have done so at the time. Our series on the 'unnatural' history of the WWF has shown that, as the winds of change raged across the continent, both British and US intelligence services hurried to establish networks and fronts to protect their political and business interests in post-colonial Africa. The WWF was but one such front.

The first, and most obvious, reason they might have promoted token political violence was as a quick means of acquiring the credibility their agents needed to penetrate the leadership of the black liberation movements. Because those movements were anti-imperialist, they were, those agencies feared, probably also pro-communist.

Any violence agents were able to provoke could also serve as an effective means of discrediting those movements as 'terrorist', should this later prove convenient: Albert Luthuli was in Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize when the first bomb exploded in SA, remember? Then already, some people suspected the incident had been set up to discredit the worthy old liberation stalwart in the eyes of an increasingly admiring and sympathetic world.

A bonus point: to the extent that the violence might make the Afrikaner government feel vulnerable, it would presumably be more open to the influence and demands of its

Dr Dennis Worrall, 'a fellow-traveller'



Western allies. Whether it was because NIS's masters found these possibilities either beyond comprehension, or too ghastly to contemplate, we do not know – but they did nothing about it. They simply returned the ARM file to the archives.

It was only when UCT professor of politics, Anthony de Crespigny, Oxford graduate and son of a British officer in India, became a surprise convert to the NP and was appointed to the President's Council that the old NIS file was dusted off. Not too many years earlier, De Crespigny had been an executive member of the SA Liberal Party and, for a while in London, had served on the Anti-Apartheid Movement's Sanctions Committee. As a member of the President's Council, the same man was now going to draft a new constitution for apartheid South Africa.

The new NIS investigation culminated in two interviews with De Crespigny. After the second interview he fled SA, prompting a great deal of publicity and speculation. But neither the SA government nor the professor have ever felt it to be in their interests to reveal what happened between the professor and NIS.

Thanks to the research of Dr James Saunders, researcher for Anthony Sampson's recent biography of President Nelson Mandela, noseweek is now able to disclose the contents of that intelligence file – and the reasons for the UCT politics professor's sudden flight from South Africa.

The discoveries and events are recorded in a 60-page document compiled more than 10 years ago by Piet Swanepoel, a senior officer who retired from NIS in 1984. (In the late '60s he was also the 'handler' of press spy Gordon Winter.) Swanepoel was one of the NIS men who attended the polite lunch with De Crespigny on 28 July 1982, at which they asked him the questions that prompted his flight five days later.

John Lang was the author of the secret NCL-ARM report quoted in Swanepoel's report. The story that follows is an edited version of both reports. *n*

When interviewed last year in Bath, England, De Crespigny told historian-researcher Dr James Sanders that he had fled SA because he was scared following his meeting with NIS. He again denied having been an agent for British Intelligence, but now added that, when a student at Oxford, he had got as far as being interviewed for a job by MI6. Unfortunately, he told Sanders, he had 'queered' the interview by suggesting to the recruiter that his reason for wanting to be a spy was to become more attractive to women. He has since been married four times.

CIA & MI6 LINKS

of the secret masterminds of the armed struggle in SA

THE FIRST HINT OF THE EXISTENCE of a secret group that had initiated and guided the shift to violence in the South African liberation struggle emerged at the Rivonia Trial in 1964.

In her account of the trial, titled *Action, Reaction and Counter-reaction*, Muriel Horrel, a researcher for the SA Institute of Race Relations, recorded: 'At the Rivonia Trial the deputy Attorney General stated that, after it had been banned, the ANC went underground. Some of its members decided to embark on a policy of violence and destruction in order to achieve their political aims. The Spear of the Nation was formed for this purpose as the military wing of the ANC. It operated under the guidance of the National Committee for Liberation, a multi-racial body formed in 1962, allegedly led by communists. The high command [of the NCL] was located in Johannesburg, with regional and sub-regional committees and cells under it. A 'Freedom Radio' was operated.'

MOTIVES AND ALLEGATIONS

Horrel continued: 'Some of those named in court as members of the NCL escaped overseas: among them were D E Montague Berman (who was stated to have founded the organisation), Randolph Vigne, John C F Lang and Neville Rubin.'

This appears to suggest that the armed struggle in SA was launched under the guidance of the NCL. Just who and what were the NCL, which succeeded in launching a 30-year civil war in SA? What were their motives? Even today, nearly 40 years later, the answers must leave most South Africans with a sense of shocked disbelief.

Because its name was later changed to the African Resistance Movement, the group is commonly referred to as the NCL-ARM. While it is widely assumed that it was communist, that assumption is wrong. Muriel Horrel, you will note, carefully described the NCL as 'allegedly communist-led'. In fact, only Berman (who died in Cape Town last year) was a communist – and even he has been described by friends as 'a chameleon'. Three of the four men named above, Randolph Vigne, John Lang and

Neville Rubin, were definitely not communists. They were in another camp altogether. Some people assumed they were all communists because they called themselves 'revolutionary socialists' in pamphlets they distributed. Not all South African communists believed in violence. These revolutionaries who pretended to be socialists did. Not only that, they set out to organise and control all violent actions against the government, in the process financing the ANC, the PAC, various 'Coloured' parties and various white liberal groups.

Nobody can tell the story of NCL-ARM as well as they did in the report that Lang drew up in August 1961 to explain to their foreign paymaster how they were spending his money. Extracts from this document, now part of the NIS archive, are published here for the first time. It begins:

'This is the first report in terms of the arrangement made with you in April, 1961.

It will be recalled that, originally, a request was made by the developing underground movement for assistance in the form of supply of certain materials. It was agreed that the Group should purchase carriers for the transportation of these materials with monies that have been provided for this purpose by you.'

The report then deals briefly with the initial phase of the group's programme, which had been to rescue various anti-apartheid leaders from detention and smuggle them out of the country. (Undoubtedly a noble mission, it was also a foolproof way to ingratiate themselves with the liberation movements and make friends and contacts at the highest levels.) Lang reported that the group had carried out eight such operations at an average cost of £150 each.

That done, the report proceeds to a detailed account of the next phase of their programme: the smuggling of large quantities of explosives into South Africa and the training of activists in the manufacture and use of explosives. What they describe is no small-scale operation by idealistic amateurs: these are businesslike professionals with apparently unlimited resources.

'It was recognised,' Lang wrote, 'that the

material in bulk could only be transported by sea ... [and] because of the difficulty of passing through national borders, an aircraft would be necessary to work in co-operation with the ship over short distances.'

'The Group registered in London two private companies to own the various pieces of equipment in order that such equipment would not be connected with the true owners. Their registered names are Brijit Transport Ltd and Delia Properties Ltd.'

Lang then sets out how the Group had

- purchased a four-seater Commanche aircraft for £8 896 [equivalent today: approx R320 000]. It was able to carry 320kg freight over a distance of 2 000km.

- had purchased *Torquil*, a sea-going vessel, 'displacing 45 tons and measuring 61 feet overall', in England for £8 000 [R280 000 today]. Various adaptations to the hull, fuel tanks and radio had cost of a further £1 870. 'The vessel should be able to carry 10 to 15 tons of materials very easily [and] is due to sail for Africa on the 13th August,' Lang advised.

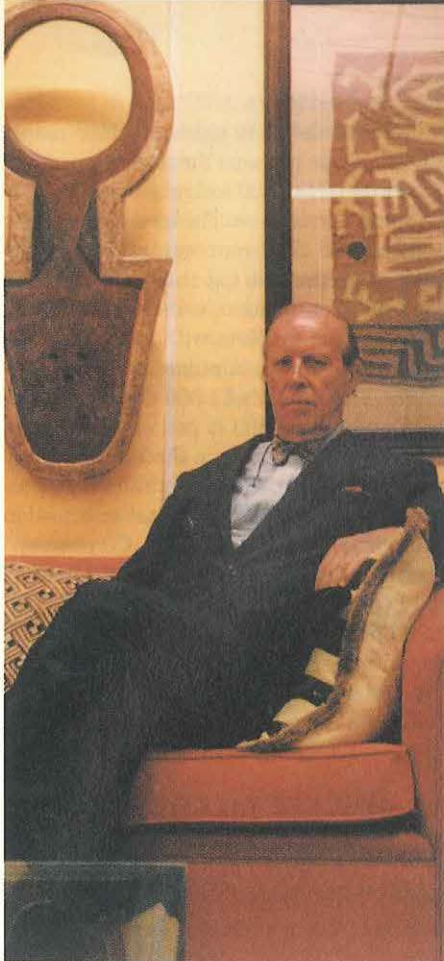
- proposed acquiring land in Swaziland on which they would build an airfield and armaments workshops, at a cost of £8350. ('The Group has reconnoitred the 16 routes from Swaziland into the Republic which do not appear on any existing road map and which can be used by a Land Rover and trailer, and which are unlikely to be blocked or patrolled,' Lang wrote.)

- proposed buying a Land Rover and trailer for £1500.

On the Group's general political activities, Lang reported: 'In addition to these operations, £500 [R17500 today] was given to the organisers of the 31st May strike. A similar amount has been given to the committee of the Pan Africanist Congress. The Group has [also] financed the calling of the Cape Coloured Convention which has successfully united the Coloured community for the first time in complete opposition to the government and apartheid. The Coloured Convention now stands on the same platform as the Liberal Party and the Congresses.'

The section concluded with an item which would later prove significant: 'The Group successfully called a very encouraging, unprecedented gathering of practically all shades of opinion outside the National Party. Because of the long distances to be travelled, extensive use of public air transport had to be made and this meeting cost about £1000 [worth R35 000 today]. ... The gathering agreed to work for a Convention in South Africa. ... This movement could play an important role in the overthrow of Verwoerd and his Government.'

'But,' Lang said in conclusion, 'there are



Randolph Vigne, now retired in London

certain more immediate questions that require to be answered.' First was the question of explosives. 'Plastic explosives,' he wrote, 'have the virtue of being light, powerful and stable. In the [earlier] memorandum the Group also asked to be supplied with diagrams illustrating suitable detonator mechanisms, including those operating with the use of solvents, as among the early targets are a number of irrigation dams. [See Harold Strachan's recollections, in nose26, of his early sabotage efforts with Ronnie Kasrils. - Ed.] Will the explosives and diagrams now become available?'

Next was communications. There was a need for a nightly news broadcast to pass instructions to cells 'and to the people as a whole', he said. The ship, *Torquil*, and the groups in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban also needed to be equipped with radio, so that direct tactical contact could be maintained between them. For this he proposed purchasing four transmitter receivers from a firm called Radifon for £150 each.

The group already had equipment for the nightly broadcasts - two powerful short-wave transmitters, which could be installed under the rear seats of motorcars. The transmitters had cost £800 - and a second-

hand motorcar had been bought for £450.

Under the heading 'Other Organisations', Lang appears to have set out how his mysteriously funded group took the initiative in encouraging members of the ANC to embark on a programme of violence - and gained access to the ANC's leadership and secret plans. He informs the group's paymaster: 'Recently, after the failure of the stay-at-home, Mr Mandela announced that his followers were considering more direct action. The representative of the Group met Mr Duma Nokwe, [who] told the Group's representative that they were considering undertaking similar activities but that there was still some division in their ranks about the advisability of this. The Group immediately asked that there be close liaison between the two organisations. Mr Nokwe was told, in outline, the progress that had been made and the Group promised that as soon as it was in a position to supply the detonators and explosives it would do so. It therefore becomes more urgent that the group should be placed in a position to commence manufacture.'

Under 'Future Plans', Lang set out the state of readiness of the Group's network. In Natal they already had three radio transmitters operating and were running a Sunday evening news broadcast under the name *Freedom Radio*. They also had explosives and, not surprisingly, had identified the SABC's radio masts as targets for a 'preliminary training outing'.

The Cape Town group had found a crew

SET FIRE

for *Torquil* and, since they had no explosives, they planned to set fire to Shackleton aircraft at the local airforce base.

The Johannesburg group operated the aeroplane and a motor repair workshop. They had planned to destroy certain pass offices and tax offices in May, but this had been postponed 'at the request of Mr Mandela'. 'Broadly,' said Lang, 'it was decided that limited objectives for training purposes should be selected first. It is therefore proposed to attempt at an early stage to achieve the disruption of the telephone services by the wholesale destruction of telephone lines on a night in August.' [Compare Harold Strachan's recollections of this project in nose27. - Ed.]

Again Lang emphasised: 'The Group decided, however, that the most urgent need was explosives and training in the use of explosives. To this end the Group has decided that it ought to seek a suitable instructor from Europe. This instructor will run courses for groups and cells from all over the country.' He suggested a budget of £3 000 for training.

[In his autobiography, *Journey Continued*, Alan Paton records: '[ARMs] instructor was a man called Robert Watson, who arrived from Malaya in 1962. He was an enigmatic character ... Some people have beliefs and would be prepared to die for them. Watson did not appear to me to be one of those.'

At his trial in the Cape Supreme Court, accused ARM member Adrian Leftwich testified that Watson had been in the British army and had "worked a great deal with explosives". "He told me he was an officer," Leftwich declared, to which Cape judge president Andries Beyers retorted: "I'm glad you did not say 'and a gentleman'."

Watson fled from SA early in 1964, shortly before Leftwich and other local ARM members were arrested. - Ed.]

The pivotal role played by the Group was further emphasised by Lang's conclusion: 'It is the view of the Group and other organisations in the underground campaign that operations should not commence until there is a reasonable certainty that it can be maintained. ... One of the biggest problems that still has to be solved is the transportation in bulk of materials.'

To be unobtrusive, the ship they bought had to be relatively small. *Torquill* would have to travel long distances carrying relatively small loads (15 tons at a time), slowing down the supply process. To speed things up they hoped to ship larger quantities of explosives by conventional means to a port on the East Coast of Africa, shortening the distances *Torquill* would have to sail. Here Lang revealed another tantalising detail about his munificent foreign paymaster: 'Recent discussions with your representative here have led to the formulation of an idea emanating from him that, in fact, the group should obtain a small merchant's business in Dar-es-Salaam. [It] should have a warehouse within the customs area which could be used for storage purposes.' In summary, the report records that a total of £24 000 [R840 000 today] had been spent on the project and that the funder had agreed to continue funding the Group with a grant of £2 500 [R87 500 today] a month.

Clearly the Group had reason to believe their funder had substantial resources: Lang urged the mystery funder to give 'deep consideration' to making 'immediate payment' of a further £20 000 [R700 000 today] to fund operations in Swaziland and Dar-es-Salaam. 'Shortage of money leads to breaches of security,' he argued.

When NIS obtained this document in the early '70s, certain details were easily verified. History had already confirmed that the people running NCL-ARM had gone about it in a very business-like manner – and that the money had been used just as

they reported it.

The first detail to catch the NIS men's attention was perhaps the most innocuous: the £1 000 [R35 000 today] for initiating a National Convention. The idea of a convention, where the representatives of all interest groups get together and hammer out a new constitution, is basically a sound one – but the problem with conventions is that they can be manipulated with money.

Where had NCL's £1 000 donation come from and where had it gone to? The minutes of a meeting held in Pietermaritzburg on 20 May 1961 recorded that 14 people, most of them women, had met to consider promoting a South African Convention. The minutes also recorded that 'a donation of £1 000 was accepted with thanks'. The name of the donor was not recorded, but the minutes did record that a committee of five had been elected 'to initiate all plans'. Two men were on the committee: John Lang and Robin Scott-Smith.

SECRET TALKS BEGIN

A clipping from a Johannesburg newspaper, *Post*, dated 2 July 1961, and headed 'Secret Talks Begin – All Races Invited', contained the next bit of information:

Secret multi-racial talks to debate whether a national convention ... should be held, began at a private house in Westcliff yesterday. Invitations had been sent to Non-White and White leaders throughout South Africa, on behalf of Mr GHR Edmunds, chairman of the powerful Press group, South African Associated Newspapers Ltd, by Mr HC Kuiper, managing director of the company.

Mr Edmunds is being backed by White Commerce and Industry leaders who offered to fly down-country Non-Whites to the Rand. Mr Edmunds is a prominent member of the South Africa Foundation.

A week later another meeting was held on the subject of a national convention – this time at SAAN's offices at 174 Main Street. The chairman was Mr Kuiper.

NIS had obtained a copy of the minutes, in which it was recorded that those present had agreed to form a permanent steering committee to organise a multi-racial national conference. Under the heading 'Finance' it was noted: '(i) A contribution of £1 000 had already been promised and half the cost of Saturday's meeting would be met from this and the other half paid by SA Associated Newspapers. (ii) The cost of the conference was estimated at £12 000 – £15 000. SAAN, the Argus Group, the Anglo American Corporation and others would contribute.'

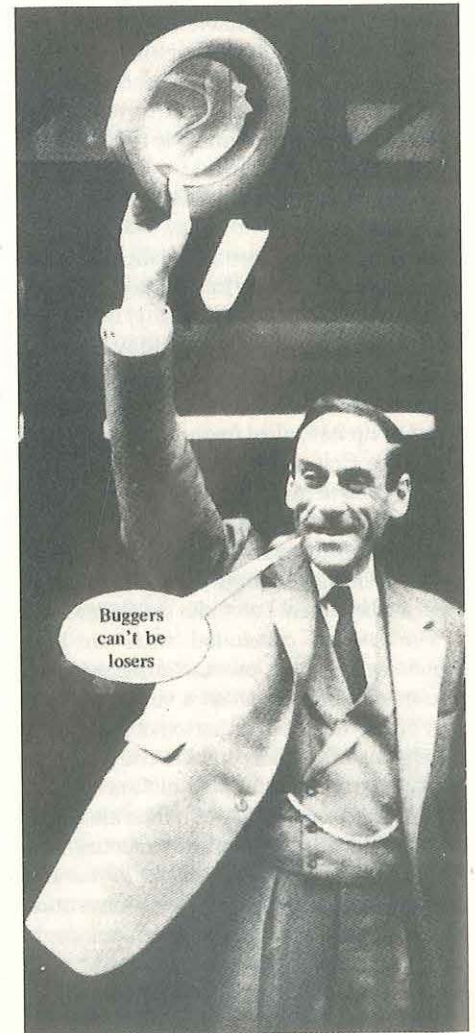
It was, of course, possible that Edmunds and Kuiper did not know where the £1000 had come from. But the people involved

with the front companies that had been set up to own the Commanche aeroplane and the ship, *Torquill*, had to know – or reveal – more about the nature or identity of the donor of the money used to start the secret war in South Africa.

It was to those that the NIS investigators now turned their attention. Records at Companies House in England revealed that Brijit Transport Ltd was registered on 16 June 1961. There were two subscribers: Anthony Rampton and Alexander Filson, both of Surrey. The company secretary was Paul di Biase of London. The two subscribers resigned on 4 April 1962 to be replaced by Caroline McNaughton and Anthony Champion de Crespigny – whose address was given as Marlston House, Newbury, Berkshire.

On 20 October 1962, these two, in turn, resigned to be replaced by John Lang and his wife Brenda. Their address was given as 12 Gayfere Street, London. The records also showed that on 5 February 1963 the company had registered a mortgage bond on the motor vessel *Torquill*.

Thorpe on the cover of Private Eye.



Records of the directors of the second company, Delia Properties Ltd, followed the same pattern.

At first the NIS's interest was directed only at John and Brenda Lang. The fact that the Langs were recorded as final controllers of both companies was no surprise. They'd fled from SA some time before the other NCL-ARM leaders. But it did suggest another line of inquiry: might the Langs be directors of other companies, as yet unknown to NIS?

Indeed. A search at Companies House revealed that on 7 August 1963, Lang had become a director of yet another suspected front company, Gransight Holdings Ltd. The directors included his NCL colleague Neville Rubin, Marion Valerie Friedmann and – believe it or not – British Liberal Party leader Jeremy Thorpe. (Thorpe was later at the centre of scandal not only involving his desperate attempts to silence a former homosexual lover, but also his connections to British Intelligence.)

Past and present directors of Gransight included Christopher Courtauld, Derek Ingram, the Reverend Timothy Wentworth Beaumont (all of London), Richard Moore, NR Battle, and another of Lang's old NCL-ARM mates, Randolph Vigne.

Several of those listed were known to have connections to British Intelligence. The Reverend Beaumont (later Lord Beaumont of Whitley), for example, was not only a leading member of the (British) Liberal Party and one of Thorpe's close friends, he was also well-known in MI5 circles. (Among the guests at a dinner he gave at his home in London on 28 June 1973 were BOSS spy Gordon Winter ... and the head of the ANC's military wing, Joe Slovo!)

But the NIS did not, at that stage, pursue this line of inquiry. The South African intelligence service was more anxious to establish what Gransight did. A NIS analyst picked up the cryptic clue – and traced the link to two South African companies.

Insight Publications (Pty) Ltd was registered in SA in 1961. Its directors included Randolph Vigne, Neil Ross and Victor Benjamin (whose alternate was Neville Rubin). In October 1964 they all resigned, to be replaced by M G Jessop and Marion Friedmann of Gransight, London. So much for the 'sight' half of Gransight. The 'Gran' half was provided by Granite Publications (Pty) Ltd, whose directors included the same Neville Rubin, Marion Friedmann and M G Jessop.

These companies were primarily concerned with the publication of a political magazine, *New African*, which first appeared in January 1962. The last issue had

appeared in July 1964, a week before most of the NCL leadership were either arrested or fled the country.

Randolph Vigne, the driving force behind the publication, was one of those who had managed to escape arrest. He had fled the country on board a ship headed for Canada. At the time the world was given to believe that Vigne had proceeded directly from Canada to Britain; in fact, he first went in great secrecy to New York, where he stayed in an apartment at 1471 First Avenue. NIS knew he also paid a visit to Washington.

Alan Paton had this to say about Vigne in his autobiography: 'A product of St Andrews College, Grahamstown, and Oxford, he was the possessor of a strong

*One of the directors
of a front company
channelling funds
from the CIA for
the armed struggle
was British
Liberal Party leader
Jeremy Thorpe*

and independent personality. Why did a man of his intelligence imagine that the blowing up of pylons would induce Dr Verwoerd to abandon the policies of racial separation? I can only guess at that ... He had an imperious personality – he also had a quality of ruthlessness but, as with his revolutionary beliefs, he did not manifest this in public.'

One of the reasons Vigne's visit to the US was kept secret was the fact that the publishers of *New African* were getting financial support from the CIA. Clearly none of those concerned wanted it to become known.

When Vigne settled in London some time later, publication of *New African* was resumed from there. The publisher was now given as Gransight Holdings Ltd.

The NIS men believed the NCL-ARM

leaders who published *New African* had not only planned and committed acts of violence, they had continued to promote violence in the magazine. John Harris, the man who in June 1964 placed the massive time bomb on Johannesburg station which killed an elderly woman and seriously injured 23 other people, was an NCL-ARM member. When Harris was executed a year later, an editorial in *New African* had praised him as 'one of South Africa's most brilliant and promising sons'.

From time to time *New African* carried an advertisement which read: 'Gransight Holdings Ltd, publishers of the *New African*, send to South Africa each month the magazine *Frontier*, now the sole voice of independent Africa circulating there'.

But in South Africa most liberals were shocked by the contents of the journal, while most black potential readers could neither afford nor risk subscribing to it. The result was that most of those who received copies of *Frontier* (*New African* renamed to circumvent a banning order), had not paid for it. Yet Gransight holdings never lacked funds.

The assertion that *New African* was the 'voice of independent Africa' was proved to be a lie when, in December 1966, the magazine itself revealed that it had obtained its funds, right from the start in 1962, from the Congress of Cultural Freedom. What the magazine did not tell its readers, but what the whole world would discover a year later, was that the Congress for Cultural Freedom had been getting millions of dollars from the CIA since shortly after World War II.

What, one wonders, would the reaction of American voters have been had they been told that the armed struggle in South Africa had not been initiated by communists from Moscow but by revolutionaries who were lavishly funded by the CIA and appeared to have many friends in British Intelligence circles? What did NIS make of this? They closed their file.

It was only in October 1980, when P W Botha appointed a man named Anthony Richard Champion de Crespigny to his President's Council that the NIS men once more dusted off their NCL-ARM file to have a second look. Could the President's new friend and adviser on constitutional affairs, they wondered, be the same man who had been listed as a director of Delia Properties and Brijit Transport, the British front companies set up to secretly ship and fly tons of explosives to the new revolutionary forces in South Africa?

Next issue: Would the real Anthony de Crespigny please step forward? n

AT LIBERTY TO ASK?

Liberty Life clients recently received a letter from David Gnodde, general manager of Finance and Administration at the company. In it he introduces them to a range of Liberty's investment products and then makes a very important point: 'Remember that in times of volatility in worldwide financial markets, sound advice

is vital. So it is important to discuss your longer-term financial planning with your Liberty consultant or broker before you make any major financial decisions.'

So, for example, before making such a decision, they might wish to ask their Liberty broker whether Mr Gnodde is the same David Gnodde against whom the British Department of Trade and Industry instituted proceedings in 1997 to have him declared unfit to be a director of any company in the UK. *That* Mr Gnodde had seen fit to leave England for South Africa shortly before (see nose15).

A GRAVE SIGHT

Joe Bloggs in Cape Town

In 1988 Cape Town attorneys Faizal Noor and Dines Ghiwala decided it would be a good idea to go abroad to raise money for the poor and oppressed of South Africa. This represented a remarkable and praiseworthy conversion, as neither man had previously shown any particular concern for the lot of the poor and oppressed.

They travelled to London (where they stayed at the five-star Dorchester Hotel and called on the luminaries of the Regent Street mosque for introductions to rich Arabs), then flew to New York by Concorde. They saw various well-connected people whom they promised 25% commission on any money they could raise for this cause. How much money they raised and what causes benefitted, we don't know.

In the years that followed they cooperated on a number of business ventures. One of the more interesting was the sale of a petrol station on Owen Road, Bishop Lavis, to a group of investors headed by locksmith Asmi Morris. Noor and Ghiwala assisted Mr Morris by arranging a R520 000 bond from Investec Bank to finance the purchase, having assured the investors that the income from the garage would easily enable them to service the debt. What they didn't tell Morris – or Investec – was that Morris and friends would not earn a cent from the garage till 2004, as only then would the (undisclosed) head lease to the existing garage operator expire.

The seller, it emerged, was an employee in Ghiwala's office who had bought it only shortly before for a lot less. When Morris

found that, though he owned the land, the garage on it wasn't his to profit from, he couldn't repay the bond. He went bust, Investec lost out – and Ghiwala and Noor arranged for a new buyer from the insolvent estate.

Former acting judge Ghiwala (Dullah Omar's new friend) has been found worthy of mention in noseweek (see noses 24 & 28). So now let's have a closer look at Mr Noor.

Faizal Noor has not practised as an attorney for many years. He's been too busy with more or less successful money-making schemes – more successful for him, less successful for those he persuades to invest with him. (It is his attorney wife who practises as Noor & Associates in Athlone.)

In 1992 Faizal bought eight sandy hectares of poor farmland behind the dunes of Strandfontein beach. The land had been put on the market by vegetable farmer Klompies Hesterman for R400 000 with the usual payment conditions: cash deposit payable on signature of the Deed of Sale; the balance to be paid on registration of transfer. Instead, Noor offered him double the purchase price – provided he was not required to pay a deposit and was given enough time to apply for the land to be rezoned before taking transfer. Noor, you see, had a new scheme up his sleeve.

Hesterman accepted the generous offer and Noor happily went off with a signed deed of sale naming one of his companies as the purchaser. In no time he'd succeeded, with the help of sympathetic friends in the council, in having the land rezoned – as a cemetery. Salaam Memorial Gardens was in business.

An attractive plan was produced, dividing the land into burial plots for devout Muslims anxious to secure an eternal resting place for themselves and their loved ones with others of the faith in sanctified surroundings. Centrepiece of the project was to be a handsome mosque. The 30 000 single plots were to be sold at R250 each. The 1 000 family plots, for R1 000 each, could be paid in installments.

Copies of the plan were rushed to the imams of mosques as far afield as Paarl and Vredendal. They were offered 25% commission on plots they persuaded the faithful in their flock to buy. Brother Shaheed Noor's office in Klip Road, Grassy Park, did a roaring trade in burial plots.

A quick calculation made it obvious that the scheme was going to be very profitable: 30 000 x R250 = R7.5 million and 1 000 x R1 000 = R1 million, which made it that much easier to persuade wealthier members of the community (doctors, businessmen, teachers wanting to invest their retrenchment packages) to pay large sums for shares in Noor's company. Among the more prominent were Dr Rifai D'Arcy, who invested R1.5m (in bundles of cash tied in shoe boxes) and Haji Osman of Campwell Hardware, Bellgravia Road, who invested R2.5m.

Noor never did pay Mr Hesterman for the land nor did he take transfer of it. After a year of haggling and pleading, Hesterman cancelled the sale. He has since sold the land to a Port Elizabeth businessman. Right now there are men digging in the land – not graves, but cabbage patches.

Small consolation for all those simple folk who believed they had settled at least one of their concerns in life: it wasn't much good as a burial ground. The water table is so high at Strandfontein that if a grave is dug to regulation depth, a shrouded corpse lowered into it is likely to float.

Three years ago Dr D'Arcy was shot and killed in his surgery in Athlone by an unknown assailant. His estate is insolvent.

When the Salaam Memorial Park scheme evaporated, Noor pacified Mr Osman by making him 'president' of another of his schemes, a bank (never licensed) called the Charter Bank of South Africa. Noor told investors that he had a major international bank, BCCI, lined up ready to invest a fortune in his bank. A Pakistani manager from BCCI – the Saudi-funded bank that became notorious for acting as an international money laundry for drug barons, arms dealers and spies (see nose27) – was brought to Cape Town to manage Noor's 'bank'. Noor called meetings of the board at Mr Osman's house in College Road, Rylands (widely known as

'The White House') and always took care to address him as 'Mr President'. Shortly thereafter BCCI was closed down by the Bank of England. Noor's Charter Bank – and Mr Osman's money – just faded away.

It's not just the ignorant Muslim poor of the Cape Flats who trustingly gave their money to the brothers Noor. Investec Bank, too, bought itself numerous burial plots – by way of speaking – from Mr Noor.

Investec is said in recent years to have granted bonds totaling R16m to finance his various schemes, only to discover that the security is worth a great deal less. Some examples: in the early '90s, syndication of property ownership was 'in'. Noor set up a syndicate to buy Athfin House, the building in which his bankers, FNB, was the anchor tenant. Enthusiastic investors invested R10m to join the syndicate. In addition, Investec granted a R4m mortgage loan. But the building is worth only R2.5m or so.

Next it was the building where his new attorney, Delawa Kumandan, has his office, Lanfin House. Investors paid thousands each to join the syndicate. Investec raised a R2m mortgage. And the original owner was never paid. The resulting sadness all round is distressing to behold.

Not to worry. Noor had a new scheme: a 190-plot housing development on the rocky slopes above Fish Hoek. Investors bought shares, Investec raised a bond. Now it seems the site allows for only two styles of house: the hanging house, pinned to the rock face, or the cave house, blasted into the rock face. Either style puts the residents below in grave peril. If there's anyone out there interested in taking over this investment, we are sure Investec would love to talk to him.

Mr Noor also has a scheme in Strand, called Strand Junction. There's a lovely model showing towering office blocks destined to rise next to Strand station on land that belongs to Spoornet's property division, Intersite. Noor's three year 'mandate' to come up with an acceptable proposal and the development funds has long expired. As an investment it should knock spots off Monex's Ratanga Junction any day. [*Stranded Bank must be just itching to lend him a packet!* – Ed.]

July 10 this year was a blue Monday for Mr Noor: a team of investigators from the Office for Serious Economic Offences called on various offices with warrants to seize documents relating to all his business ventures. That afternoon he left on an urgent business trip – to London. He told friends he was going to see a major funder. Could it be that he is anxious to revive that old scheme to raise funds for the poor and oppressed of South Africa?

ABSA

Dishonesty remains their business

The Independent Financial Adviser, a magazine published by the Insurance Brokers Council of SA (IBC), has a most interesting report in a recent issue concerning the difficulty an independent broker has had in extracting honest answers from ABSA Insurance Brokers.

ABSA Insurance Brokers – a division of the ABSA group – has already achieved notoriety in the columns of noseweek (see noses 16, 21, 26).

It transpires that Johan Pienaar, an independent broker in Roodepoort, has battled for months to get a satisfactory response to a long letter he wrote to Johan Reynecke, the new MD of ABSA Brokers, about various problems his clients have encountered with that august firm. Pienaar wrote the letter assuming that the ABSA Brokers MD would be eager to assist him in sorting out these problems. When he got no reply [*are we surprised?*] he referred the matter to the IBC, which took the matter up on his behalf. It appears they have had equally little success.

The Independent Financial Adviser report gives details of only two matters raised by Pienaar. In both cases it is apparent why Mr Reynecke has difficulty in coming up with an honest reply.

Briefly, the facts of the first case. In August last year, Mr X (name withheld as all unhappy ABSA clients are terrified of what their bank might do to them if their identity is discovered) bought a new car with finance provided by Bankfin – another division of ABSA. A Fedgen Credit Life Scheme policy, providing R48 000 worth of life cover, was included as a standard part of the Bankfin package and cost Mr X an extra R50.54 per month.

In February this year – six months later – Bankfin's broker in Roodepoort, Ronnie Keys, called on Mr X and advised him that he should cancel the Fedgen policy and replace it with a 'better' policy from Momentum Life. Relying on this expert advice, Mr X cancelled his Fedgen policy and signed up for the Momentum policy. This policy provides R70 000 worth of life cover, plus disability and 'trauma' cover – but costs R125 per month: more than double the Fedgen premium. Worse, the

premium will increase at 15% per year.

When Mr X told his independent broker, Johan Pienaar, about these developments, Pienaar called agent Keys at ABSA Brokers to find out what was up. Keys was not available to take the call, but a friendly lady in his office advised Pienaar that they were promoting the Momentum policy on instructions from ABSA Brokers' regional manager, Abrie van Niekerk.

Hence the questions addressed to ABSA Brokers' MD by *The Independent Financial Adviser*: They include:

- The original Fedgen policy was sold to Mr X by ABSA as 'in his best interests'. Six months later, ABSA was offering him a 'better' policy. 'The illogicality is obvious,' the *Adviser* declares: the Momentum policy was available at the time ABSA sold him the Fedgen policy. Either ABSA hadn't acted in his best interests to start with or they weren't doing so now. Which was it?
- When Keys recommended the Momentum policy as a 'better' policy, he should either have had a good reason – or he was 'selling premium'. 'It looks like the latter,' says *The Independent Financial Adviser*, before posing the question: 'On what grounds did Keys say that this was a "better" policy?'

The report concludes with some nasties: if ABSA regional manager Van Niekerk was promoting the idea, was he doing so on instructions of senior management? Was Fedgen aware of this? Did the MD himself approve the systematic replacement of the Fedgen policies? If not, were these actions of such a nature that they should be stopped?

noseweek readers may wish to note that Reynecke was appointed ABSA Brokers' new MD last year. He was previously a senior executive at Momentum Life!

When his predecessor as MD, Ben Linde, was identified as a liar in the case *Hersch vs ABSA Brokers*, he was promoted – to chairman of ABSA Brokers.

** The Independent Financial Adviser is also awaiting Reynecke's comment about a case reported by former IBC president, Ben Swart, who questioned the actions of another ABSA broker, in Centurion. In that case a client's monthly premium for an existing retirement annuity was reduced from R4 000 to R1 000 a month. ABSA brokers then used the extra R3 000 a month to purchase two additional retirement annuities from other insurers for their client. The net effect: the broker and ABSA gained nearly R76 000 in extra commission, while the ultimate value of the client's annuities can be expected to be reduced by a similar amount. n*



POWER

PROFIT

AND POLLUTION

IF EVER A PLACE EXEMPLIFIED NEO-colonial relations between the First and Third World it is Richards Bay. Priding itself as an export growth point, powerful foreign investors have big and very profitable investments in the area. This is great for them, because the environmental costs are all borne here while the largest profits flow overseas.

The 'big five' – the gigantic aluminium factories largely owned by Billiton (Hillside at 500 000 and Bayside at 150 000 tons a year), Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) controlled by Rio Tinto but also with a Billiton and local stake, the Mondi pulp factory, Indian Ocean Fertiliser (IOF), and the Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT) – sway decision-making at local, provincial and national levels.

The nature of this relationship was, of course, set during the 1970s in the dark apartheid days. RBM supplies about a third of the world's demand for titanium slag, from which titanium dioxide is made, to be used in pigments for paints, papers and plastics. The mind boggles at the number of First World soft drink cans that

are squirted out from Hillside and Bayside aluminium. As for Mondi, it's just one more smelly Third World pulp mill operating to environmental standards no self-respecting First World country would permit.

What the mix of bad gasses – some 100 tons per day from all the big factories – and all the other wastes are really doing to public health and the environment (locally and globally) cannot yet be fully appreciated.

As for RBCT, it will soon proclaim its billionth (that's no misprint) ton of coal exported. Add to this the timber cut from the timber plantations that blight the water catchments of KZN, chopped into mountains of wood chips ready for exportation round the world, and you have a measure of how Richards Bay is a microcosm of the modern world's environmentally hostile economic system.

RBM gobbles its way through the sand dunes north of Richards Bay destroying climax dune forest as it churns up millions of tons of sand. The mine dumps are then planted with acacias or exotic trees, which RBM's public relations arm touts as 'dune

rehabilitation.' The real story though is that the basic raw material exported is multiplied in value more than 20 times in factories overseas. That's where the big profits lie.

South Africa's interests would best be served by reducing the mining rate, and beneficiating (adding value to) the raw material here before exporting it. This would greatly multiply the profit made here, and prolong for many years our benefit. But the old regime, so desperate for foreign exchange, gladly sold out South Africa's assets, and as for the new South Africa – oh well, it continues in neo-colonial servitude.

Billiton's Hillside factory uses more electric power each day than all of Cape Town, but it is sitting pretty. The price it pays per kilowatt – and for all those millions of tons of coal burnt and the greenhouse gas belched out in Mpumalanga – goes up and down with the price of aluminium on the London Metal Exchange. Electricity is the main cost in aluminium production, so a steady profit is assured in virtually any market conditions. The factory is sited close to the central business district and

dumps its gasses there. The CSIR's predictions for gas fallout before the factory was built have been belied by the reality.

To the Hillside pollution must be added the daily tonnage from Bayside and IOF. From March to July, when wind speeds and directions change, gas levels frequently exceed acceptable health levels. The hourly figures correlate with respiratory complaints reported to local doctors.

Combine the pollution South Africa absorbs from both ends of Hillside's production and you can see how pleased the First World shareholders of Billiton are that it's all so far away. Despite this, Hillside is now pressing to expand its factory for another 150 000 tons of annual output. Who could blame them, with South Africa's servitude apparently so assured.

IOF was in the old days, Triomf, one of Louis Luyt's first enterprises. Although there is a far less environmentally damaging fertiliser production process – the so-called 'nitro route' in which nitric is used instead of sulphuric acid – this technology had been developed in Norway, and there was no way it could have been established in South Africa in the 1970s. Thanks then

to past sins, the factory fumes on today. So, can you imagine how the permit-granting authorities reacted when IOF applied to increase gas pollution by 80% to double production, with no discussion of the 'nitro route'? All this, mind you, for a 10% increase in jobs.

Well, you guessed it – the go-ahead has been given despite environmentalists' objections all the way to the end.

RBCT is planning expansion of its vast coal storage dumps, which is most unfortunate for people across the harbour when the wind blows coal dust and effluvium from stray coal fires their way. What hopes for job-creating tourism investment here?

Plans are also afoot to increase capacity to produce the wood chip mountains, so that all those gums and pines spreading across our landscape and drinking up our scarce water supplies can sail over the sea to end up as, among other things, wasteful packaging designed to entice First World consumers.

Richards Bay has a large surrounding unemployed population hoping 'development' will give them jobs. The best

employment-generating growth path is via tourism and diversified small – and medium-sized beneficiating and manufacturing industries. That's what would really be best at the local, provincial and national levels. However, every step along the heavy-pollution path makes the best kinds of development less and less viable. Who wants to enjoy the hospitable holiday climate of Richards Bay before moving on to Zululand's nature reserves, if they get bad gas for a welcome? Richards Bay though, has recently announced it is aiming to become the world's largest dry bulk export harbour, it being number two right now.

Socrates argued that 'the unexamined life is not worth living'. This has never been more true than in our time. We must find ways to turn around this unsustainable, catastrophic economic system – a system which Richards Bay so colossally epitomises.

– Jim Phelps

Jim Phelps is a university lecturer and environmental activist in Kwa-Zulu. n

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Life's a Beach

STARRING

AL KROK

AND

DOUG E. DOGGE

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AL, I MUST TELL YOU ABOUT THIS FLYING DREAM I HAD...



IT'S AMAZING! I'M LIKE LYING IN THIS FIELD RIGHT?



I IMAGINE I'M A CLOUD - ALL FLUFFY AND LIGHT.



THEN SUDDENLY, I'M FLYING! I'M A BIRD, NO, A PLANE! I'M FLYING OVER STELLENBOSCH, NO, PARIS YEAH, PARIS! - THERE'S THE TOWER, THE SEINE AND ALL THOSE TINY LITTLE FRENCH PEOPLE.

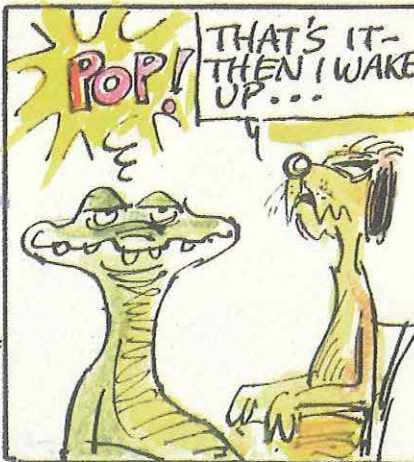


BUT, WAIT.. WHAT'S THAT SMOKE?.. THE ENGINE'S ON FIRE! I'M LOSING ALTITUDE. NOSEDIVE!!

OH BABY! YES BABY YES!



AAAARGH!!



POP! THAT'S IT - THEN I WAKE UP...



I ALSO HAD THIS COOL DREAM ONCE - OF GOING TO HEAVEN... SO NEAR, YET SO FAR, EH DOGGET?

TERRY HERBST'S BISHO LETTERS - PART 1

There are a large number of people in the Eastern Cape who wish they had never heard of, let alone from, citizen Terry Herbst. There are many more who greatly admire his writing skills, courage and tenacity. Full of enthusiasm for the new South Africa, Herbst returned to Port Elizabeth in 1991 after a five-year stay in London. He was encouraged by Nelson Mandela's public admission that there was a great deal of corruption in South Africa, and his call on everyone to play a role in its eradication. Further inspired by Archbishop Tutu's warning that a watch should be kept on the ruling party, Terry decided to do his bit.

He started a personal letter writing campaign to insist on the highest standards of probity and accountability from the government of the Eastern Cape. The tone is sometimes waspish, but, after all, the new, revised code of conduct for public servants does acknowledge the public's right of access to information.

We are not easily discouraged at noseweek, but the record of that ongoing correspondence tests even our steely resolve. But then, too, we ask ourselves: how can something so depressing also be so totally hilarious? Here's an extract - with more from Herbst to follow in future editions!

Where there's *Smoke* there's *Fire*

A TV DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE public purse being plundered in a small Transkei town in 1995 provided the launch pad for my protracted campaign of correspondence with the Bisho administration about corruption, nepotism and theft.

From the comfort of their armchairs, millions of viewers watched in disbelief as the then MEC for Local Government and Housing, Max Mamase (whatever has happened to him?) announced that the administration of Lady Frere had collapsed because of the 'misuse' of public funds.

While this did not appear to have particularly upset the minister, I was outraged, so on 29 October 1995 I wrote to ask how these funds were misused and whether those responsible had been brought to justice.

A month later Mamase's personal assistant, Mrs B Stofile - wonder whether there's a touch of nepotism here? - responded saying my letter had been forwarded to 'the relevant authority' for attention.

After four months of deafening official silence, I sent a reminder and, two months later, a second reminder, which prompted the following reply from Mr B M Mahlangeni, writing on behalf of the permanent secretary, Department of Housing and Local Government, Bisho:

'While the department appreciates your greatest concern about alleged misuse of public funds in Lady Frere, this office in attempting to fully address the situation, requests copies of the detailed data in respect of this problem as identified by you.' (Asking for copies of 'lost' correspondence was to become a favourite ploy for keeping nuisances like me at bay.)

Mr Mahlangeni continued: 'In these premises, you are accordingly requested to

communicate with the Directorate for Urban Local Government as reflected in the enquiries above, and arrange a date in which issues raised in the previous correspondence being requested for more details would be discussed for problem resolution.'

It was clear from this gobbledygook that a long dry season lay ahead: Mamase was now asking me for the 'detailed data' that I (in plainer language) had asked him for six months earlier. And the 'problem' had, of course, not been 'identified' by me, as he now alleged, but by his own minister!

I nevertheless determined to push on. On 10 June I responded: 'If you fully understood my reason for writing, you would not have asked me for 'copies of detailed data in respect of this problem'. I wrote after watching a television programme in which your minister spoke about public funds in Transkei - and in Lady Frere, in particular - being misappropriated. What I wanted to know was whether those responsible had

been arrested and whether they had appeared in court.'

A year after my first letter to Mamase, I wrote to Mr Mahlangeni: 'In organised business circles, no correspondence should have to wait five months to be attended to. Perhaps you might care to let me know the reason for the unseemly delay in attending to my request for information.'

Two months later a letter arrived - this time signed by Z W Ndinisa, Mr Mahlangeni no doubt having been sent on to bigger and better things elsewhere - who informed me that my correspondence had been referred to the Regional Office in Queenstown for 'their urgent attention'.

Five reminders faxed between 11 February and 20 September 1997, resulted in my receiving a copy of a letter addressed to the Queenstown office by Mr Ndinisa, asking to be 'kept abreast of all developments in this matter'.

At this stage it might be pertinent to remind readers that this letter was written 23 months after my original letter asking the minister for details of the massive scam. On 13 October 1997 I wrote to the department asking for the latest developments in the case. Surprise! Less than a week later I had a reply:

'Kindly be informed that the Lady Frere Municipal offices were gutted down by fire and records burnt to ashes. Under these prevailing circumstances, inspection was adversely hampered and the regional office could not proceed with the inspection.'

As far as Bisho was concerned, this letter, signed by Mr Ndinisa, who appeared to have been promoted to permanent secretary, made it clear that the matter was ended.

I wasn't quite finished, though, and



Picture: Hazel Sonn

dashed this off to the department:

'Thank you for your letter of 16 October, which brings to an end a chapter of official incompetence that will be difficult to improve upon. My original letter in this search for information was written two years ago. A quick tally will show that, since then, a simple request from a taxpayer for information about the misuse of funds resulted in no fewer than 16 letters – a monumental waste of time and money, particularly with the disclosure that the information sought by me went up in flames.

I consider this exercise an appalling demonstration of how not to run a government and I despair for the future of the Eastern Cape. It is not surprising that ANC MPL Joe Jordan found it necessary to describe Bisho as a circus. It is, in fact, a five-ring circus, and the laughing stock of South Africa.'


'To my surprise, the office of the MEC replied: 'The matter has been referred to the MEC, and the matter will be taken up.'

Needless to say, there has not been another word from the MEC or his staff. Clearly, no Phoenix is about to rise from the ashes of Lady Frere. – Terry Herbst n

Presidents Mandela and Mbeki have both thanked Terry Herbst personally for his corruption-busting role. But that's about as far as it's gone. Mbeki has since noted that 'sitting in government there are sophisticated thieves continuously seeking ways to misdirect public resources away from the people to themselves'. Mandela has gone further and declared 'the new cadres in all

levels of government appear to be even more corrupt than they were in the previous regime'. The Heath Investigating Unit has its hands full in the Eastern Cape, where it is looking at 22 000 cases of corruption – involving R480-million – in the public service alone.

This year Herbst compiled a selection of the 500 letters he's written to bureaucrats running the country – and their responses – under the title *The Bisho Letters*. It's a hilarious account and devastating indictment of the game of theft, pass-the-buck



PHONDO LWEMPUMA - KOLONI PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINSE OO
 ISERE LENQILA NORLUMENTE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT Y
 WEZINDLU DEPARTMENT BEEGING EN B

Ingqunyiswa Private Bag/Private Bag X0035 Bisho 5608 SOUTH AFRICA

Referent	Unit
Ref No.	Telephone
Versyings Nr. 10/34	0401-95433
	Telex
Imbizo	Facsimile
Exposits	0401-42-13/9
Waw. MBHUSA.	99 5 0445
	16 OCT 1997

Mr. T. Herbst
 5 Saraphil Mansions
 Pearson Street
 Central Hill
 PORT ELIZABETH
 6001

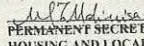
Dear Sir

LADY FRERE TRANSITIONAL LOCAL COUNCIL - ALLEGED MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS - YOUR LETTER DATED 22 AUGUST 1997 REFERS

Kindly be informed that the Lady Frere Municipal offices were gutted down by fire and records burnt into ashes

Under these prevailing circumstances inspection was adversely hampered and the regional office could not proceed with the inspection.

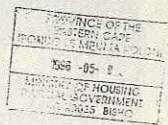
Yours faithfully


 PERMANENT SECRETARY
 HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
(PHONE NO. 0401-95433)

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING

Ref: 10/2/6
 Eng: Mr B M Mahlangeni
 Tel: 0401-99449
 Fax: 0401-9564350

Private Bag X0035
 BISHO
 5608




Mr Terry Herbst
 5 Saraphil Mansions
 Pearson Street
 Central Hill
 PORT ELIZABETH

Dear Sir

MUNICIPALITY OF LADY FRERE : ALLEGED MISUSE OF FUNDS

- Reference is made to your letter dated 2 March 1996 headlined "Misuse of Public Funds".
- While the Department appreciates your greatest concern about alleged misuse of public funds in Lady Frere, this office in attempting to fully address the situation, requests copies of detailed data in respect of this problem as identified by you.
- In the premises, you are accordingly requested to communicate with the Directorate for Urban Local Government as reflected in the enquiries above and arrange a date in which discussed for problem resolution.

Yours faithfully


 PERMANENT SECRETARY : DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

and cover-up being played in the Eastern Cape. None of South Africa's publishers, all desperate to be politically correct, were interested. Undaunted, he published the work himself in a modest edition of 500 copies. They were sold in a week, so he had 500 more printed. These, too, were quickly sold, bringing the title to the top of the Eastern Cape's best-seller list. Copies are available from Fogarty's Bookshop, Walmer Park Shopping Centre, Port Elizabeth. ☎(041) 368-1425.

notes and updates

An update from the culture beat

The New York City school board has officially declared Jewish English a second language. Backers of the move say the district is the first in the nation to recognise Hebonics as the language of many American Jews. Some examples: in Hebonics

• Questions are always answered with questions:

Question: 'How do you feel?'

Hebonics response: 'How should I feel?'

• The subject is often placed at the end of a sentence after a pronoun has been used at the beginning:

'She dances beautifully, that girl.'

GAVIN MCFADYEN reports

- The sarcastic repetition of words adding 'sh' for emphasis: mountains becomes 'shmountains' turtle becomes 'shmurtle'. (mountains-shmountains/turtle-shmurtle)
- These common phrases were translated from 'Standard English' to Hebonics:
 - English: 'He walks slowly.'
 - Hebonics: 'Like a fly in the Vaseline he walks.'
 - English: 'Sorry, I don't know the time.'
 - Hebonics: 'What do I look like, a clock?'

English: 'I hope things turn out okay'

Hebonics: 'You should BE so lucky!'

English: 'I see you're wearing one of the ties I gave you.'

Hebonics: 'What's the matter, the other tie you didn't like?'

English: 'May I take your plate sir?'

Hebonics: 'You've hardly touched your food. What's the matter, something's wrong with it?'

English: 'It's been so long since you've called.'

Hebonics: 'You didn't wonder if I'm dead yet?'

English: 'Anything can happen.'

Hebonics: 'Things are never so bad that they can't get worse.' n

shake-up or shaikdown?

continued from page 9

man at UEC Projects, an Altech subsidiary involved in various defence projects for the apartheid government. He was introduced to the company by his wife, Zerena Mohamed-Shaik, who already worked there as a personnel clerk. Within no time Chippy was smuggling top secret information out of the company's files to the ANC. No matter that it didn't mean a thing to the struggle – it was a great spy coup for Mo.

When, in 1990, the ANC leadership returned from exile to hold their first congress (at UDW) and to negotiate with the old regime at the World Trade Centre, Mo Shaik was put in charge of their security. When it was time for ANC intelligence cadres to be integrated into the existing state intelligence structures, Mo (who qualified as an optometrist at UDW) did the co-ordinating. In the same year Mo found the perfect role for the only brother who had as yet not featured: Shabir. At Mo's suggestion, Shabir Shaik was sent on a mission to Malaysia to raise funds for the ANC.

Shabir became an advisor to the treasurer general of the ANC, Thomas Nkobi. (Nkobi's long-time lover, Gill Marcus, is today a deputy governor of the Reserve Bank.) When Nkobi died, Shabir used funds from Malaysia to establish a trust fund named after him. Little is known about the affairs of the Nkobi Trust, although foreign visitors hoping to do business with South Africa frequently felt inspired to make donations to it.

Shabir's career as fundraiser experienced a small hiccup in 1995 when, for unknown reasons, President Mandela's attorney, Ismail Ayob, wrote to the Malaysian prime minister, Mahatir Mohamed, to inform him that Shabir did *not* represent the ANC.

But, scarcely a year later, Shabir had a new patron, Jacob Zuma, who promptly took him along as his personal advisor on an official visit – to Malaysia!

Shabir also accompanied his friend the minister of public enterprises, Jeff Radebe, on an official trip to Russia. (Which reminds us: Like Mugabe, Radebe's wife, Bridget, too, has diamond interests in the DRC – in the area where the South African UN contingent will be keeping the peace, or so it is said.)

So much for the past.

Today **Shabir Shaik** is still a director of various companies controlled by the Nkobi Trust. Amongst them is Kobihold, which controls both Kobitech, supplier of computerised simulation systems to the defence force, and Kobitel, aspirant empowerment partner in the cell-phone bid.

He also has a new directorship. Remember

UEC Projects, the old defence company that brother Chippy so successfully infiltrated? It has since been sold to French arms supplier, Thomsons, who have cleverly renamed it African Defence Systems (ADS) – and, just as cleverly, appointed Chippy's brother Shabir to its board of directors.

Old spy **Shamin 'Chippy' Shaik** has, of course, moved on. When defence minister Joe Modise was negotiating our weapons programme, Chippy was his right hand man. Now Joe has moved on, but Chippy remains as the government's Head of Defence Procurement. He heads the committee that decides on all our weapons purchases.

Thomson's will be forgiven if they thought that, in their line of business, Shabir's was a very good family connection to have – even if Chippy insists that he recused himself from the meeting at which it was decided to award a good chunk of the R30 billion deal to Thomsons' subsidiary, ADS.

Thomsons clearly have an eye for a man with the right connections and experience: ADS has acquired a black empowerment partner in the form of a company called Futuristic Business Solutions. Directors of FBS are Lambert Moloji (who is former defence minister Joe Modise's brother-in-law) and Tsepo Molai (who, in turn, is Lambert Moloji's brother-in-law). A laugh a minute, isn't it? But on with the Shaiks.

A LAUGH A MINUTE

Younis Shaik, a lawyer, is today head of the Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. In addition, he and Yussuf Surtee – Nelson Mandela's shirt supplier and the Saudi royal family's local rep – are directors of Ipostel, an 'empowered' member of the Cell-C consortium. Younis has also joined various other Party dignitaries on the board of Ubambo, a second 'empowerment' partner in the Saudi-backed bid.

At least Younis has nothing to do with arms dealing, you say? Wrong. The Saudi's, it seems, are determined to win SA's third cell-phone licence – so much so that they've made it a condition of several extremely lucrative arms-for-oil deals: no cell-phone licence, no deals. Which was, one supposes, meant to ensure a no-lose situation for all of them. Communications minister Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri did her best to 'fix' it – but then the judges of the Pretoria high court went and opted for a shake-up rather than a Shaikdown, and have ordered a review of the entire process.

Maybe this crisis situation calls for the talents of the fourth – and main – Shaik.

His Excellency Mo Shaik is today our ambassador in Algiers – and the right man for the job he is, too, because Muslim Algeria

is about to displace Hindu India as South Africa's biggest customer for arms. In fact, the whole of Muslim north Africa is a veritable arms bazaar.

And just across the gulf are America's two great Muslim standbys, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Twenty-five years ago their dream to dominate the Muslim world was embodied in a vast but shady banking empire known as the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). It was set up by Pakistani bankers, funded by the Saudi Royal family – and used by the CIA for various dirty cold-war operations.

BCCI's ultimate mission was to acquire international influence – and a nuclear weapons capability – for its masters. It collapsed some years ago under the weight of intrigue and corruption – before its mission could be accomplished. But the men – and the dream – live on.

Today the Saudis – rather like the Israelis of yore – are frequent visitors to Pretoria, where it is fervently hoped that they will buy some billion's worth of our G6 cannons – the first artillery piece in the world capable of 'delivering' a nuclear warhead. For the sake of the children's fund, naturally.

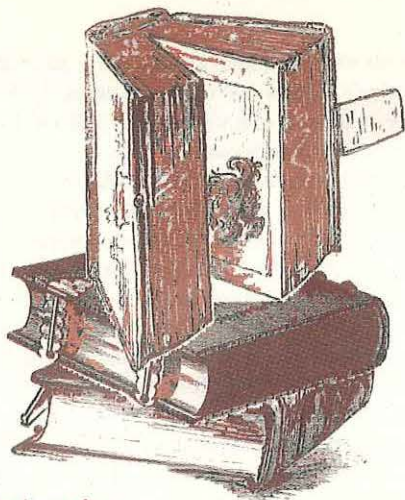
Can the Shaiks and friends in high places still manage to pull off the deal? If they don't, we are told by the *Mail & Guardian*, there could be some nasty questions to answer about a sum of R100 million that the government has already secretly paid out to Saudi influence brokers and as yet unnamed South African 'middlemen' to 'sweeten' the G6 deal. No surprise then, that those old movers and shakers Trevor Manuel and Jeff Radebe have been summoned to try and put right for the Saudis what Ivy did wrong.

Shaik, rattle-n-roll, it's African renaissance time, baby! [To be continued.]

Here are two tasters from our next installment on the subject of black empowerment and related issues:

□ During Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson's visit to SA last year, his advisor Roger Hallhag admitted that 'offsets' are internationally discredited because they are so open to corruption. Why, then, was Sweden persisting with them as part of its arms deal with South Africa? "Lower standards apply in third world countries," he replied.

□ Informal sexual relationships were a feature of the liberation movements' life in exile – and remain both common and very influential in the new government. Not that they were that rare in the 'old' SA. Think only of ... *don't miss our next issue!* n



Reviews by
William Saunderson-Meyer

The Skull Mantra

By Eliot Pattison
Century

THRILLER WRITING HAS MORE THAN its fair share of hack authors. But in this edition we bring you an outstanding debut detective story with a difference by one Eliot Pattison, a writer well worth seeking out. Also featured are four other writers who, although they have a number of books behind them, have largely managed to retain their literary integrity.

To do so is not easy; it is, apparently, analogous to retaining one's innocence after losing one's virginity. One of the great problems with good writers of fiction is that after the first success, the temptation exists to churn them out by formula – and rake in the money from the dotting camp followers.

Pattison's *Skull Mantra* is set in contemporary Tibet, as ruled by the pig-iron hand of China. The unlikely detective is a Chinese police inspector, Shan Tao Yun, who has offended the Communist Party hierarchy in Beijing because of his single-minded indifference to political niceties, and is serving an indefinite sentence in a Tibetan labour camp.

When a headless corpse is found by a prison work gang on a windy Tibetan mountainside, Shan is reluctantly brought into play by the political authorities. He faces an ultimatum to find a politically expedient solution to the murder or else the Buddhist priests in his work brigade will be punished.

This epic tale has great moral resonance. Where a lesser writer may have left one crushed by the apparent hopelessness of the Tibetans' plight, the *Skull Mantra* leaves the spirit soaring with hope at the indomitable will of an oppressed people. A rare item: a book to be sought out and savoured, rather than swallowed in a sitting.

Havana Bay

By Martin Cruz Smith
Macmillan

AS A RULE, ONE SHOULD BE WARY of writers who venture to faraway locations to seek settings for their books. It might be cost efficient in terms of tax deductions for a working holiday, but rarely goes beyond providing anything more than a stage set. Good writing demands an intimate knowledge of the characters' milieu, rather than an exotic backdrop.

Although the weakness of Martin Cruz Smith's *Havana Bay* is this faint hint of the travelogue, similar to John Le Carre's disappointing *Tailor of Panama*, it is lifted above the average by his empathy for his jaded hero, Russian detective Arkady Renko.

This is the fourth novel featuring Arkady, whose life as traced through *Gorky Park*, *Polar Star* and *Red Square* has become steadily bleaker. His beloved Irina has died, a victim of the incompetence of the declining Russian medical system. The militia officers are not paid for months at a time, making his colleagues an easy prey to corruption. Now his best friend, attached to the Russian Embassy in Havana, has died in unusual circumstances.

Renko has always skittered along the edges of depression; now he toys with the plunge to suicide. He is saved from himself by a sudden and frightening immersion into the criminal underbelly of Havana, last outpost of Communism's few remaining true believers.

Cruz Smith writes in a spare, unsentimental style. There are no simplistically happy endings, no easy solutions. It will not detract the slightest from what the *New York Times* rightly called 'a richly intricate mystery', to reveal that Arkady leaves Havana with the case resolved, but his personal life more tattered than before.

Void Moon

By Michael Connelly
Orion

MICHAEL CONNELLY IS ONE OF those American writers on the riches and fame fast-track. Not only has he won an Edgar Award, the Nero Wolfe prize and the Anthony Award, all for novels featuring L.A. detective Harry Bosch, another tortured and complicated hero, but he has a website for the adoring fans. Let this not detract from a talented writer who is not afraid to vary the formula. Instead of Harry Bosch, we have Cassie Black, a former robber of casino gamblers' winnings, who is out on parole and working as a car salesperson.

Working for chump pay and having to endure the petty humiliations that are

heaped on the ex-con become all too much for Cassie. She decides to return to her thieving ways and hits the jackpot. But the trouble is, it's too much money, so much that someone very powerful must be very angry.

Cassie finds herself on the run, with a cold and capable killer on her trail, a killer who is also on the trail of the daughter she has kept secret and protected from her real life.

This is a well-plotted thriller with one of the more interesting female heroines to surface in a long time.

Four Corners of Night

By Craig Holden
Pan

ALSO IN THE TORTURED HERO OEU-vre is Craig Holden's *Four Corners of Night*. Set in a city in America's Midwest, it features two cops who are not only partners but close friends since childhood. A young teenage girl goes missing and with her disappearance the tissue is ripped from the still seeping scar of their joint lives: the disappearance for seven years of the one cop's daughter. This is a harrowing and spell-binding novel, which is in a class of its own.

Blood Rain

By Michael Dibdin
Faber & Faber

BLOOD RAIN IS THE SIXTH IN THE series featuring the lugubrious detective Aurelio Zen, who provides the reader with wonderful glimpses of the Machiavellian politics of Italian law enforcement and the corruption rife in Italian society.

Zen has been sent to Catania in Sicily as a penalty for coming up with the wrong solution for the crimes in the previous novel, *A Long Finish*. Here he comes face to face with the Mafia, an institution in decline but still brutal and permeating every facet of society.

Zen is unwillingly swept up in the case of an unidentified, rotting corpse found sealed in a railway carriage and abandoned on a disused siding. He is pitted not only against the Mafia, but also powerful figures in government. The presence of his daughter on assignment in Catania, a city that lives in the shadow of the smouldering volcano of Etna, provides little solace, as she is sucked helplessly into the intrigue.

Sicily is a place where no-one can be trusted and every move Zen makes is monitored and subtly orchestrated by forces of which he is only dimly aware. The plot cracks along to two shocking and powerful climaxes. *n*

All titles are available in soft-cover editions.

A return to the

BY HAROLD STRACHAN

Classics

MY SISTER POLLY WAS DECLARED bilingual as a student teacher, and thus it came about that she was sent from the Teachers' Training College, Pietermaritzburg, for her first real-life classroom experience, to the Voortrekker Hoërskool vir Seuns. All said *seuns* were 14-ish and somewhat like bags of cement from too much rugby; most were bigger than my sus, who was 19, and some had to shave in the morning before coming to school.

Well, Polly was a free spirit and, given free choice of subject, and not wanting to lay another boring condescension on the lads with another boring rugby story, she decided to give them some credit for budding intellect, and tell them a good yarn from the Classics, with a sort of short comprehension test afterwards.

Goeie môre seuns, says she in her best English Medium Training College Afrikaans, with all the r's pronounced English style with the tongue curled back as in writing.

Goeie môre, says she, *Vandag gaan ek vertel julle ...; er, julle vertel ...; die stowrie van Pandora en haar wonderlike doos*, and all these lads fall upon the floor clutching kidneys, livers, abdominals *ensovoorts* and plead to God for help.

She stands agape and aghast until after 10 minutes or so the head prefect in his gold braided cricket blazer excuses himself from the physics lab and comes in and glowers hideously on the unruly mob, and sits purposefully down *nogal*, so all can see he's going to enforce the gentlemanly thing around here and nobody's going to take the mickey out of a lady just because she's young and, you know, a bit pretty. Sort of. Afrikaners are polite people, by repute.

Welkom, Van Jaarsveld, says Polly. *Ek wou die klas net vertel hoe Prometheus se broer Epimetheus Pandora se doos oopge-maak het, en watter vreeslike dinge hy daar gesien het*. And the head prefect falls down on the ground hugging his insides against bursting, and invoking the Almighty.

You must realise we're getting on for minute 25 or so of a 40-minute lesson by this time and all teaching has stopped in the entire school from the din and tumult in the third-form corridor. The headmaster is one Piet Hofmeyr, related to Jan, no less, and a man of broad opinion. And, dare one

say it, liberal sensibility. He sits in his office and nibbles the end of his fountain pen and thinks man, he's not an examiner from the Training College, and he doesn't want to intrude you know, nor exceed his authority, but after all this is *his* school, and it's falling into anarchy.

He tiptoes into Polly's place where lie all about all these hyperventilating forms. He makes a small, silent, submissive gesture with his hand, and sits down gently at a vacant desk.

Meneer, says Polly. *Ek gaan die seuns net vertel watter lelike dinge uit Pandora se doos uitgevlieg het toe Prometheus se broer dit oopge-maak het*.

Well, a headmaster can't fall about and clutch his anatomy, but he can discreetly wipe his face with his handkerchief, and along the way stuff most of it in his mouth and bite down hard.

Personally, though the family disagrees, I think it's one of the reasons why Polly emigrated to Canada, to Vancouver, as far as possible away from the Quebecois and associated quandaries of multilingualism.

Shame, she never got a chance to deliver the punch line; that the last thing to fly from this box of horrors was Hope. A nice classical touch, that. There's always hope.

So, inasmuch as I feel embarrassed about Barney Pityana and the bloody fool he makes of himself in taking on the media (plural, that is to say, of medium), I should like to remind all citizens, all comrades, all cadres, all fighters for freedom and generally nice *slapgat* folks who never made it into any such category, like *makhewerekhwere*, Senegalese chancers and Mozambiquan dreck, that Hope is always available to all peoplekind, and maybe when B Pityana has read a couple of North American and British newspapers, since he knows English, he will realise what a

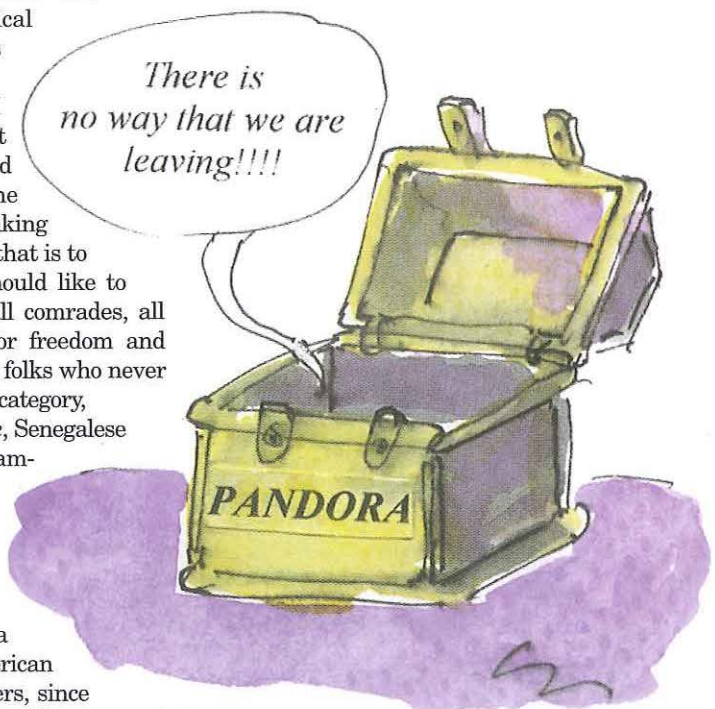
Pandora's *doos* of global derision he has opened for himself, and maybe finally come to grips with what democracy actually means, and a democratic press.

How's that for a declamatory sentence?

Barney's problem, and the problem of so many an old-time party zealot, is that somebody pulled the rug out from under their revolutionary feet, somebody tied their revolutionary shoe-laces together while they weren't looking, and now that they're bloody stuck, their declamation doesn't work. You could pull off an attack on the media (plural) in such a vague generalised way if you had an old-time Soviet Bloc regime behind you, *ou boet*, but you sure as hell can't with our constitution, nor with a democratic human rights system which in your own weird way you seek to use for yesteryear's demagogic purpose.

So. To quote Winnie the Pooh:

*Courage, said he, there's always hope,
Just bring a thinnish piece of rope,
Or if there isn't any, bring
A thickish piece of string.* n



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