

BACKGROUND BOOKS

SOUTHERN AFRICA

What was Southern Africa like before the current protagonists arrived on the scene? Who lived in the area now dominated by the Republic of South Africa but consisting also of Namibia (South West Africa), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and independent Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland?

Brian Fagan and Roland Oliver in **AFRICA IN THE IRON AGE** (Cambridge, 1975) briefly sketch the evidence for the Bushmen as the original inhabitants and describe the emergence of early Iron Age African civilizations at sites established by Bantu groups migrating southward. Prehistory figures also in the early chapters of the basic **OXFORD HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA** edited by Leonard Thompson and Monica Wilson (Oxford, 1969-71). In Vol. I, subtitled **South Africa to 1870**, the authors show African hunters and herders arriving first in what is now known as South Africa, followed considerably later by the first Cape Town Dutch colonists in 1652. (Today's Afrikaners insist that their forebears arrived first.)

The focus of Vol. II of the Oxford history, subtitled **South Africa, 1870-1966**, is the peace imposed by Britain on the Boers and its failure to create the basis for the development of a multiracial society. Much of the background to this story is in the letters, resolutions, press statements, and other "raw materials" that fill three volumes of **FROM PROTEST TO CHALLENGE: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964** edited by Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter (Hoover, 1972-74).

Professor Carter's own book, **THE**

POLITICS OF INEQUALITY: South Africa Since 1948 (London: Thames & Hudson, 3rd ed., 1962) is a detailed account of the crucial period after the National Party came into office. Political groups examined include the opposition as represented by the United Party, the Torch Commando (originally the War Veterans Action Committee), Labour, Liberals, Union Federalists, Conservatives, and non-European organizations.

Whether in history, politics, economics, sociology, or literature, the pervasive theme in writings about Southern Africa is race relations.

In contrast to the many largely polemical works, several studies help to illuminate South Africa's black and white politics. One is Leo Marquard's **THE PEOPLES AND POLICIES OF SOUTH AFRICA** (Oxford, 4th ed., 1969, paper), a succinct and thoughtful introduction to parties and parliament, trade unions, and economic interest groups. Another is T. Dunbar Moodie's **THE RISE OF AFRIKANERDOM: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion** (Univ. of Calif., 1975). Moodie makes clear the relationship between the Afrikaner's Calvinist theology and the "civil religion" on which the modern South African state is founded.

South Africa is the wealthiest state in Africa. Its economy dominates the region. D. Hobart Houghton in **THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY** (Oxford, 3rd ed., 1973) discusses the rich agricultural and mining resources, the impressive industrial boom, and the rural/urban, black/white, and other imbalances and inequities of a diversified and growing economy subject to powerful

internal and external constraints.

Since 1948 the state itself has emerged as a major investor. Foreign private investment has been essential, however, in providing both capital and technology. The controversial argument that U.S. government pressures on American firms can influence the South African regime is made in a new book, **WHITE WEALTH AND BLACK POVERTY: American Investments in Southern Africa** by Barbara Rogers (Greenwood, 1976). Practices of U.S. firms in South Africa are aired in the September 1976 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings, **U.S. POLICY TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA**, available free from the Committee.

South Africa's relations with its neighbors are subject to considerable change. *Washington Post* correspondent Jim Hoagland received a Pulitzer Prize for reporting that led to his readable **SOUTH AFRICA: Civilizations in Conflict** (Houghton Mifflin, 1972). He sees little hope for heading off a violent confrontation with militant new nationalist regimes in the neighboring black states.

Mozambique, most militant of the bordering states, still depends on South Africa for jobs for its emigrant laborers and for management of its ports and railways, finance and markets, and its giant Cabora Bassa hydroelectric project. Eduardo Mondlane, the American-educated anthropologist who launched Mozambique's nationalist movement, was assassinated in 1969. His legacy includes **THE STRUGGLE FOR MOZAMBIQUE** (Penguin, 1969, paper), his account of the FRELIMO movement, guerrilla war against the Portuguese, and involvement with the Republic of South Africa.

Richard Stevens' **LESOTHO, BOTSWANA, SWAZILAND** (London: Pall Mall, 1967) describes the history and

current situation of these three weak states created by 19th-century treaties with the British that served to avert Afrikaner encroachments. Botswana has sought to use its mineral resources to reduce its economic dependence on South Africa; Lesotho, poverty-stricken and completely encircled by the Republic, resists the South African giant as best it can; conservative Swaziland, with its casino and sales of *Playboy* magazine, has catered to the demands of South African whites for pleasures forbidden at home.

The story of white Rhodesia's decolonization and likely emergence as independent black-run Zimbabwe is still being written. Former U.S. Ambassador to Zambia Robert C. Good, in **U.D.I.: The International Politics of the Rhodesian Rebellion** (Princeton, 1973), provides a scholarly account of the Rhodesian white minority's seizure of independence in 1965 in defiance of Britain and the world. African impatience with both British "liberalism" and the Ian Smith regime is summed up in Eshmael Mlambo's **RHODESIA: The Struggle for a Birthright** (London: Hurst, and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1972, paper).

Little-known Namibia with its vast deserts, sparse multiracial population, and history of German, then South African, occupation is nearing political adulthood and possible strife. No definitive book on this country has been written. Among lesser studies that express black African aspirations are **A DWELLING PLACE OF OUR OWN: The Story of the Namibian Nation** by Randolph Vigne (London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1973) and **NAMIBIA '75: Hope, Fear, Ambiguity** edited by Jorden Lissner (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1976).

The complex societies of Southern Africa, with their mixtures of class and

race distinctions, tradition, and modernization, have generated a rich sociological literature. One sociologist who maintains that Afrikaner political rule is likely to prevail for some time is Heribert Adam. In **MODERNIZING RACIAL DOMINATION: The Dynamics of South African Politics** (Univ. of Calif., 1971, cloth; 1972, paper) he argues dispassionately that increasing class differences within Afrikaner society will bring evolutionary change, avoiding Armageddon.

Novelist, biographer, Christian militant, and political agitator Alan Paton in **SOUTH AFRICA AND HER PEOPLE** (London: Butterworth, 1970) pleads for a de jure multiracialism based on a nationalism transcending racial and ethnic conflicts. His book also provides an appealing portrait of the human and physical splendors of the vast veldt, the Karoo Desert, and the golden coastal sands. Two other important books, both by men of religion, are **DISCARDED PEOPLE: An Account of African Resettlement in South Africa** (Penguin, 1972, paper) by Cosmas Desmond, and **BANTU PROPHETS IN SOUTH AFRICA** (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1961, paper) by Bengt Sundkler. Father Desmond is a white Catholic priest currently under house arrest. His book, which is banned in South Africa, is a systematic denunciation of Pretoria's "homeland" effort. Sundkler examines the proliferation of separatist churches as Africans sought to reconcile white oppression

with religious promise.

In South Africa's prolific literature as in its troubled politics, glimpses of the future as well as the tormented past and present abound. Alan Paton's 1948 novel, **CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY**, the story of a rural African preacher who seeks his missing son in sinful Johannesburg, won world renown. The roster of talented writers includes the late Chief Albert Luthuli, Ben Jacobson, Bessie Head, Peter Abrahams, playwright Athol Fugard, Nadine Gordimer, poet Dennis Brutus, Laurens Van der Post, Richard Rive, Alex La Guma, poet Oswald Mtshali, Ezekiel Mphahlele, and Luandino Vieira, among others. Two collections that provide an introduction to some of their writing are out of print but available in most libraries. Editors Jack Cope and Uys Krige, in **THE PENGUIN BOOK OF SOUTH AFRICAN VERSE** (Penguin, 1968, paper), assemble translations from Afrikaans and several African languages, as well as English-language poetry. All sing the love of the fiercely contested land. Nadine Gordimer, herself a gifted novelist, and Lionel Abrahams edited **SOUTH AFRICAN WRITING TODAY** (Penguin, 1967, paper), a selection of short stories by writers of both races, dealing mostly with life in the cities. Out of their harshness and bitter humor comes a sense of a society being born—Black Africa's first completely urban society, spawned by the apartheid laws that sought to deny its existence.

EDITOR'S NOTE. *Comments on many of these books were provided by Galen Hull, a researcher with the Southern Africa project of the African-American Scholars Council, and Aaron Segal, program manager for International Science Studies, the National Science Foundation and co-author, The Traveler's Africa (Hopkinson & Blake, 1973). We are indebted also to Patrick O'Sheel, political counselor in the American Embassy, Republic of South Africa, 1965-69; and Africanists Absolom L. Vilakasi, professor of anthropology at American University; Pauline H. Baker, who has made two Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored research trips to Southern Africa; and John Purcell, Fellow, the Wilson Center.*