THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

AND THE DEBATE ON "RACE RELATIONS", 1929-1958

by

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The ideological impact of developments within the colonial and post-colonial periphery
on the metropolitan centre has frequently been overlooked by scholars and analysts.
The weight of colonial history has survived to the extent that movements of ideas and
political ideologies have usually been seen within a unilinear perspective: generation
within the colonizing mother country and importation and subsequent vulgarization
through the tyranny of distance in the colonized periphery. No specific attention has
been paid to the more complex and subtle process whereby ideas and political practices
have moved back and forth between colonizer and colonized, and this has been reinforced
in the case of British imperialism through the conventional view that British public
opinion remained mostly disinterested in colonies. (1) Thus, the interesting and
important area of ideological interaction, where colonies often served as social
laboratories to test out models of social control for implementation in the metropolitan
core, has inadvertently been missed. (2) A tentative analogy has been drawn between
German colonial practice in Namibia and Tanganyika and the later experience of National
Socialism, but no work has yet been done systematically on the relevance of British
imperial rule in South Africa from the time of the Anglo-Boer War and later
developments in British politics from the early 1930s onwards.

Such a glaring omission is especially amazing when it is realized just how
significant were the relationships between the former British colonial administration
in South Africa and the senior political class centred around the Whitehall and
Westminster Establishment. The creation of South African Union in 1910 was probably
the most momentous success for the British liberal establishment in colonial matters
in the period up to the second world war, and it served as an important model in the
official mind for later political dilemmas of a similar magnitude: not for nothing
was Lionel Curtis, a former Kindergarten member, used as a special consultant by the
Colonial Office at the time of the Anglo-Irish Treaty partitioning Ireland in 1922.
Similarly, in an era of declining Establishment morale in the face of growing
international competition, the authoritarian and patrician arrogance of the former
South African proconsuls injected an element of self-confidence that began to make
itself felt by the time of the rise of fascism in the mid-1930s. (3) While the British
political elite eschewed any open alliance with the fascist states in Europe against
the Soviet Union after 1933, the softer line of appeasement reflected to a considerable
degree the influences of the Germanphilia of such former Kindergarten members as Curtis
at All Souls and Chatham House, Philip Kerr (Marquis of Lothian) at the Rhodes Trust
and Geoffrey Dawson at The Times.

The defeat of this policy with Britain's entry into war in 1939 and the
ushering in of more liberally biassed colonial development programmes with the 1940 and

1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Acts can be seen as representing a decline in direct South African influence on the official Establishment mind. However, there were additional and subtle connections which were to become apparent by the early post-war years as the rise of colonial nationalism and movements for desegregation in the United States raised the issue of "race relations". For, bound up with the authoritarian model of post-colonial social engineering in South African government was also engrained a distinct process of racial partitioning under such labels as "segregation" and "trusteeship". (5) As has been shown elsewhere, much of the origins of these concepts can be traced back to the debate within British imperial administration before Union and the Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission under Sir Godfrey Lagden in 1905. (6) But, equally, this social engineering came to exert a wider influence on what was to become known as the more general "problem" of "race relations". As early as 1913, for example, the Natal segregationist Maurice Evans, following a visit to the United States South, was urging a remodelling of South African governmental machinery away from the metropolitan pattern of Westminster politics. "We have adopted as final a system of government gradually evolved by homogeneous peoples of Western Europe to suit their needs", he complained, "and fatuously hope this will meet the totally different conditions of South Africa ..." What was far more important, Evans suggested, was the urgent need to establish "machinery, within and subject to the parliamentary system, which shall provide for the steady, continuous study of the ever changing relations of the races". (7)

This idea for the bureaucratic control over a manipulative area of "race relations" came increasingly to occupy South African political discussion in the years after the first world war and a path was mapped out that was to act as an important experiment in the creation of a "race relations industry". From the time of the creation of the Native Affairs Commission in 1920, white liberal educators and professionals such as Charles T. Loram and Alex Roberts gained a limited access to governmental policy formation. This was further strengthened by the establishment of informal agencies like the Joint Councils and Bantu Men's Social Centre, through which liberal political ideology could be disseminated amongst the small class of African political leaders – a factor of no small moment, coming as it did in the wake of a period of black political militancy after the 1918 Peace Settlement involving strikes in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth and a campaign of passive resistance to the pass laws. (8)

The significance of the white liberal approach to the area of "race relations" lay in the fact that it was far more evolved politically than comparable developments in British colonial Africa. Ideas of colonial rule all over Africa were becoming increasingly influenced in the 1920s by theories of indirect rule and working through ostensibly "indigenous" tribal institutions. Informal links were established with social anthropology which, under the impact of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown in the 1920s, asserted the functional totality of African cultures and the primary importance of micro-cosmic research through locally based field work. But even with the establishment in 1926 of the International African Institute in London by a group of missionaries and anthropologists with the blessing of the Colonial Office, these links were never especially close. The most that can be said about the empiricist British anthropology that developed increasingly under Malinowski's direction by the 1930s into questions of "culture contact" and social change was that it failed to evolve any coherent theory of colonialism and by-passed central questions of economic exploitation and underdevelopment effectively by default. (9)

In contrast, South Africa by the late 1920s had already begun to move into a much more advanced phase of policy development through its more sophisticated and inter-locking mechanisms of labour exploitation through the compound, the reserve and the location. The foundations of a coherent policy of state manipulation of tribal and ethnic identities on a nation-wide scale were laid by the 1927 Native Administration Act, while state institutionalized refeudalization via the 1932 Native Service Contract Act represented the beginnings of a "Prussian" path of industrialization on the basis of an alliance between mining capital and large-scale capitalist agriculture grouped around large estates. (10) In this context, traditional western liberal concepts of applied rationality and continued progressive reform needed to be rethought in order to fit a different political and cultural matrix.

The Birth of the Institute

The establishment, therefore, of the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1929 marked an important new phase of liberal politics in South Africa. In the earlier 1920s, South African liberals had tended still to make the traditional dichotomy that their counterparts did in the colonial metropolis of London, of objective theory on the one hand and applied political practice on the other. In an era of growing disbelief in the nineteenth century inheritance of biological racism and social Darwinism, liberal values tended to be redefined in terms of a cultural relativity that asserted the whites' "civilising mission" to "lift up" native races on the basis of an internationally bestowed "trusteeship" via the League of Nations. Implicit within this had been the application of the anthropological developments occurring in Britain and France to South African conditions. Through rational and "scientific" study of the "native question" it would then be possible to move beyond the more traditional approach of history, which was seen merely to have exacerbated political conflicts. "... political experience and historical knowledge", J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones argued before the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, "have not given us the panacea for our racial difficulties, but have led us instead into a wilderness where the road is lost in the thick undergrowth of racial pride, passion and prejudice." (11) In contrast, "scientific" study of the issues could be linked to a wider policy of westernization which could "aim at surrounding Native life with all ... those civilizing agencies which enrich our own life - such as educational and religious teaching, economic development, hygienic organizations and governmental control". (12)

By the end of the 1920s, however, a growing political pessimism had begun to set in as it became clear that the Pact Government of Hertzog was set on increasingly resisting liberal influence for some form of enlightened political and economic segregationism which would act as realisable outlets for the aspirations of the African political class. The "black manifesto" election of 1929 ended in another defeat for Smuts's South African Party, through which most English-speaking liberals pinned their hopes for saving the common franchise in the Cape Province, and it began to become clear to some key liberal spokesmen such as Loram and Rheinnalt-Jones that a less overtly political approach was needed. Thus, the founding of the Institute under the nominal directorship of Rheinnalt-Jones was seen as a key means to control some of the more radical political tendencies within some of the local Joint Councils (13), whilst at the same time co-ordinating both liberal research and political activity through one body. Adopting a low-key approach, the Institute sought gradually to build up a credible image as a reliable research body with the government, while funds provided by the Carnegie Corporation and the Phelps-Stokes fund in America and the Rhodes Trust in Britain prohibited any formal political attachment. A membership drive by Edgar Brookes in the course of 1934 added another 113 members, giving a total of some 659, though the overall funds remained in deficit to the tune of £1416. Dependence on overseas sources for funds and the difficulties of establishing an internal political base indicated how necessary it was for the organization to be as "apolitical" and empirical as possible. The Institute was, in fact, for the campaign organizer, Brookes, a "Ministry of Munitions" rather than a "Ministry of War" since it sought to work "in cooperation through and active with sections of South African opinion, liberal or conservative, which are not violently anti colour". (14)

The effect of this initial avoidance of a political standpoint, however, was a _de facto_ acceptance of the logic of governmental segregation policy. It became clear, in the aftermath of the 1936 legislation of the United Party government of Hertzog and Smuts that ended the Cape common franchise and entrenched and systematized the segregationist provisions of the 1913 Land Act via the Native Land and Trust Act, that a more coherent liberal philosophy was needed for South African conditions, if liberalism was to survive at all as a credible political entity. In this context, the Institute in the latter part of the 1930s served as a key focus for liberal political debate and the germination of a notion that at a later date would come to be called political pluralism and which would form a pillar in the Institute view of what denoted the area of "race relations".

The Development of an Institute View

The Institute acted as a crucial institutional intermediary in the inter-war years between the political activists of the "liberal establishment" and the research and academic activities conducted in the four English-speaking universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Durban and Grahamstown. While it had initially been able to involve some liberal Afrikaners from such universities as Stellenbosch and in the Orange Free State at Bloemfontein, the growth of a more militant Afrikaner nationalism by the mid-1930s ended these ties and left such liberal Afrikaner sympathizers with the Institute as there were, such as Leo Marquard, in a degree of cultural isolation. (15) This concentration of ethnic support for the Institute amongst the English and Jewish professional and academic class enhanced the ethnically-based analysis of South African politics and history which had already been engendered by the "culture contact" debate centred around Africa. In the early 1930s there still existed a faint possibility of a development of a more social-democratic and class based analysis as a result of the influences of the Ballingers and their reports on the southern African Protectorates and of a small Fabian Society initiated by Julius Lewin in Cape Town after a visit there by Bernard Shaw. (16) However, Lewin's independent efforts received short shrift from Rheinnalt-Jones (17), while William Ballinger's efforts to gain Institute co-operation in efforts to build up African co-operative societies in the Protectorates and in Orlando township were vetoed by Loram from the vantage point of the United States. (18)

Thus, by the mid-1930s there was little internal opposition within the white liberal grouping for the development of an alternative ideological perspective that can now be seen as a rudimentary form of political pluralism. With the departure of William Macmillan in 1932 from South Africa, the last basis of possible Joint Council resistance in Johannesburg ended, as he was succeeded in the control of it by the far more quiescent Oliver Schreiner, followed later on by the anthropologist Ellen Hellman who was steeped in the culture contact methodology. (19) The way was then opened for a liberal who had been sitting in the wings for the previous twenty years, ever since his appointment as lecturer in Philosophy in Cape Town in 1908, Alfred Hoernle. With a German ancestry and an Indian missionary upbringing, Hoernle was in a strong position to reinterpret the wider crisis of liberal ideology in South African terms. At the same time, being married to the head of the department of anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Winifred Hoernle, he was able to imbibe the debate on the new anthropology, such as that disseminated from Africa. Thus Hoernle's writings were not simply a response to an internal South African situation, though a recent analysis of Hoernle's thought by Martin Legassick is right to stress the significance of this (20), but were also an attempt to achieve a more universal model of a liberally-based "race relations" in an era of growing ethnic polarization.

Hoernle's ideas on liberalism were formed in a cultural context different from those of his English-speaking South African colleagues. In contrast to an almost uncritical and colonial acceptance of an English empiricism and an implicitly Whig view in the continuity of parliamentary institutions, Hoernle's ideas had been shaped by the far more rapid economic and industrial transformation of nineteenth century Germany and the traditionalist counter-attack, under Bismarck's chancellorship, to the onward march of a liberal industrial capitalism. (21) In late nineteenth century England liberal philosophers had approached the question of reformulating liberal values away from the negative laissez-faire view of the night watchman state towards a liberal,Hegelian conception of positive state action in order to realize "the good". (22) This, however, had occurred in the relatively isolated academic cloisters of Oxford, and, for the most part, empirical English political culture treated the ideas of T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet with a considerable degree of suspicion. German liberal thought, in contrast, was formed less in a context of a benign, if slightly bewildered, English tolerance than of strong ideological polarization. As Professor Hinton Thomas has pointed out, attitudes in Germany formed around a vehement Prussian hatred of the "Zivilisations-literat" and "Intellektueller" and a contrastingly affirmative admiration of the "Intellektueller" as a superior type of man. (23) Hoernle's German upbringing and acquaintance with liberalism was shaped by a defensive concern to assert basic values and ideological premises as basic access to political power was denied. (24)

In South African conditions, therefore, Hoernle's thinking was of importance in so far as it tackled the issues thrown up by a rapid industrialization that co-existed uneasily with pre-industrial social groupings rooted in a gemeinschaft culture. While the ultimate liberal objective should always be to seek to transcend such simplistic notions as the "soul of a people", at the same time it would be impossible to ignore these through the equally simplistic applications of individualist free market economics centred around the isolated homo economicus - a tendency all too readily adopted by such South African liberal economists as W. H. Hutt. (25) It was essential, therefore, for a South African liberalism to be reformulated so as to take these local groupings and pre-industrial structures centred on local patriotism into account.

For Hoernle, the Institute represented a key body through which such a reformulation could take place since, as a fact-finding and research enterprise, it was in a strong position to achieve a dispassionate and "synoptic" view of race relations in South Africa which was otherwise lacking. As a philosopher with a strong idealist belief in the independent power of ideas (26), however, Hoernle also recognized that it was essential for the Institute to gain a strong and coherent ethos of its own. This he sought to impress on it after becoming chairman of its executive committee in 1934. The importance of Rheinnalt-Jones's own personal network of political contacts was certainly recognized, but it was also necessary for the Institute not simply to represent itself as a mere platform for the haphazard dissemination of different ideas on the English empirical model. It was no use inviting different churches to give their different addresses on race relations at the meeting of the annual council of the Institute, he wrote to Jones in 1935, for it would negate the "community of interest" which the Institute had to build up. (27)

In the wake of the 1936 legislation, this ethos of the Institute lay, for Hoernle, in mediating between the Government's own proclaimed policy of "trusteeship" and the building up of separate structures of social control over the African work-force through the reserves and liberal claims towards a common and colour blind "humanity". The influence of anthropology had shaped Hoernle's thinking on the independence of distinct racial "groups" which had their own cultural and historical traditions; the point was to prevent a "caste" system developing from these "groups" and instead to ensure that each had opportunities for its own fullest "development":

> I plead, therefore, that where history has committed
> racial groups to living together in the same country,
> every group should be given the opportunity to achieve
> the cultural development of which it is capable.
> There must be no rigid caste system enforcing upon
> whole groups a fixed status in the social structure
> which, by limiting their opportunities of development,
> condemns them automatically to permanent inferiority,
> regardless of innate capacity to develop and assimilate
> the essentials of western civilisation ... To minimize
> friction and tension, not to say antagonism, between
> the racial groups should be a major consideration, if
> the welfare of the Union as a whole is to be promoted. (28)

In essence, this was the adaptation of concepts drawn from the English tradition of political pluralism, represented by Hoernle's mentor at Oxford between 1898 and 1905, Bernard Bosanquet (29), and his friend Harold Laski (30), whereby intermediary social groups between the individual and the state were held to have personalities of their own. In the South African context, however, these groups, for Hoernle, took on a racial mantle. While arguing that race and culture were independent variables, nevertheless for the most part groups in South Africa were defined in racial terms, despite the obvious possibility of individuals born in one racial group imbibing the culture of another. (31)

The point was, though, how was the dominant "race group" in South Africa, the whites, to be prevented from entrenching a "racial caste" society. In an unpublished memorandum of 1941, Hoernle revealed private doubts about the ability of

liberal theory to tackle this basic question of political power. In a thinly
disguised attack on the work of the Institute and other bodies, Hoernle argued that
the "ambulance work" of the liberals, if anything, only strengthened the state's
overall position in maintaining the caste society. The point was a reflection of the
ultimate weakness in Hoernle's life-long belief in the independent force of ideas
alone:

> In the present day South African world, there is not,
> in my opinion, any hope, or prospect, of the
> realisation, under the leadership of the white caste
> cooperating with the Non-White castes, of the
> abolition of the system of racial castes. But I fail
> to see how these liberals who, for this reason, avoid,
> or refuse, or give up, the effort to think out the
> application of liberal principles in some kind of
> social structure without racial castes, are really
> serving the cause of their principles most effectively.
> It seems to me that, thereby, they allow the upholders
> of an illiberal theory and practice to win the contest
> by default. (32)

These unpublished warnings, however, did not detract from the overall
direction of the Institute during the war years and up to the Nationalist victory of
1948. Secondary industrialization and the growing issue of social control in the
urban context provided a fair deal of scope for the Institute's research expertise
to be put to good use behind the Government committee, established under the
chairmanship of D. L. Smit, to investigate social welfare in the urban areas. Since
the early 1930s Rheinnalt-Jones had investigated patterns of house-building in urban
locations and close ties had been formed with the members of Native Advisory Boards
which had originally been established under the 1920 Native Affairs Act. Hoernle,
too, in 1940 took over as chairman of the Alexandra Health Committee in Johannesburg,
which was responsible for running the township that was formally outside the control
of the Johannesburg municipality. These experiences ensured that by 1942, in a joint
pamphlet entitled The Union's Burden of Poverty and which was originally submitted to
the Smit Committee (33), Hoernle and Rheinnalt-Jones had moved a considerable way
beyond that of the liberal position of the mid-1930s. It was increasingly recognized
in both commercial and industrial circles that an increasing section of the African
working class was going to become permanently urbanized, and this had important
implications for the Stallardist assumptions behind urban areas legislation that
Africans were to be in ostensibly "white" urban areas only to minister to the economic
needs of whites. The possibilities of rooting the majority of Africans as a
contented peasantry on the land under various forms of kinship and tribal control
looked remote by the early 1940s and the Institute liberals found themselves at odds
with the Government's chief segregationist apologist on this point, George Heaton
Nicholls, chairman of the Native Affairs Commission. The main aim now was to seek
African urbanization within the context of the establishment of a welfare state in
South Africa. By July 1942 the Institute's executive committee appointed a sub-
committee to work out ways of implementing the aims of the 1941 Atlantic Charter,
signed by Churchill and Roosevelt, to African conditions (34), and it was becoming
clear that Beveridge-type welfare proposals were dominating liberal thinking. In a
context of continued economic growth, therefore, it no longer seemed reasonable to
assume that increasing African urbanization should necessarily imply growing slums.
"... there is no good reason in the world", Hoernle argued, "why an efficient
industrial worker should be a 'proletarian' ... or live under slum conditions. All
through modern industrial countries, the pressure is, and has been for years, to
give the workers a 'humane' or 'civilized' standard of life. With the control of
Nature with which modern science has endowed us, any economic system must be accounted
a failure, root and branch, if with proper planning it cannot do that. The African
industrial workers are as much entitled, in return for efficient work, to live on
this plane as workers of any other race." (35)

This argument for an inherently neutral technology ipso facto to raise
living standards on a colour-blind basis was to be a pillar of post-war liberal
argument. However, it masked over another basic facet to liberal thinking at this
stage - namely, that continued urbanization of African workers actually strengthened

the nascent pluralist arguments of the 1930s. Hoernle's Alexandra Health Committee, for instance, sought to defend the location from encroachments by white property speculators in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg organized through the North East District Protection League. Supporting the right of the African standholders to continue their private occupation in the location, the committee, however, took an inherently segregationist position as a mechanism to avoid, as they saw it, continued "racial friction". The solution was, in fact to isolate the township as far as possible from further "European encroachment" and thus remove the economic basis behind the white speculators' campaign against its removal:

> To check permanently European residential expansion in the single direction of Alexandra Township does not cause irreparable injury to the European interests in general, considering the enormous areas to the north of Johannesburg which are, potentially, available for further close residential settlement, should such settlement really take place on any considerable scale after the war. And, meanwhile, it would put an end, at one stroke, to the danger of mounting friction between Alexandra Township and its European neighbours, whilst giving the Township the security and confidence in its future which it needs in order to pursue a constructive policy for improving itself. (36)

Such a policy of paternalist segregation, however, can be seen as in some respects part of a strategy of securing a firmer local alliance between white liberals organized through the Institute and the class of African standholders and aspirant traders organized in Alexandria through the Alexandria Standholders Protection and Vigilance Association. (37) This, in turn, represented an important potential for political influence in the ANC through the local African bus-owner and businessman in Alexandria, R. G. Baloyi, who was treasurer of Congress. However, on a national basis, by 1942-43 the Institute was coming in for an increasing degree of African political attack for failing to make its political position clear. Between July 1942 and January 1943 the Institute debated a letter sent by Alfred Xuma, President of the ANC, to Rheinnalt-Jones asking for clarification of the Institute's position on the pass laws, the registration and recognition of African trade unions and the Union's "native policy" generally. (38) In response, the Institute's Council eventually came out with a mere reiteration of its previously "apolitical" position outlined in Council statements in 1935 and 1941. Here Hoernle's "synoptic" views on race relations had clearly shown influence as it was affirmed that the Institute should pay "respectful regard" to "the traditions and usages of the various national, racial and tribal groups which comprise the population; and that due account must be taken of opposing views earnestly held". (39) From the support for the status quo within the Council, it was clear that only a small group of Cape liberals led by Douglas Buchanan and Donald Molteno stood for a more political approach, while some of the key Institute supporters, such as Graham Ballenden of the Johannesburg Council, the anthropologist H. P. Junod, D. D. T. Jabavu (anxious for any white liberal support against his Trotskyite critics inside the All African Convention), and representatives of the University of South Africa were able to dictate the dominant line. (40) Isolated as a result of the meeting, Douglas Buchanan (who had acted as advocate for Tshekedi Khama in the early 1930s) sought to mount a lone campaign against ostensibly political manoeuvrings by a small clique centred in Johannesburg, but there was little or no support for his position of merging the Institute with William Ballinger's Friends of Africa. As Hoernle pointed out, the Friends of Africa had little funds and there could at best be only co-operation between the two bodies (41), while Buchanan's hope for "one strong body presenting a united front behind a clear and unambiguous policy" (42) lacked any extensive African political support as Congress began to move towards a more activist campaign of passive resistance to the pass laws. (43)

Thus, by the end of the War, the Institute began to become increasingly isolated from organized African political opinion, and, in the aftermath of the African mine strike and suspension of the Natives Representative Council in 1946, fell increasingly under the somewhat ill defined pressure from within the Native Affairs

Department machinery for reform of native policy in the last two years of the Smuts government. By this time, Rheinnalt-Jones's long hold over the Institute was coming to an end as he settled for a new job as welfare adviser with the Anglo-American Corporation in its new Orange Free State Goldfields. With Quinton Whyte as his successor, policy remained somewhat ill defined (44) and the dominant influence until the UP election defeat in 1948 came from the president, Edgar Brookes. As a Natives Representative in the Senate for Natal and a member of the Native Affairs Commission, Brookes, by 1947, was in a strong position to advise the inexperienced Quinton Whyte on the nature of the Government's reform proposals. These provided for increasing the powers of the NRC, increasing African local government through general and local councils and urban advisory boards within a general framework of political "parallelism". They were, however, suspended until after the 1948 election. (45) Nevertheless, in January 1948 the Action Committee of the Institute was able to state its views in a confidential memorandum which, for the most part, supported the general thrust of UP political reform. "... any policy propounded by the Institute", it declared, "should, in the circumstances, be based on the existing system and be a development of it", though it did see a "danger" in the proposals to extend the powers of the NRC conflicting with the aim of increasing African parliamentary representation. The influence of the pluralist discussion of the previous decade made itself felt in the assertion that "the application of democracy to a multi-racial society with peoples at different levels of development may involve forms not hitherto found necessary". (46)

The UP defeat in 1948, however, led to an immediate suspension of the discussion and it became clear that an alternative role for the Institute was needed to meet a crisis of growing political polarization as the ANC, under Youth League pressure, sought to boycott the institutions of native representation. "Perhaps the Institute's most valuable function", Quinton Whyte weakly declared in February 1949, "is to provide a meeting place for all races and for mutual consultation" (47), though exactly how remained uncertain. As Edgar Brookes temporarily retreated into seclusion from politics, after resigning from the Native Affairs Commission, there was an absence of any firm voice in the direction of Institute affairs. A defensive conservatism overtook the Institute's organ, Race Relations News, as it passed under the influence of Winifred Hoernle. "In industry and trade, indeed in the whole life of our towns and cities", it declared in December 1949, "the ways of the white man must prevail, for no other pattern, at least for the Cape Coloured and the African, is known or available, and the Indian in South Africa must conform to our western ways." (48) Such a defensiveness remained dominant in South African liberal debate until the advent of the Liberal Party in 1953, and the more radical liberal declarations by Patrick Duncan in favour of passive resistance in the wake of the second Nationalist election began to unlock attitudes. (49)

The Longer Term Implications

By the time of the Nationalist victory in 1948, the Institute had established a degree of political credibility as a central pillar of the South African liberal establishment that was to carry over and expand through the great conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s. While this was crucial for internal South African political debate, it was also significant on the wider international plane. In Britain, at least, the South African institute came a full three decades before the establishment of its namesake as an offshoot of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House. In this intervening period many of the concepts and ideas engrained in the Institute's pluralism came to define many British attitudes towards "race relations". While never confronted with the scale and degree of ethnic and racial division as in South Africa, British ideas on race, as they moved from a simplistic discussion on the "colour bar" in the 1930s for the scattered black population of students, seamen and itinerant traders, began to take on some of the pluralist mantle of the Institute. From the time of William Ballinger's departure for South Africa to assist in reorganizing the ICU, South African liberals forged important contacts, via middle-class philanthropists like Winifred Holtby, with British trade union leaders. Arthur Creech Jones, Labour Colonial Secretary in the post-1945 Attlee government, had his first real direct contact with South African conditions through the ICU and consistently took the white liberal standpoint. Anxious for Ballinger to play down his attacks on the Institute liberals, he wrote to Winifred Holtby at the end of 1930

that "we must remove his anti Rheinnalt Jones complex. It would be a pity if support of the Inter-Racial Institute were affected by misunderstanding". (50)

These attitudes continued to dominate opinion on the left in Britain towards South Africa throughout the 1930s as issues of race became more immediately bound up with the struggle against Mosleyite fascism and anti-semitism. Only isolated voices like Leonard Barnes and later Leonard Woolf drew out critical distinctions between the South African path of racial segregationism and the British path of colonial development as ensconced in the 1940 and 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Acts. (51) For the most part, attitudes were defined through bodies like the Fabian Colonial Bureau under Rita Hinden, which consistently took the white liberal view that South African politics would in some way be transformed through economic and industrial development. (52)

This impact of the Institute can be seen as important for it negates the conventional view that the development of the plural model in the analysis of colonial society occurred only in the post-1945 period through the work of J. S. Furnivall in Burma, Boeke in the Dutch East Indies and M. G. Smith's work on the Caribbean. The labelling of "plural" to denote a society of differing independent social and cultural entities, which met only in the economic market place, was already nascent in much of the culture contact anthropology carried on in Africa under the auspices of the International African Institute. Furthermore, Hoernle's ideological systematization of this into a more general pluralist methodology based upon the cultural independence of "race groups" and the possibilities of "total separation" as a means of preserving liberal values in South Africa, foresaw much of the analysis of Furnivall after 1945. (53) Both traditions, too, maintained a basic ahistoricism about them and failed to note the degree of creolization that had occurred in so many colonial societies. (54)

The dominance of the "race relations" view of plural societies composed of multiple ethnic groups continued, however, in the post-war period. In this respect, one of the key defining works in the development of the British Institute of Race Relations perspective, Philip Mason's An Essay on Racial Tension, written for an unofficial Commonwealth Relations Conference in March 1954, internationalized the South African plural perspective. "It is surely profoundly important for the future of the world", the essay concluded, "that each group of races, the fair and the dark, should know what it is the other fears and what it is the other wants. At present, we are not always aware of what our own group wants, let alone the other side." (55) In one key sense, a repetition of Hoernlean "tension management" and a "synoptic" view of race relations.

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Notes

(1)   On this point, see the recent study by Bernard Porter, The Lion's Share: a
        short history of British imperialism (London and New York: Longman Group,
        1975), pp. 348-354.

(2)   In the nineteenth century, one important social laboratory for the Victorian
        political class was Ireland. See George Dangerfield, The Damnable Question: a
        study in Anglo-Irish Relations (London: Quartet Books, 1976), esp. chap. one.

(3)   For the leader of the Kindergarten, Lord Milner, see A. M. Gollin, Proconsul
        in Politics (London: Anthony Blond, 196).

(4)   A linkage that needs much more investigation, using especially the Lothian and
        Curtis Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The general South African
        influence was recognized by A. J. P. Taylor, English History, 1914-1945
        (Penguin Books, 1965), p. 512.

(5)   For a discussion of the ideological context in which these terms were
        formulated, see P. Rich, "The Dilemmas of South African Liberalism: white
        liberals, racial ideology and the politics of social control in the era of
        South African industrialisation, 1883-1948", PhD Thesis, University of Warwick,
        1980; "The Origins of Apartheid Ideology: the case of Ernest Stubbs and
        Transvaal native administration, c.1902-1932", African Affairs, April 1980,
        pp. 171-194.

(6)   Ibid.

(7)   Maurice Evans, Black and White in the Southern States (London, 1913), p. 235.

(8)   Rich, "Dilemmas", chap. six; for the Joint Councils, see the rather inadequate
        treatment by J. W. Horton, "South Africa's Joint Councils: black-white
        cooperation between the two world wars", South African Historical Journal, No. 4,
        November 1972; for C. T. Loram, Alex Roberts and the Native Affairs Commission
        acting in a semi-official capacity to define "native policy", see Martin
        Legassick, "C. T. Loram and South African 'native policy', 1920-1929",
        unpublished Ms, University of Warwick, n.d.

(9)   See, for instance, Wendy James, "The Anthropologist as reluctant Imperialist"
        in Talal Assad (ed), Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (London: Ithaca
        Press, 1973), pp. 41-69. This can be contrasted with the more apologetic
        account by Adam Kuper, Anthropologists and Anthropology: the British School,
        1922-1972, pp. 13-50, 123-149, where the often divergent interests of academic
        specialisation and applied administration are especially emphasised. As a
        number of contributors in the Assad volume argue, however, the empiricism of so
        much British anthropology and its alleged non-involvement in colonial politics
        represented a tacit support for the whole colonial enterprise effectively by
        default.

(10)   M. L. Morris, "The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture:
        class struggle in the countryside", Economy and Society, 5, No. 3 (1976),
        pp. 292-338; Stanley Trapido, "South Africa in a Comparative Study of
        Industrialisation", Journal of Development Studies, 7, 3 (April 1971),
        pp. 309-320.

(11)   J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones, "The Need of a Scientific Basis for South African Native
        Policy", South African Journal of Science, Vol. XXIII, December 1926, p. 80.

(12)   Ibid., p. 90. See also C. T. Loram, The claims of the Native Question upon
        Scientists (Johannesburg: SA Association for the Advancement of Science, 1921),
        for a similar positivist view.

(13)   ArSAIRR, C. T. Loram to J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones, 11 January 1928; J. D. Rheinnalt-
        Jones to T. Jesse Jones, 5 December 1928; Rich, "Dilemmas", pp. 206-7;
        Legassick, "C. T. Loram".

(14)   South African Institute of Race Relations, Fifth Annual Report for the Year 1934,
        Appendix B, Report of the Campaign Organiser on the fund and membership campaign.

(15)   Interview with Julius Lewin.

(16)   Interview with Julius Lewin; ArSAIRR, J. Lewin to J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones,
        1 July 1930.

(17) Ibid., J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones to J. Lewin, 14 August 1931.

(18) Howard Pim Papers, C. T. Loram to H. Pim, 2 December 1929; for an analysis of the Ballingers' efforts at establishing African-run co-operatives in the wake of the collapse of the ICU, see my paper "British Labour and the Imperial Question: the case of William Ballinger and African economic cooperation in Southern Africa, 1929-1943", unpublished paper, Research Unit on Ethnic Relations, University of Aston, 1980.

(19) See, for example, Ellen Hellman, "Culture Contact and Social Change", Race Relations, Vol. XV, Nos.1 and 2, 1948.

(20) Martin Legassick, "Race, Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: the Case of R. F. A. Hoernle", African Affairs, 75, April 1976.

(21) See the introductory memoir by I. D. MacCrone in the posthumous collection of Hoernle's writings, Race and Reason (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1945), for a description of Hoernle's German upbringing.

(22) Though the actual impact this movement had on more general efforts at state-initiated social reform in late nineteenth century England remains a matter of debate. Michael Freeden, in particular, has sought to play philosophical idealism down for "at the very most, Idealism must be regarded as one element, amidst a general progressive movement in ideology, philosophy, economics, science and practical politics. Had [T. H.] Green not existed, liberalism would still have become collectivist and finally overspilled to social reform". The New Liberalism - an ideology of reform (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 17.

(23) R. Hinton Thomas, "German and English Intellectuals: contrasts and comparisons" in En J. Feuchtwanger and Klaus Schulz (eds), Upheaval and Continuity (London: Oswald Wolft, 1973), pp. 83-84.

(24) Hoernle's classical education in the Landesschule at Pforte, near Naumburg on the Saale, was symptomatic of this alienation of the German liberal bourgeoisie from the central institutions of power. Classical education in late nineteenth century Germany was for the bourgeoisie "a means of compensation ... in the sense of a prestige substitute for a socially frustrated group. It served to bolster the self-confidence and to advance the self-awareness of the liberal German middle class in its 'heroic phase'; this class defined the image of the home vere humanus as an image apparently utterly remote from contemporary issues and of purely aesthetic significance" (Walter Jens, "The Classical Tradition in Germany - grandeur and decay" in Feuchtwanger and Schulz, op. cit., p. 70). The connections between this cultural trend and the formulation of Hoernle's ideas could be more fully researched as an interesting exercise in cultural history. Extensive use may be made of his unpublished notes and lectures deposited in the archives of the University of the Witwatersrand.

(25) For Hutt's views in the1930s and his attachment to individualistic laissez faire economics, see W. H. Hutt, "The Economic Position of the Bantu in South Africa" in I. Schapera (ed), Western Civilisation and the Natives of South Africa (London, 1934; rep. 1967), pp. 195-237.

(26) The basis of Hoernle's philosophical idealism was a "revolt against matter" and the materialist conception of natural phenomena. "We take our stand ... on the principle that Nature is what we think her to be, subject only to the proviso that bad thinking can be corrected by better." The implication of this was the triumph of mind over matter and the conception of each mind as a world, a microcosm, a cross section of the universe, as such constantly expanding and shrinking; growing and failing; retaining old, absorbing new experiences; at its best transforming itself, and its world, by an activity which is both creative and logical" (emphasis in original). Matter, Life, Mind and God (London, 1923), pp. 64, 67 and 134.

(27) ArSAIRR BIV file 16, R. F. A. Hoernle to J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones, 25 May 1935.

(28) R. F. A. Hoernle, "The Problems of Race" in Race and Reason, p. 42.

(29) MacCrone, "Memoir", p. XI.

(30) R. F. A. Hoernle, South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit (Cape Town, 1939), p. 135. For an analysis of the impact of Bosanquet's and Laski's influence on English political pluralism, see the stimulating essay by David Nicholls, Three Varieties of Pluralism (London: The Macmillan Press, 1974), pp. 5-15.

(31) "The Problem of Race", passim.

(32) ArSAIRR B17 9c), R. F. A. Hoernle, "Reflections on the Racial Caste Society of the Union", unpublished ms, 1941, p. 4. It is interesting that this short memorandum was excluded from the Race and Reason collection.

(33) J. D. Rheinnalt Jones and R. F. Alfred Hoernle, The Union's Burden of Poverty (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1942); the memorandum was the driving force behind the initial establishment of the Smit Committee, Rheinnalt-Jones Papers, A394, J. S. Smuts to J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones, 14 October 1941.

(34) South African Institute of Race Relations, Minutes of Executive Committee, July 6-9 1942.

(35) R. F. Alfred Hoernle, "The Africans in Urban Areas", The Union's Burden of Poverty, p. 35. After Hoernle's death in 1943, Rheinnalt-Jones seems to have moved the Institute into a more overtly Beveridge-type welfare programme. J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones, "Social Security and the Non European", Race Relations, Vol. XI, No. I, 1944.

(36) Alexandra Health Committee, The Future of Alexandra Township, p. 27.

(37) Rheinnalt-Jones Papers, Urban African Administration file, 1942: L. M. Povall, Acting Secretary, to Professor Hoernle, 13 October 1942, enc. Memorandum by Alexandra Standholders Protection and Vigilance Association. The committee sought freehold land rights and freedom of trade as its central objectives.

(38) ArSAIRR, Policy, A. B. Xuma to J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones, 1 July 1942. By this time Xuma had become disaffected from the Institute liberals on the Alexandra Township issue as he had resisted the initial establishment of the Alexandra Standholders Committee which had been suggested by the Administrator of the Transvaal on the grounds that it would force the Alexandra freehold standholders back to the same status as a location advisory board. Unlike other African urban locations, the Alexandra standholders enjoyed a limited degree of political influence via the Alexandra Health Committee, which Xuma wished to see widened from its unelected status to one where there were nine elected African members. However, the Committee of which Hoernle was chairman was seen as acting in the interests of the Transvaal administration and its policy of establishing a white board of control over the township. Pressure for boycotting the Health Committee had come from the more radical section of opinion in the township and Xuma argued that the only way he could restrain this was through hoping for an eventual widening of its membership. "[The Committee] is only tolerated for the time being", he warned, "because there are law abiding and patient people among the standholders of Alexandra Township who have constantly pleaded with that large section of ratepayers who suggested boycotting the committee and refusing to pay rates as a protest against taxation without representation" (A. B. Xuma Papers, ABX 410614, Representation Made by A. B. Xuma on behalf of a Deputation of Alexandra Township Standholders to the Transvaal Administrator, General J. J. Pienaar, June 14 1941, pp. 3-4). The failure of the Health Committee to be widened and its campaign for an effective policy of urban segregation as a means of keeping the township in existence against a municipal campaign in Johannesburg for its removal can thus be seen as an important factor behind the wider ANC breach with the Institute in 1942-43.

(39) ArSAIRR Policy 1943, J. D. Rheinnalt-Jones to A. B. Xuma, 9 April 1943.

(40) South African Institute of Race Relations, Minutes of the General Annual Meeting, January 13, 14 and 15 1943. Representatives from the University of South Africa threatened to leave the Institute if it became a "political" body, while Rheinnalt-Jones warned that its status under the Companies Act might be affected.

(41) ArSAIRR Policy 1943, short memorandum by R. F. A. Hoernle on correspondence with D. Buchanan, n.d. Hoernle's letter containing the statement was hand-written on 25 January 1943; see also the handwritten "Points on Buchanan Correspondence", 15 May 1943, where Hoernle frankly confessed that "I feel degraded by being linked with WGB [William Ballinger]. After years of effort on my part I am now convinced that WGB does not understand team work and hasn't the moral basis for it. Nothing will induce me to try again."

(42) Ibid. D. Buchanan to R. F. A. Hoernle, 2 and 6 February 1943.

(43) Peter Walshe, <u>The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa</u> (London: C. Hurst and Co, 1970), pp. 312-314

(44) Whyte's ideas seemed to be based upon a half-hearted acceptance of Hoernle's threefold formula of assimilation, parallelism and total segregation. "Men of liberal spirit", he concluded, "if they are to be realistic and practical and not merely to wander aimlessly in the desert of arid speculation, cannot align themselves today with any one of the more clearly defined policies." <u>Apartheid and Other Policies</u> (SAIRR, 1950), p. 20 - a return in one sense back to the atheoretical empiricism of the early 1930s before Hoernle's appearance as a key institute figure.

(45) For a discussion of these reform proposals, see my article "Liberalism and Ethnicity in South African Politics, 1921-1948", <u>African Studies</u>, 35, 3-4, 1976, pp. 229-251.

(46) South African Institute of Race Relations, Memo RR 2/48, Consideration of Proposals Regarding Natives Representative Council (marked "private and confidential"), p. 4.

(47) <u>Race Relations News</u>, Vol. XI, No. 2, February 1949, p. 12.

(48) <u>Race Relations News</u>, Vol. XI, No. 12, December 1949.

(49) For Patrick Duncan's contribution to the radicalization of South African liberalism in the 1950s, see Tom Lodge, "Patrick Duncan and Radical Liberalism", unpublished seminar paper, University of York, 1976. This paper attacks the view by Martin Legassick of liberalism acting in the South African context either as a monolithic "agent of social control" or else a marginalised peripheral phenomenon of no political significance: "Liberalism, Social Control and Liberation in South Africa", unpublished paper, University of Warwick, n.d.

(50) Winifred Holtby Papers. A. Creech Jones to W. Holtby, 25 November 1930.

(51) Leonard Barnes began to reformulate his ideas on imperialism in a Marxist direction in the early 1930s on his return from South Africa. Whilst most attention on the left was being directed towards fascism in Europe, for Barnes "the Afrikaner social system" represented "the extreme outrage against humanity": a view that began to be widely felt in left-wing circles in Britain only by the late 1950s. See Leonard Barnes, Unpublished Autobiography, School of Oriental and African Studies. Among other writers who had lived in South Africa, W. M. Macmillan left in 1932, feeling that the country should be held up as "the warning" (WH Papers, W. M. Macmillan to Winifred Holtby, 27 April 1932). After visiting the West Indies, where he published a book, <u>Warning from the West Indies</u>, in 1936, Macmillan increasingly drew attention by the late 1930s to the divergent paths between British colonial policy and the trends in southern Africa. See, for example, his important pamphlet <u>Democratise the Empire: a policy for colonial change</u> (London: Kegan Paul, 1941) where arguments are raised against the continuation of the indirect rule policy on the analogy of the South African reserve system. "The South African fashion of Reserves has its counterpart in the policy that would fain keep other of the African peoples unspotted from the modern world" (p. 37). This argument is picked up in a less original form by Leonard Woolf by the time of the important collection of Fabian essays of 1945. See Leonard Woolf, "The Political Advance of Backward Peoples", in Rita Hinden (ed), <u>Fabian Colonial Essays</u> (London, 1945), pp. 85-98.

(52) C. J. Sansom, "The Fabian Colonial Bureau and Southern Africa, 1940-1955", in <u>The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries</u>, Volume 10, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, Collected Seminar Papers, No. 25, p. 2.

(53) J. S. Furnivall, "Some Problems of Tropical Economy" in Rita Hinden, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 161-184.

(54) This is the central objective behind the illuminating study by Edward Braithwaite of creolization processes in Jamaica under the impact of a slave society: <u>Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820</u> (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971).

(55) Philip Mason, <u>An Essay on Racial Tension</u> (London & New York: RIIA, 1954), p.139. The essay was a product of a specialized interest in "race relations" that commenced at Chatham House in 1952. The essay was written in August 1953 and

discussed at an unofficial Commonwealth Relations Conference in March 1954 at Lahore, Pakistan.