

Book Reviews and Notices

TO BIND THE NATION: SOLOMON KADINUZULU AND ZULU NATIONALISM 1913–1933

by NICHOLAS COPE

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1993, xviii + 302pp. illus. maps, R59,95 (soft cover).

The reigns of the Zulu kings from Shaka to Dinuzulu are well known to readers of Natal history, but on the period between Dinuzulu's death in 1913 and the rise of the modern Inkatha movement there is a big gap in the literature accessible to the reading public. The research on this era is buried in theses, research papers and learned journals. The University of Natal Press must be congratulated therefore on publishing Nicholas Cope's doctoral thesis on a vital, yet neglected period in our history.

To bind the nation is a major contribution to our understanding of Dinuzulu's son and successor as 'unrecognised' king of the Zulu, Solomon kaDinuzulu, and of events in Natal and Zululand between 1913 and 1933. Nicholas Cope has produced an admirable and intriguing book which provides us with valuable insights into the deep-rooted causes of the conflict which has racked Natal and South Africa in the recent past. Cope is sensitive to these connections, but firmly declares that 'it is to history that this book is committed'. This well-written book is based on extensive and meticulous archival research and is a 'quality' publication. Its merits were recognised when *To bind the nation* received the 1993 CNA *Debut* Award for English writing.

Solomon was not born in Zululand, but on the island of St Helena, where his father was in exile during the 1890s. He received an 'English' and Christian upbringing, though with little formal schooling. His succession to his late father's officially abolished royal title in 1913 was controversial, but ultimately he was widely accepted by both traditionalist and modern Zulu people. What Solomon failed to achieve, although he came very close at times, was to get the Union Government to formally recognise him as King of the Zulu. This was his life's ambition which also encompassed a deep desire to heal rifts within Zulu society and to 'bind the nation'.

Cope sympathetically brings the sadly flawed character of Solomon to life, but this is much more than a biography, it is a rigorous examination of the social, political and economic history of a period of great divisions in Natal and Zulu society. Cope's narrative moves smoothly between tracing Solomon's personal, matrimonial and political actions, and exploring the broader social and economic context in which his life was set. He paints a fascinating portrait of a South Africa where Africans suffered considerable repression and

social dislocation, but not yet the great humiliations of apartheid. The Zulu had been drawn into the broader industrial society as migrant workers and in the rural areas they had lost much of their land to white agriculture, so their social structures and traditions were under great strain. The 'reign' of Solomon spanned a time of rising trade union activity, with the foundation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), and of black middle-class political activity. Solomon became involved with both trade union and middle-class movements, to the alarm of the white authorities and the Natal press.

Solomon was dependent on the Union Government and yet the more he furthered its interests, the more he alienated himself from sections of his followers. Cope provides an intriguing early example of this. During the First World War, Louis Botha was desperate for labour to support the Union's war effort in Europe. Africans were recruited from all over the Union to serve, unarmed, behind the front lines. The Government thawed towards Solomon as the Chief Native Commissioner realised that here was a figure with the prestige to bring in thousands of Zulu recruits. Solomon was allowed considerable freedom in undertaking political and traditionally kingly activities, but he failed to increase recruitment. The loss of the troopship *Mendi* with hundreds of African lives was too well known.

Also intriguing were Solomon's dealings with British royalty. In 1925, Edward, the Prince of Wales, visited South Africa and Solomon, with tacit official approval, led the Zulu nation to the great *indaba* at Eshowe and held important private interviews with the prince. Afterwards there were persistent rumours that the prince had ratified his position as king. The officials of the Native Affairs Department, many of them Natalians schooled in the Shepstone tradition, were generally hostile to Zulu royal claims and all Solomon's endeavours were thwarted. Thus when the Governor-General of the Union, the Earl of Athlone, arrived in Eshowe five years later, Solomon was in a truculent mood and disrupted the proceedings at the *indaba*. Solomon was also very drunk and the solemnity of the meeting between the representative of the British Crown and the Zulu 'king' and people degenerated into a confrontation with farcical overtones.

One of the crucial events of Solomon's reign was the founding of the first Inkatha Zulu cultural movement in 1924. The name was taken from the 'sacred coil of the Zulu nation' which the British had destroyed during the Anglo-Zulu War. Inkatha's purpose, as symbolised by the original coil, was 'to bind the nation'. It was essentially an initiative undertaken by educated middle-class *kholwa* leaders and chiefs close to the Zulu royal family. The movement was a reaction to the stresses resulting from land loss and urbanisation. Inkatha was an ideal vehicle for Solomon and it became very influential, although it was not well administered. It collapsed shortly after Solomon's death, its last action having been the campaign to erect the Shaka memorial in Stanger. This project, and Inkatha itself, became enmeshed in corruption and financial mismanagement which reflected on Solomon and which discredited the cause of kingship.

Solomon died in his early forties after a tragic decline in political authority, mental stability and after suffering from alcohol-related illnesses. The legacy of Zulu kingship lived on, although there is now an even greater need to 'bind the nation' in the broader context.

GRAHAM DOMINY

[Edited version of a review first published in the *Natal Witness*.]

NOTHING REMAINS BUT TO FIGHT: THE DEFENCE OF RORKE'S DRIFT, 1879

by IAN KNIGHT

London, Greenhill Books, 1993, 167 pp. illus. maps, £19.95.

The defence of Rorke's Drift on 22–23 January 1879 has long established itself as one of the best-known actions of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. Popular perceptions of the gallant stand by an outnumbered British garrison against overwhelming Zulu odds have been kept alive by numerous dramatic retellings and by evergreen films like *Zulu*. Tourists still flock to the scene of the battle, where they are now better served than ever before by the Natal Museum Services's excellent displays and exhibits. Archaeologists assiduously probe the site, and historians continue to debate and re-interpret the event. Among the latter, few are better known than Ian Knight. He has written extensively on the Anglo-Zulu War, and has regularly been reviewed in *Natalia*. Two of his latest books, *Brave Men's Blood* (1990) and *Zulu* (1992) have been highly acclaimed.

Zulu, which was concerned primarily with the battle of Isandlwana, also contained a sizable section on Rorke's Drift. This was really inevitable, since the action at Rorke's Drift was in effect a continuation of Isandlwana and the fighting down the Fugitives' Trail. The opportuneness could be questioned, therefore, of Knight's bringing out a similar book so close on the heels of *Zulu*. For in *Nothing Remains but to Fight*, he has had of necessity to cover much of the same ground, sketching the background to the war, and following events from Isandlwana over Fugitives' Drift to the isolated garrison at Rorke's Drift.

Yet it must be accepted that, if Knight's latest book is to stand on its own, the background has to be painted in, for all that it might be over-familiar to many readers. In any case, Knight has tailored the introduction to fit the theme. Besides covering the advent of the war and the opening stages of the campaign, he also describes the region itself, its white settlers and traders, and the nature of the Zulu kingdom. Moreover, it is clear that Knight's comprehensive treatment of the battle itself is now the best available. He marshals the latest archaeological findings and scholarly interpretations, welds them to the vivid contemporary accounts which he quotes to great effect, and imparts immediacy to the whole through his own observations, which are based on his personal familiarity with the site, terrain and climate. And in a welcome departure from previous popular accounts of the battle, he rescues the Zulu from the anonymity to which they are habitually consigned, and in his thorough treatment of their strategy and tactics puts them on an equal footing with the British.

Certain additional features increase the value of this book. Knight closely describes the participants, both white and Zulu, and fleshes them out as individuals. In the process, he provides much unfamiliar information. Not the least fascinating part of the book is the chapter entitled 'Awards and Sequals' [sic]. In it, he not only tells the subsequent story of Rorke's Drift up to the present, but follows the careers of both defenders and attackers, many of them sad anti-climaxes. And in a most valuable discussion he shows how conflicting popular perceptions of the battle have been in a process of continuous development, whether one considers accounts in the press and journals, personal reminiscences (both British and Zulu), paintings or films.

The illustrations undoubtedly add to the significance of this book. On the

strength of Knight's earlier publications, one had expected the illustrations to be comprehensive, and indeed they are. But here he has gone beyond what is merely necessary. His assiduous picture-research has unearthed many unfamiliar images, and numbers of the protagonists spring into unexpected life as their faces are at last revealed. His use of contemporary maps and diagrams is effective, while present-day photographs of the site, archaeological digs and artefacts all aid our imaginative grasp of the battle and those people, places and things connected with it. Appendices, bibliography and index round off a very satisfactory production. It will not be easily superseded and, in its comprehensiveness and balance, decidedly outclasses its most recent competitor, James Bancroft, *The Terrible Night at Rorke's Drift* (1991).

JOHN LABAND

FEARFUL HARD TIMES: THE SIEGE AND RELIEF OF ESHOWE 1879

by IAN CASTLE AND IAN KNIGHT

London, Greenhill Books and Pennsylvania, Stackpole Books, 1994. 256 pp., illus., maps and plans, hardcover. SA price not yet available.

Ian Knight is perhaps the best-known popular current writer on the Anglo-Zulu War and probably the most prolific. In this study of the unglamorous siege of Colonel Pearson's column in Eshowe he is joined in authorship by Ian Castle, a fellow student of the conflict of 1879 and a specialist in uniforms and weaponry. Both are request visitors to the battlefields of KwaZulu-Natal and their work brings together complementary views and intimate knowledge of the terrain and of the sources, both in the United Kingdom and in South Africa.

Fearful hard times is primarily a narrative account of the events surrounding the siege of Pearson's column in Eshowe during the Anglo-Zulu War and the attempts of Lord Chelmsford to relieve the force. On the day of Isandlwana Pearson gained a victory over a Zulu *ibutho* at the Nyezane River, but was then pinned down without support in the KwaMondi mission station for seventy-two days as a result of the collapse of Chelmsford's central column. Castle and Knight give a fairly detailed background to Pearson's campaign and provide much new information on the events in and around Eshowe during the siege and during the advance of the relief column in April 1879. The authors state in their introduction that the Eshowe campaign is one of the lesser-known aspects of the Anglo-Zulu War and they have set out to remedy this deficiency. They make liberal use of unpublished diaries and reminiscences of British participants, but do not neglect the Zulu side of the story, despite the relative lack of information on the strategy adopted by King Cetshwayo and his generals around Eshowe.

The authors also venture beyond the narrative to offer some context on the rigid class divisions within British society and its influence on codes of conduct within the army. The aristocratic Dawnay brothers, one a regular officer, the other merely a 'gentleman adventurer', secure plum appointments with Chelmsford's troops because of their social connections. Lt. Davison, who died of disease during the siege, is extensively cited and one of the grimmest aspects of the siege is revealed in his diary, namely the frequent courts martial and floggings of the troops by Pearson. The writers tend to allow incidents such as these to speak for themselves, but they do point out how the merry hunting-sporting attitude of the British troops at the outset of the campaign changed

under the impact of the heavy casualties at Isandlwana. No longer were the Zulu wounded so chivalrously regarded; they were hunted down or left to die by the vengeful and nervous imperial and colonial troops and their African auxiliaries.

Castle and Knight have uncovered and presented a wealth of new or little-known information on this campaign, which, despite being a 'sideshow' nevertheless exerted a major strategic influence on the conduct of both sides during the two-and-half month siege. The book is well illustrated with unusual photographs and the enthusiast interested in campaign details can follow the course of events on Ian Castle's carefully drawn maps. Unfortunately, the lurid dust cover suggests that the book is a modern version of a 'Boy's Own' imperialist adventure story rather than the more serious and reflective work that it truly is.

GRAHAM DOMINY

RECEDED TIDES OF EMPIRE: ASPECTS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF NATAL AND ZULULAND SINCE 1910

by BILL GUEST and JOHN M. SELLERS

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1994, xvi + 316 pp. illus. maps, tables. R52,95.

During the last few decades there has been a considerable amount of research done on the prehistory and colonial past of the Natal and Zululand region. This research is reflected in the number of journal articles and monographs that have appeared, making the region prior to the twentieth century one of the better known in southern Africa. Few monographs, however, have appeared on its history in the twentieth century, while those which have been published have tended to be political rather than historical studies, with the emphasis in recent years being on the violence racking the region. While there have been journal articles on aspects of twentieth century Natal's social and economic history, this remains virtually a virgin field as far as monographs are concerned. *Receded tides of empire*, therefore, goes some way towards filling a significant gap.

Although not officially part of a series, *Receded tides* can be seen as a second volume to the important collection of essays on social and economic history in colonial Natal edited by Guest and Sellers in 1985, *Enterprise and exploitation in a Victorian colony: aspects of the economic and social history of colonial Natal*. Like its predecessor, this volume does not attempt to offer a complete overview of the social and economic history of the region in its chosen period — at this stage this would be impossible because of the gaps in current research. It offers instead a series of essays, each one giving an analysis of a specific theme and written by a scholar or scholars currently researching the particular topic. Inevitably this means that the editors had to rely on contributions which highlight only those aspects of the region's history that have been researched. Because of this, the reader is left with only a partial knowledge of developments, while important regions within Natal and Zululand are ignored. As far as the latter aspect is concerned, the only regions covered specifically in the volume are northern Natal, the sugarbelt and KwaZulu; and these are examined only in relation to certain periods.

Although each chapter is an essay in itself and is meant to stand on its own,

there is an interrelationship between a number of themes. This is evident in those chapters on railways (by Heine Heydenrych and Paula du Plooy), the harbour (by Anthony Lumby and Ian McLean), coal (by Bill Guest) and manufacturing (by Mark Addleson) and is particularly striking in the two complementary chapters on the sugar industry by Paul Dickinson and David Lincoln.

A major problem with the volume is the serious imbalance between 'society' and 'economy' within some of the chapters. It is a pity that in commissioning the essays the editors were not more rigorous in setting out their requirements. Some of the chapters, particularly those by Guest and Lincoln, and those by Verne Harris on changing forms of agricultural labour on white-owned farms in northern Natal, 1910–1936, and by Joy Brain on the Indian community in Natal, offer a more historical approach, concentrating on both economic and social aspects within the relevant theme and clearly drawing the links between the two. By contrast, those by Lumby and McLean on Durban harbour, Cornelis de Jong on whaling and Giuseppe Lenta on agriculture in KwaZulu are more strictly economic studies. This contrast is apparent even in the two concluding chapters which focus specifically on segregation. Paul Maylam offers a nuanced account of segregation in Durban and its effects on Africans in that city while Trevor Wills concentrates more on the enforcing of segregation in Pietermaritzburg. The overall impression of the book, unlike the earlier volume, is that it focuses far more on the economy of the region than on society.

A theme which runs through the book is the growing interrelationship and interdependence of Natal and its sister provinces in the years since 1910. The chapters show how Natal through most of the period benefited economically from Union and the role of the region in the development of the province comes through clearly. This complements the work done on the attitude of white Natalians to the Union which Paul Thompson published in *Natalians first* and elaborates on the reasons why they were not prepared to break their ties with the rest of the country, despite political antipathy. Yet it also becomes clear how the wider South African connection, and particularly the policy of apartheid, has been detrimental to the region since the early 1980s, especially the excessive growth in government spending which has drained the region's resources.

A disappointing aspect of the book is the scarcity of references to the experience of Africans, and particularly workers, from its pages. While they appear particularly in the chapters by Guest, Lincoln and Maylam, the only real attempt to come to grips with their experience comes in Verne Harris's account of agricultural labourers on white-owned farms in northern Natal. His essay raises questions on the role of farm (rather than plantation) labour throughout the province and during the latter part of the century. Surely it is time that this crucial aspect of Natal's history receives more attention than it has done?

An important purpose of any book of essays such as *Receded tides of empire* is that it will stimulate further research. One hopes that what has appeared here will encourage other scholars to examine the neglected areas.

JOHN LAMBERT

**SERVANTS AND GENTLEWOMEN TO THE GOLDEN LAND:
THE EMIGRATION OF SINGLE WOMEN FROM BRITAIN TO
SOUTHERN AFRICA, 1820–1939**

by CECILLIE SWAISLAND

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press and Oxford/Providence, Berg Publishers Limited, 1993, 186 pp. illus., paperback, R44,95.

A first impression could be that this topic hardly deserves a full-blown book. Are single women important as a category, and were there enough of them to make a difference and warrant serious study? Closer reading reveals a carefully-researched, multi-faceted work which belongs most comfortably to women's history, but is at the same time British colonial history and Southern African history. For readers of *Natalia* the work is another reminder of how firmly Natal featured in the general spread of British civilisation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The author explores in depth why single women left hearth and home, braved a hazardous sea voyage, and ventured into distant, often inhospitable territory. She explodes the myth popularised by W.R. Greg in 1862 that there were 1 248 000 'redundant' unmarried women in Britain, the remedy for which was to '... restore by an emigration of women that natural percentage between the sexes in the old country and in the new ones, which was disturbed by the emigration of men.' (p.5) She looks rather to employment opportunities in the colonies and the appeal of evangelism and imperialism. There seem to have been four periods in this respect: 1820–60 when unskilled domestic labour was needed; 1860–85 when middle-class women sought opportunities; 1885–1900 when skilled and professional women went to specific positions, and 1900–1939 which was a period of consolidation of professionals. Supply and demand in marriage did play a part, usually on an individual basis. In Natal, for example, Joseph Churchill and Hugh Gillespie, who came with the Byrne Settlers, arranged for their respective sisters to join them and then became brothers-in-law. The most well-known organised scheme, when Sir George Grey recruited some 100 Irish women as prospective wives for the German legionaries on the Cape Eastern Frontier, proved less than successful and was not repeated. However, 'loyal wives' were again encouraged following the Anglo-Boer War. Conversely, to counteract the temptation of women recruited for missionary work to marry instead, several Anglican bishops established sisterhoods. For instance, Bishop Colenso established the Sisters of Mercy in Natal, which did not outlast the Colenso ecclesiastical controversy. Bishop Webb established the Community of St Michael and All Angels in Bloemfontein and later the Community of the Resurrection in Grahamstown. Through each of these, respectively, Sister Henrietta Stockdale launched nursing training in Kimberley, and Mother Cecile teacher training in Grahamstown. Whatever the reason for leaving Britain, whether escape from personal trauma or a search for the sun, the position of governess was the great standby of single women throughout the period.

It is in the individual case studies that the real interest of this book lies. Dr Jane Waterston, apparently the only woman doctor in South Africa in the nineteenth century, became a legend in Cape Town, as did Lilian Rose for her work in concentration camp schools during the Second Anglo-Boer War. The founding principals of leading girls' schools — both private and government — were invariably single British immigrant women. In Natal, names such as Miss

Mary Campbell, Miss Eliza Jane Usherwood, Miss Martha Cheetham, and Miss Norma Burns come to mind. Far beyond the period studied here, private schools were still recruiting teachers from overseas. The contribution of these individuals was very considerable.

Statistical evidence was not easy to come by, but that given from the Annual Reports of the British Women's Emigration Association suggests that between 1895 and 1912, 4 821 single women came to Southern Africa, as compared with 5 506 to Canada, 841 to Australia, 477 to New Zealand and 200 to the USA. These figures in themselves seem to justify the research.

This is a Eurocentric study and makes no attempt to see the issue through African eyes, other than to assess the effects of black domestic labour on that of whites and their attitudes. By her own admission, the author excludes Roman Catholic activity. These limitations aside, the work goes some way towards according dignity to a neglected 'species' and topic, and, for this, as well as for a fascinating and informative read, Cecillie Swaisland must be commended.

This book is well produced by the University of Natal Press and has a useful bibliography and index.

SYLVIA VIETZEN

A LEXICON OF SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN ENGLISH

by RAJEND MESTHRIE

Leeds, Peepal Tree Press, 1992, 148pp., R44,00.

Rajend Mesthrie's long-awaited Lexicon of South African Indian English (SAIE) is a delight and will assuredly give great pleasure to South Africans in many walks of life. Not least of these is curiously enough the housewife to whom, through the press and fairly regular features in women's magazines, Indian terms particularly those related to Indian cookery and spices, have been becoming more familiar in recent years. The mysteries of *tandoori*, *roti* and *naan* have been expounded, and she buys *samosas*, *masala*, *achar*, *pappadums*, *chillibite mix* and *dhaniya* at the supermarket without batting an eyelid. I must admit, though, to have been slightly taken aback in my 'local' in Constantia to see the last of these offered as '*danja*' — perilously like *ganja* — which appears elsewhere in this invaluable book. Though taking the form of a lexicon, it contains detailed description and explanation of how and where SAIE developed. The linguist will give due attention to the excellently presented and reasoned introductory material, as well as to the chapters on slang, grammatical differences, characteristic peculiarities in pronunciation; and to the very fascinating list of 'overlap' between SAIE and general SAE which follows the lexicon. There is also a superb table of idioms, of which more later. Apart from the ordinary reader, the student or reader who has dipped — or delved — into the work of SAIE writers, and who wants to know more, will find this a veritable mine of information. Indeed, for the reader who has discovered how much there is both to ponder and enjoy in the wry humour and often profound social commentary of such writers as Achmat Dangor, Ahmed Essop, Essop Patel, Ronnie Govender and Shabbir Banoobhai, this is a must.

Dr Mesthrie throws open for our pleasure and further understanding a treasurer's trove; from the rituals of the god stand, *puja* goods, porridge prayers

or goat prayers and marriage ceremonies, to the games of *thanni* and *carom* and their lingo, to the street language of the rougher element whose argot has much in common with that of any South African *breker* of whatever group. Apart from an impressive list of the vocabulary, he reveals some of the philosophy — humorous or prosaic — of everyday life: ‘to have a headache in one’s toes’ (to malingering); ‘to have a double engine’ (girl friend or mistress as well as a wife); ‘to want biryani every day’ (to have unrealistic expectations); ‘to run on Indian time’, ‘to use Fs and Bs’ ‘to use languages’ — the meanings of these will be obvious — ; ‘to get *dholl* curry and rice every day’ (to live a humdrum life) and perhaps best of all ‘to jump like a cut fowl’ (to be obstreperous but ineffectual).

Besides giving these enthralling glimpses of what often seem to the outsider an essentially private Hindu culture — my own experience having been of staying in Muslim homes and gossiping in Muslim kitchens, and consequently being aware of some small omissions in this field of the vocabulary — Dr Mesthrie does not neglect the historical aspects of what one may call Indian South Africa. His inclusion of the names *Truro* and *Belvedere* often encountered in Indian contexts, is of particular interest. They were two of the ships in which Indians came to South Africa.

He also treats many of the languages from which SAIE has borrowed, including Afrikaans, from which some of the adoptives do not line up with their original meanings. For example, *brom* (complain, grumble) is to ‘brag, exaggerate, tell tales’, *mal* (mad, crazy) is, as in American English ‘angry, cross, upset’, and *draad* (thread) means, quite inexplicably, ‘grace, style, elegance, “know-how”’. There is also a section on reduplication, very common in SAIE, but apparently not related to that which so strongly characterises Afrikaans. Examples are: ‘We waited-waited but they didn’t come’, ‘Talking-talking we forgot about the time’.

In the section on grammatical differences Mesthrie illustrates some lively uses of phrasal verbs: ‘He by-hearted the work’ (learned it off by heart); ‘She look-afters the baby’. These are predictably marked as basilectal forms and are not to be confused with educated usage, such as the Sanskritic *dvandva* forms like *butter-bread* or *masala-chicken*.

It is certainly a comprehensive work, wider in scope than might be expected of a ‘lexicon’. It is a textbook for the professional linguist as well as a source of pleasure and information to the general user, perhaps particularly, but by no means exclusively, in Natal.

For me personally the classification of the vocabulary for the purpose of illustrating the type or spectrum of usage, tends to be a stumbling block — despite the excellent alphabetised index complete with page numbers at the back. When reading 1a several words I expected to find were missing, but further on in 1b. These included *aradh*, *bhai*, *chevda* (available now in packets in cafes) *kalya* — a common dish, — *rotla*, *taj*, *thambi*, *uplang*, *zakaat*, and particularly *bibi*, a name or title in frequent use. This I found confusing and would for myself prefer a single alphabetised series with the classifications marked for each entry. This would mean that the reader only partially familiar with the vocabulary would not be limited as one is at present by choices which the classification system imposes, and which may run counter to one’s own experience. Treatment in a single series would increase its value lexicographically, whereas to someone with a different slant on inter-cultural studies it would possibly not, so this is perhaps a purely subjective viewpoint.

One minor point: there are two possible Sintu language etymologies which

have been overlooked. One is *boula*, a brazier, I think wrongly linked to Fanagalo from English *boiler*, which seems more likely to have come from the Zulu from *-mbawula* firepot or brazier. The other is *lahnee* probably related to *-lani*, white person. (Anthony Sampson *Drum*, 1956, 'I heard a murmur, "Laanis", the tsotsi word for a white man' and M.J.K. Mfusi *Soweto Zulu Slang*, thesis 1990, *ilani*, *amalani*, Class 5 noun, white person.)

The only real lack is that there are too few of the quotations which illustrate the words and expressions in contexts, usually with so much humour. It does not detract, however, from the overall pleasure this lively and erudite work provides. It is a welcome contribution to our knowledge about the English of our country, culturally and scholastically.

JEAN BRANFORD

HINDUISM IN NATAL: A BRIEF GUIDE

by ALLEYN DIESEL and PATRICK MAXWELL

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1993, 120 pp. illus. R24,95.

The Press and authors should take a bow! This book is real value for money. Co-authored books are difficult to pull off, and this one does not entirely succeed. There is some disjointedness of style and of content as we move from descriptions of Hindu religion, to descriptions of temple architecture to records of field expeditions. Sometimes technical Hindu terms are introduced which are not explained (such as the god's vehicle). There is a technical quibble about the printing; no doubt for reasons of economy the margins, especially at the binding edge, are too small for comfortable reading.

But the advantage is a book of almost pocket size which is remarkably inexpensive and which could serve as a field guide on the expeditions that readers will certainly be inspired to make. Also, despite its price it contains some attractive photographs to expand the text.

The book comes at a very good time. Starting to build a nation out of our divided communities we urgently need to understand one another's deep beliefs. Hinduism is relatively small in South Africa as a whole, but much more dominant in Natal. Natalians who work alongside Hindus daily need to know about what they believe. Christians and Muslims who are scornful of people whom they regard as idol-worshippers need to know how crudely mistaken their views are. Hinduism is not an easy religion for non-Hindus to understand. The art, the stories, the pluralism, the ways of worship, are exotic and unfamiliar. Christianity is diverse enough, Hinduism far more so, being really a federation of religions united under a cultural Indian umbrella. Better than in any other book I know, Diesel and Maxwell guide us through the different traditions in South African Hinduism, being careful at the same time to warn us that the distinctions and divisions can be oversimplified.

The book includes a short guide to the architectural and iconographic features of some of the more important temples in Natal, which could help visitors make sense of what they see. However, to be really successful in this regard the book would have had to give very much more detail with more illustrations, even if just black and white sketches. Even with the guide in hand, visitors are unlikely without further assistance to be certain what they are looking at or of its significance. Since there is rarely anyone at the temples to give informed instruction to visitors, a really detailed guide would be invaluable.

Readers of the book will certainly, on completion, have a reasonably clear if elementary idea of what the various strands within Hinduism believe. They will know something of how they worship, though more could profitably have been said about home worship, about ceremonies at rites of passage (since Hindu weddings are often the one kind of worship that non-Hindus are likely to see), about *arthi* and other ritual customs. They will know the names of the main scriptures and festivals. They will have a grasp of what ceremonies like firewalking mean to the participants. This is an impressive achievement in a small book, and a testimony to Diesel and Maxwell's scholarship – since only one who really understands well can provide a simple summary. I suspect that even with the book's help the significance of Hindu temple art and iconography will still elude the seeker. Perhaps, with the Press's indulgence, another book may be expected?

RONALD NICOLSON

WHITE GIRL IN SEARCH OF THE PARTY

by PAULINE PODBREY

Pietermaritzburg, Haded Books (an imprint of the University of Natal Press), 1993, 204 pp. illus. R48,99.

If one likes meeting interesting people, then picking up an autobiography brings pleasurable anticipation, and Pauline Podbrey's book certainly does not disappoint. Some of the interesting times she has lived in were spent in South Africa. Her story will have special appeal to anyone with a feeling for the social and political history of Europe and South Africa in the twentieth century. The title seems consciously to echo George Bernard Shaw (*The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God*), and in fact GBS himself makes a brief appearance in the book, when he attends a communist meeting in Durban during his visit to South Africa in the 1930s.

The nine-year-old Pauline, together with her mother and younger brother, arrived in Durban in 1933 to join her father, Berl Podbrey, who had come to South Africa four years previously to escape the unemployment, oppression and persecution which were becoming the lot of many Jews in Lithuania. Pauline remarks, 'Subsequent events in eastern Europe proved that this was the wisest decision he ever made.'

The family's adjustment to a new life in a new country and Pauline's schooling at Berea Road Junior School and Durban Girls' High, are the background to the personal development of a sensitive and intelligent child, whose parents, though Jewish, were not religious. Pauline tried to bring her own beliefs to a traditional religious focus, but this did not last. But there was a strong desire for a philosophical home. Her father was left-wing in politics, and from an early age Pauline seems to have been consciously searching for a cause, a movement, a party, which reflected that political position. She soon recognised the injustice inherent in South African society, and did not rationalise or banish such thoughts, as most of her Natal-born school friends did. Her first nine years of life in Lithuania, her own temperament, her family's experiences and its climate of ideas, combined to make indifference impossible. An example from her family's history: as a girl in 1918 Pauline's mother had witnessed the senseless murder of her parents as they sat at the Pesach meal — the sort of horrific incident South Africans have recently seen

in KwaZulu–Natal and on the East Rand. The following extended extract admirably captures Pauline's adolescent consciousness with its mixture of certainty and self-doubt.

'In Durban, in 1935, I often envied my friends Helen, Jane or Melanie for their carefree ability to enjoy life without the sack of guilt that I seemed to trundle round with me everywhere . . . I burned with indignation at stories of cruelty or injustice, wishing I was there to stop it yet longing to direct my mind to easier, pleasanter dreams. I saw myself rushing to save a child from abuse, warding off a horde of whites burning down a homestead, confronting a mob of would-be lynchers. My fantasies always began and ended with me leaping in to save, protect, succour . . . Of course it was silly, pointless, even arrogant, I told myself, to concentrate on white-tipped waves and blue skies, on the smell of grenadillas and the taste of paw-paws, on pretty clothes, parties, boys. I didn't want to change places with my friends . . . I was different, I had an aim in life, I would be a revolutionary, a Communist. My friends were selfish, superficial and lacking in compassion, I consoled myself. Yet these friends of mine were not hard or insensitive. Helen cried when her cat was run over; Jane turned green with nausea when she witnessed a man knocked down by a tram; Melanie talked of becoming a nurse because she wanted to help people. So why were they so blind to the life around them? How was it that race and colour could distort their perceptions?'

With these sensitivities, her 'sack of guilt', and a desire to do something and become involved, Pauline Podbrey was clearly destined for a life of political activity. She sought out, found and joined the South African Communist Party, and worked for it and the trades union movement during the late 1930s and during the Second World War. Her intended marriage across the colour-bar to H. A. Naidoo, a fellow-worker and leading figure in the Party, caused pain and consternation even in her enlightened family. Not that her parents disapproved of her fiancé in any way — quite the reverse, in fact — but they were unable to face the social consequences of such a marriage in Durban, at that time. The Party's transfer of H.A. and Pauline to Cape Town, with its more relaxed attitude towards race, enabled them to marry without causing problems for her family. Her years in Cape Town were clearly a time of great happiness and fulfilment for Pauline, who writes with great enthusiasm and affection for the place itself and the many friends the young couple made there. As the Nationalist government got into its stride after 1948, life became more and more difficult for people on the political left, especially those whose very domestic circumstances were anathema to the new rulers of South Africa. H. A. was 'a person of Indian origin' resident in the Cape without the necessary permit, and no prospect of obtaining one. He was thus virtually deported back to Natal, but Pauline remained in Cape Town, because of her work and her promise to her father not to live in Durban while married to an Indian. H. A.'s few illegal visits to his wife and child in Cape Town were risky undercover exercises, and it soon became clear that the couple would be wise to leave South Africa.

Then followed the subterfuges and adventures of their separate voyages — without passports — to England in 1951, their linking up with the Party in Britain, and their time in Hungary, working for the English Service of Radio Budapest. They went to Hungary with enthusiasm, grasping the opportunity to live and work in a communist state, but three and a half years later the corruption and oppression they saw there had brought disillusionment. Their outspokenness in questioning and criticising the system placed them in danger,

even though they were British nationals, and in 1955 they decided to return to Britain. Their colleagues were nonplussed, and tried to persuade them to stay. 'What if the British don't accept you?' Anna demanded, 'After all, they know that you've served our government.' 'In that case,' H. A. told her, 'we'll return to South Africa.' 'You mean,' Anna was incredulous, 'that you'd rather live in racist South Africa than here?' 'Yes,' H. A. told her, 'at least there I have the possibility of opposing the system, of forming genuine trade unions, of resisting.' They knew that returning to Britain would mean a struggle to find jobs and a home. 'All the same, we deemed it preferable to the oppressive dishonesty of our present surroundings.'

H. A.'s disillusionment was so complete that he absolutely refused to rejoin the Party on their return to Britain, but Pauline did so, hoping that her continued membership would give her opportunities to tell people what was happening in Hungary. But British communists were no readier to hear her criticisms than the comrades in Budapest had been. Pauline realised that they would never be persuaded. 'They didn't want to know. They refused to know.' Pauline and H. A. learnt to talk of other things when they were with their communist friends, 'not always easy to political animals such as we . . .' Some friends could not forgive what they regarded as their betrayal of the cause, and friendships ended. '"Why, you've become a reactionary," Joe Slovo said to me at a party in London, as if that epithet absolved him from any further discussion.'

When in 1956 the Hungarian people rose against Soviet oppression, Pauline and H. A. seriously considered returning to Budapest at the invitation of the new workers' committee at the radio station. 'We were still debating the pros and cons when the Russian tanks rolled into Budapest . . . On 5 November we listened on the radio to the last despairing words of Hungarian Premier Imre Nagy appealing for help which he knew would not come. The words were muffled, the radio crackled. And then it was cut off. I burst into tears.'

Pauline's youthful faith in God had not endured, and had been replaced by faith in the Party. Now that had been stripped from her, leaving her feeling 'naked and bereft'. But in rebuilding a philosophical basis for her life, she could be sure that she would resist injustice wherever she found it, fight racism in all its forms, and uphold the principles of socialism and democracy. This outline of her odyssey cannot do justice to the directness, honesty and modesty with which Pauline Podbrey tells her story, nor to the wealth of interesting detail it contains. She played a part in the unfolding of political events in this century, and we can be grateful that she decided to publish her personal account of it.

JOHN DEANE

THE COLIN WEBB NATAL AND ZULULAND SERIES

BAYNES, Joseph. Letters addressed to the Governor of Natal and Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding the absence of consideration in our present form of government for our coloured people. Introduced by John Lambert. Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg; University of Natal Press, 1992.

First published in 1906, and written against the backdrop of the Bhambatha Rebellion, Baynes highlights the lack of justice then appertaining in the Colony.

DADOO, Y.M. Facts about the Ghetto Act.

and

NAICKER, G.M. A historical synopsis of the Indian question in South Africa. Introduced by Barry White. Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993.

Naicker's synopsis, compiled in 1945, comprises statistics about Indians in South Africa and includes a list of the 66 laws and ordinances discriminating against them. Written in the following year, Dadoo's pamphlet deals with yet another such law, the 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. The act was designed to confine Indians and other Asiatics in segregated areas, while at the same time giving a qualified franchise in Natal and the Transvaal.

FRITSCH, Gustav. A German traveller in Natal: three chapters from *Drei Jahre in Süd Afrika*. Translated by Gerlind Lyttle; introduced by Ian Hilton. Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992.

Fritsch, a scientist, and photographer, visited Natal between September and November 1864. His emphasis is on the flora and fauna, and on the indigenous peoples.

HUMPHREYS, William Clayton. The journal of William Clayton Humphreys. Introduced by Julie Pridmore. Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993.

A hitherto-unpublished journal of a trading and hunting expedition to the Zulu country between July and October 1851.

LAMB, Ridgeway H. Hard times in Natal and the way out. Introduced by John Lambert. Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1992.

First published in 1908. Like Baynes' pamphlet above, Lamb's provides comment on the situation in Natal shortly before Union. Lamb attributes the 'undesirable condition' of the Colony's financial, political, commercial and social affairs to the lack of justice.

MARWICK, J.S. The natives in the larger towns: a lecture delivered in Durban, August 1918. Introduced by Alex Mouton.

and

RICH, S.G. Notes on Natal. Reprinted from *The International socialist Review*, 1917. Introduced by Chantelle Wyley. Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993. Marwick, a man with a long history of African administration, (in the Transvaal mines he had earned the Zulu Name Muhle – a good or kind person) was appointed in 1916 by the Durban Corporation as the first manager of its Native Affairs Department. His lecture set out methods for controlling and guiding the ever-increasing numbers of Africans moving to the towns, and for preserving good relations between the races. In contrast, Rich's pamphlet is 'perhaps the first published attempt at a description of the Natal economy in terms of labour exploitation, and the encroachment of the expanding Natal industrial and agricultural sectors on African owned or occupied land', according to the introduction. A teacher at the American Board of Commissioners' Adams College, Rich appears to have been a prominent Durban member of the International Socialist League (South Africa) for the short time he was in Natal.

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