

ANNEXURE TO CHAPTER 4

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE 'LIBERAL APPROACH OF MORAL PERSUASION'

1 Optimism

A characteristic of liberalism in the 1930s and 1940s was a buoyant optimism that black aspirations would be met (*Ilanga Lase Natal January 23, 1937:11; Bantu World May 28, 1938:8*). This was based on a characteristic belief of black liberals, articulated in 1948 in the face of the Nationalist Party election victory as what could well be called the credo of *Bantu World*: “historically the forces of tyranny have never prevailed against those of righteousness” (*Bantu World October 23, 1948:2*). Despite bouts of dejection, this sentiment would resurface time and again, invariably accompanied by “thrills of hope” or “renewed hope and encouragement” (*Ilanga Lase Natal December 29, 1933:9*), even after the Nationalists came to power in 1948 (*Bantu World September 3, 1949:2*).

A common motif of editorials promoting black liberalism is that black South Africans should bear with tolerance and patience the seemingly slow progress of political transformation, the end result of which they were assured (*Ilanga Lase Natal December 30, 1932:9*). While it would be easy to distrust the white man’s intentions, the wise African realised that white liberals and “progressives” constantly had to contend with racists among them, whose potential conversion to enlightenment on recognition of black achievement and ability is inferred throughout (*Ilanga Lase Natal August 2, 1941:13*). Optimism was expressed that the future generation of Afrikaners were “outgrowing” the traditional antagonism towards blacks (*Bantu World October 1, 1932:6*), and in the white population in general, racists were in the minority (*Bantu World September 13, 1941:4*; and even five years later - *Bantu World December 7, 1946:4*).

Closely linked to the optimistic view of white intentions and intrinsic goodwill was the early belief that quasi-government institutions in which blacks participated, as well as those established by liberal whites for the purpose of fostering black progress were effective, positive structures. In the 1930s and early

1940s, Advisory Boards, Native Representative Councils and Joint Councils (which *Bantu World* in 1932 declared to be inspired by the interracial councils of the southern states of America), which were later to be denigrated by Africanists and even conservative black newspapers, were enthusiastically praised in the black press. These were viewed as opportunities to demonstrate black ability to effectively participate responsibly in urban western society (*Bantu World* December 3, 1932:1; December 30, 1939:4).

2 Moderation

The black journalist of this period made a real attempt to understand the fear of ‘Europeans’ vis-a-vis black advancement. The white population was continually reassured of black acceptance of social inequality; black liberal demands were confined to the right to “develop without ... hindrance from the powers that be” (*Ilanga Lase Natal* October 2, 1931:9).

Insight into ideological thinking which permeated the black leadership for the first half of the twentieth century (and thus was fundamental to the ‘liberal approach’) is gained by the views expressed *inter alia* in an editorial entitled “Equal Rights”, written by Plaatje in the *Bechuana Gazette* in 1902. (Plaatje was founder-member of the SA Native National Congress, forerunner of the African National Congress.) The comments were apparently considered to be valid and relevant, since the editorial was reproduced in the 21 December 1904 edition of the *Gazette*.

We do not hanker after social equality with the white man ... We do not care for your parlour, nor is it our wish to lounge on couches in your drawing-rooms. The renegade Kaffir who desires to court and marry your daughter is a perfect danger to his race, for if his yearnings were realised we would be hurrying on the path to the inauguration of a generation of half-castes ... For this reason we advise every black man to avoid social contact with the whites, and the other race to keep strictly within their boundaries.

All we ask is our just dues; we ask for our political recognition as loyal British subjects ...

Under the Union Jack every person is his neighbour’s equal. There are certain regulations for which one should qualify before his legal status is recognised as such: to this qualification race or colour is no bar (*Willan* 1997:64).

In the same vein, in the 1930s, much journalistic effort was expended in reassuring the South African 'European' that he had nothing to fear from blacks, who were not hostile to whites (*Bantu World September 30, 1939:4*). On the contrary, every opportunity was used to express the friendliness of blacks towards whites (*Bantu World December 22, 1934:8*)

In the 1930s, black political editorials and political comment were epitomised by a tone of contented resignation to black political subordination (*Ilanga Lase Natal November 7, 1930:9*). Polite language couched attempts to allay white fears, which were to be avoided at all costs, since this, more than any other factor, would delay the advancement of the black South African. Thus Africans were not hostile to 'Europeans' (*Bantu World March 16, 1940*); and "would elect the best men regardless of colour" (this comment was made by Chief Luthuli, who in 1949 would be elected leader of the ANC for the 1950s) (*Bantu World July 23, 1949:2*). Rather than threatening western civilisation, the black South African was striving to attain standards of education and sophistication which he perceived as synonymous to such civilisation (*Bantu World January 20, 1940:4*). In this way, black musicians were "ambassadors of their race", as Mseleku, western-style composer of note, declared at a function at the Y.M.C.A. in Durban in 1955: "you are trustees ... so remember to go forth and do your good work. Do not misuse this privilege (sic), for you represent us (to) the world at large" (*Ilanga Lase Natal August 20, 1955:16*).

Bantu World, in particular, often employed a tone of hand-wringing gratitude which bordered on the obsequious ("Under a good and benevolent government Bantu interests are being carefully looked after ..." and the like) - (*Bantu World May 31, 1941:9; May 8, 1943:4*).

In 1948, *Bantu World*, as mouthpiece of the 'liberal approach', was stated by R.V. Selope Thema to be a

... journal (which) has never been, and will never be a propaganda medium but an organ of education, enlightenment and appreciation. It guides and counsels the African people on lines of sane and steady progress, along the lines of western civilisation and in co-operation with Europeans, because the *Bantu World* believes that South Africa owes its amazing progress to the white man's brain and the black man's brawn (*Bantu World June 26, 1948:1*).

Any signs of militancy or defiance, such as the miners' strikes of 1946, were met with hostility by journalists. Representative of the educated elite, rooted in an ideology of liberalism expounded for decades, their reply was synonymous with the puritan stance on overt defiance which was articulated in the press, particularly in the 1930s: acts of defiance would result in white fear as well as the lowering of white opinion of the black South African population *as a whole*. Whites would confuse the hostile actions by these irresponsible representatives of the black race with the benevolent intentions of the (inferred) majority of the black population. Most importantly, individual effort on the part of black liberals to convince whites of their goodwill would be in vain, and lead to the "destruction of freedom" (*Umteteli wa Bantu January 2, 1943:2*).

Music was an indispensable medium for communicating benevolence, and examples of music creating bridges of friendship abound in the black newspapers of the 1930s and 1940s. In one such article, the Jazz Maniacs band (here referred to as an "orchestra", as jazz-bands often were), was credited with having created at one performance "enough friendliness which, if constantly done, would temper down the weather in race relations" (*Ilanga Lase Natal February 2, 1946:16*).

A hallmark of the 'liberal approach' in the 1930s and 1940s was the appeal, rather than demand, for 'equal status'. However, this appeal was tempered by the concession that 'social equality' - which was translated as the social mixing of races - was neither achievable nor desirable. The development 'along their own lines' proposed by whites was as nonsensical as the "'white ghost' called social equality" (*Bantu World January 14, 1933:1; December 3, 1949:2*). Here too, they were taking their lead from perceived black American objectives, as expressed in an article by a white Southern American, Mark Ethridge. While recognising the fundamental principle of the elimination of white "prejudice and ignorance", he adds: "I have nowhere mentioned the abolition of segregation or so-called 'social equality', because I have nowhere found these steps to be among the Negro's aspirations" (*Bantu World August 26, 1939:4*).

What was envisaged by exponents of the 'liberal approach' in America and hence in South Africa, was a "tilting of the racial line from the horizontal to the vertical", whereby blacks and whites on either side of this line could enjoy the "rights and privileges" to which they were entitled as full citizens of the

country (*Bantu World* August 26, 1939:4). This sentiment was echoed repeatedly in the black South African press (*Ilanga Lase Natal* January 16, 1931:9; April 24, 1931:9; *Bantu World* June 4, 1932:4; January 14, 1933:1).

However, in the 1940s a subtle but definite shift in thinking took place. It was more often reported that Western music, the flagship of the 'liberal approach', was trampling politically-induced obstacles between white and black, thereby hinting at the possibility of social mixing in an ideal future. The "pleasant" task of reporting on the success of jazz bands and vocal groups at 'European' functions for which they had obviously been hired, fell to the famous music critic of *Bantu World* and correspondent and commentator of other newspapers, Walter M.B. Nhlapo. Listing the white-sponsored events at which the Merry Blackbirds, De Pitch Black Follies, the Jazz Maniacs and the Synco Down Beats had admirably acquitted themselves as representatives of black South Africa, he mused: "Hm, these European night clubs are serving a great factor to a better South Africa. They are breaking slowly but surely the segregation barrier set up by dirty politics" (*Bantu World* December 6, 1941:9).

In response to encouraging statements by white liberals like the member of parliament in the Smuts Government, Jan H. Hofmeyr ("We have ruled out the complete domination of the one race upon the other") (*Bantu World* August 20, 1932:4), Senator Heaton Nicholls ("There will be never (sic) a South African nation until every person, irrespective of race or colour, is proud to call himself a South African") (*Bantu World* February 10, 1940:4); and Col. Deneys Reitz (who opened the Union's Civil Service to blacks, which was perceived as a turning point in the commitment to fulfilling hitherto empty promises to the black populace) (*Ilanga Lase Natal* August 2, 1941), political demands and utterances by black liberals were characterised by moderation and politeness.

Setbacks to black advancement were borne stoically: the "Anti-Native mentality" displayed by the Union Minister of Defence, "the Hon. T. Roos", for example, motivated the editorial response: "How many pin-pricks have the Natives patiently bore (sic) with incredibly and rare docility: ... But the Native Africans have all along bore (sic) it with wonderful patience with the hope that a time will come when the South African (white) public mind will see the right policy and follow it" (*Ilanga Lase Natal* February 15, 1935:7).

Despite its tendency to greater realism and a generally harsher tone at times than found in *Bantu World*, *Ilanga Lase Natal* largely supported the bourgeois elite of the African National Congress in the 1930s and 1940s. When Elliott Tonjeni “and a few other Cape firebrands” who were branded guilty of introducing “a Communistic bias” resigned from the organisation, the action was “hailed with a sigh of relief”. Added to the assurance of loyalty to the white government was the promise that grievances would be redressed by lawful means, while “wild and irresponsible talk” would not be tolerated by “an organisation which includes the Chiefs and the respectable classes of Native Society” (*Ilanga Lase Natal November 28, 1930:9*). Appeals to white better-judgement and goodwill, for “sane legislation” and concessions in recognition of demonstrations of ‘civilisation’ are a constant theme of letters and editorials (see for example *Ilanga Lase Natal January 9, 1931:9*).

Reassurances of loyalty to white rule were reiterated time and time again (*Ilanga Lase Natal October 2, 1931:9*; *Bantu World September 30, 1939:4*). “Extravagance and abuse” were to be eschewed, since these would inflame, rather than soothe, the “embers of racialism and colour prejudice” (*Bantu World December 13, 1941:4*). In the early 1940s, which according to Ballantine was a transitional phase in which a “New Africanism” articulated a “broad groundswell” which culminated in a period of “militant protest” (*Ballantine 1993:55; 1991B:146*), Walter M.B. Nhlapo (the influential writer whose comments Ballantine quotes as an example of support for the expression of this “New Africanism” in music (see *Ballantine 1993:60; 1991B:149*)), states that the efforts of politicians who were trying to incite militant defiance in opposition to pass laws are “doomed to failure” because of their “extremist attitude”: “It is not profane extreme provocative words (sic: no commas) that will emancipate us from the burdensome ‘scraps of paper’ but calmness and reasoning of a sane nature” (*Bantu World February 1, 1941:9*).

One reader of *Bantu World* insisted that, “if only the Oppressor would pinch a bit harder, the African progress would accelerate its advancement”. “Automatic” emancipation would be the result of applying cooperative “diplomacy, psychology and tact” in matters of education, economics and commerce (*Bantu World August 2, 1941:5*).

While the *Bantu World* editor noted that the “growing demand” amongst educated Africans for

responsibility and leadership of their own affairs was becoming more evident, he hastened to reassure whites that “What they are asking for is not the right to rule the country but the right to participate in the administration of the affairs of their people” (*Bantu World June 5, 1943:4*).

Petits bourgeois attitudes of the ANC leadership are epitomised by the polite tone of the plea sent to Prime Minister Smuts in protest of mass arrests in 1944: “We strongly protest, and in the name of democracy, christianity and human decency, humbly and most respectfully request and urge you to remove these acts of racial discrimination, injustice and oppression in preparation to (sic) your participation in the San Francisco Conference” (*Bantu World March 31 1944:4*).

As late as the 1950s, liberal sentiments and exhortations to evoke the implicit, dormant goodness and racial tolerance from black and white were still to be found in *Bantu World*, in particular. The staff at *Bantu World*, the editor maintained, still believed that it was not impossible for both white and black South Africans to emphasise the constructive factors “that hold South Africa together” such as cooperation and goodwill, and reject the prejudice and hatred “that pull it apart”.

On both sides of the colour line there are men and women who have too great a regard for human dignity to surrender their souls to the dictates of race and colour prejudice. It is our firm conviction that these men and women can, if stirred to action, bring about a better and mutual understanding between white and black, and thus eventually provide a solution to a problem which at present seems to baffle the minds of men (*Bantu World September 30, 1952:7*).

The liberal editor of the *Bantu World* remained firmly committed to moderate and reasoned bargaining. During the heated debate on exclusive Africanism versus inclusive African Nationalism which featured prominently from the 1950s, the paper continued to plead for sane reasoning and the avoidance of “high sounding” ideals “which everybody knows is unattainable” (*Bantu World December 10, 1949:2*). However, it is in the dawning of the realisation in this decade that even the most moderate ideals and aspirations were ultimately unattainable, and that the reality of Apartheid was more vicious, and cared less for the educated, than the most dire predictions of perceived ‘radicals’ could forecast, that a subtle shift from the extreme ‘liberal approach’ of the paper in the previous two decades is detected.

It is significant that, rather than viewing the ‘liberal approach’ as politically passive and ultimately

ineffective, Rezant viewed the role of the Merry Blackbirds as active political emissaries, proving to whites the capabilities of blacks, both intellectually and musically. When questioned as to whether he believed that his band had filled a political role in this way, he replied: “Very, very much so ... No doubt about that.” Secondly, as an inspirational model of achievement, they hoped that their example would compel others to strive to improve their position in life. Because of this broader objective, he was proud of the achievements of other bands, including those of their biggest rivals, the Jazz Maniacs (*Rezant - writer's interview: 8/4/98*).

3 The Vacillating Hopes of the 1930s

In the 1930s, general feelings of discontent at the lack of earnest attempts by the Government to address the ‘Native question’ are starkly contrasted by effusive optimism in anticipation of imminent liberation. A rather volatile graph could depict the oscillating pattern of hope and despondency expressed in *Ilanga Lase Natal* prior to the Second World War: the fluctuating high and low tides of liberal sentiment were directly affected by, and occurred in response to, white political statements. A white reactionary statement would be met with flat tones of disillusionment and despair, an encouraging remark by a white liberal would result in the expression of optimism. Liberals like Jan H. Hofmeyr seemed regularly to bolster the flagging faith of black intellectuals with soothing words of reassurance and support. For example, in 1937, the May 29 edition of *Ilanga Lase Natal* verbalised deep pessimism about the fate of black South Africans, particularly the educated, in the future (*Ilanga Lase Natal May 29, 1937:11*). Two months later, the same publication expressed soaring hopes in an editorial headed: “Swelling Tide of Liberalism: Black man’s advance in the scale of civilization could not be checked”. Here the heartening words of Hofmeyr, at that stage Minister of Mines and Education, and oft-quoted author of many liberal comments in the press, praised arch-liberal Lieut. Col. James Donaldson for his “sane advice”, which included telling “us to make the Natives our friends”. Hofmeyr, the *Ilanga* editor said, believed South Africa “could never permanently secure the wealth and prosperity of the White man by keeping the Black man poor and depressed” (*Ilanga Lase Natal July 3, 1937:11*).

The more forthright manner of the Natal newspaper, *Ilanga Lase Natal*, is clearly distinguished from the obsequious Transvaal-based *Bantu World* in this decade. In response to the formation of the coalition government in 1933, it was firmly stated that “Native public opinion definitely expects an early, earnest and serious attempt to deal with the Native problem” (*Ilanga Lase Natal April 7, 1933:9*). Disillusionment was verbalised at the failure of their white ‘wards’ or ‘elder brothers’ “to help the Africans to develop into manhood” (*Ilanga Lase Natal April 7, 1933:9*). *Bantu World*, by comparison, enthused: “Since the formation of the coalition government a new spirit is abroad in the land, a spirit of optimism and confidence ... It is to be hoped that this new spirit of goodwill between Boer and Briton will be extended to the Bantu people” (*Bantu World April 15, 1933:6*).

The liberal views articulated by journalists in the optimistic moments of the 1930s are characterised by a superlatively expressed, glowing optimism. *Bantu World* states that the newly-awakened “conscience of white South Africa ... will no longer tolerate injustice and oppression” (*Bantu World September 10, 1932:4*). A year later, *Bantu World* again declared that the “conscience of white South Africa had been awakened”, and that through “persuasive” rather than “abusive” speech, white public opinion would be swayed “to the side of fair play, liberty and justice” (*Bantu World April 29, 1933:8*). *Ilanga Lase Natal*, for example, voices the hope that a “new consciousness” of “justice and fair play” is awakening amongst white South African legislators. One manifestation of such consciousness is the “enlightening” report on the social and economic conditions of South African blacks by the Native Economic Commission (*Ilanga Lase Natal September 29, 1933:9*), the establishment of which in itself signalled “to the whole world” a change in governmental stance (*Ilanga Lase Natal November 17, 1933:9*).

In an exuberantly positive front-page lead article in May, 1933, *Bantu World* articulates the liberal approach as epitomised by the character of the Joint Councils Movement (*Bantu World May 20, 1933:1*). This article is important precisely because it refers to the militancy which existed amongst sectors of the working class and their leaders (such as Clements Kadile of the ICU, who had been prominent in the 1920s), and clearly shows the cleavage which appears to have existed between the elite journalists promoting the liberalistic spirit of Washington over workers who espoused the militant ethos of Garvey:

JOINT COUNCILS CREATE SPIRIT OF GOODWILL
Direct Action and Revolutionary Measures Have Landed Some
Misguided People In Gaol And Others In The Graves.
Wanted: True Leaders Of Vision

The Joint Council Movement ... has created a new spirit in South Africa. It has made men realise that ... in the civilised life of to-day (sic) the economic and political interests of white and black are inseparable.

Although there are die-hards and rabid racialists on either side of the colour line, the fact remains that this new spirit will prevail in the end, for it has found a splendid response (sic) in the universities and colleges of this country. The Fort Hare Bantu-European students conference of about four years ago has proved that young South Africa is determined to shake off the bitterness of the past and go forward in a spirit of goodwill and true fellowship.

There are still die-hards among Bantu leaders, men who maintain that direct action is the only weapon that will enable the Bantu people to gain their freedom and improve their conditions. Revolutionary measures they hold will bring the Bantu into the Promised Land of Freedom. Communism and not religion, they say, will lead the Bantu to Paradise.

All those leaders who do not agree with their doctrines and their propaganda are stigmatised as "good boys," as the tools and agents of capitalism, and men who are betraying their race. But all this talk has not improved the conditions of the Africans ...

It is needless to point to the spirit of Philanthropy manifesting itself in every sphere of activity in this city (*Bantu World* May 20, 1933:1).

By comparison, *Ilanga Lase Natal* declared just two months later that attitudes displayed by the new coalition towards 'Natives' provided "ample reason for regret and resentment". In the 1920s, this newspaper had been under the impression that white opinion regarding black progress and development "had undergone a considerable change for the better". The editor bemoans the sudden deterioration of the situation. "By a stroke of the pen, the whole position has been changed", he sorrowfully says, and the chief cause of this lamentation is that the new Minister of Native Affairs, unlike his predecessor, has already proven to be quite unsympathetic to the 'Native' cause. The previous incumbent of the Native Affairs portfolio, epitomising liberal beliefs of whites in general, had been essentially benevolent to the black cause: "since Union the Minister of Native affairs (sic), quite apart from his political leanings, has been looked upon as a wise and just counsellor, a Father, so to speak, to whom the Natives could bring their troubles with hope and confidence" (*Ilanga Lase Natal* July 14, 1933:9).

The notorious 'Native Bills' were an effective blow to optimism. In response to the Native Representation Bill which resulted in uniform disenfranchisement of all Africans in South Africa, black hopes were "dashed to the ground" (*Ilanga Lase Natal February 1, 1936:9*). This Bill, Bantu World told its readers, would "establish once and for all the policy of political segregation" (*Bantu World March 14, 1936:8*).

It was in these moments of doubt regarding the ability of the liberal concept to induce benevolence from white rulers that a spirit of black assertiveness and brief glimpses of black defiance were first evident in the black press. The conservative and normally servile and fawning Bantu World was motivated by the inherent repression of the Hertzog legislation to modulate the usual key of the liberal spirit to one in which proof of equal status of blacks to whites would *compel*, rather than encourage, whites to recognise African rights of full citizenship:

It is the achievement of the race as a whole that will compel, much against their will, those who despise us today to recognise that as human beings we are entitled to all human rights, economic as well as political.

The task of our leaders, therefore, is to launch a campaign of organising (sic) the masses of our people, who must be educated on their rights and duties (*Bantu World July 4, 1936:8*).

Very significantly for this discourse, the above article was juxtaposed to an article on the Pan-African Conference, and even more importantly, to an article entitled, "Africa Awakens From Sleep", in which the writer expresses a recognition that the burgeoning feelings of unity of all Africans would 'embolden' black South Africans "in our dreams of a new Africa" (*Bantu World July 4, 1936:8*).

Liberals' hopes were once again revived by Hofmeyr's call for white South Africans to "make a fresh start in the building up of a new liberalism, a liberalism of the mind and of the heart". The Bantu World editorial in which Hofmeyr's encouraging speech is discussed at length, concludes with his words: "The white man has awakened the Native; he has ended his savage life; he has set his feet upon the long road which leads to civilisation. It is a path on which there can be no retreat. And the white man has no option save to adjust his thinking and policy to the realisation of these facts!" (*Bantu World August 22, 1936:8*).

In 1939, the editor of *Bantu World* declared that the earlier incumbent of the portfolio of Native Affairs had “won for himself the respect of a large section of our educated community” through the exercise of consulting the “enlightened men of our race” (*Bantu World* September 23, 1939:4). Obviously this practice of consultation did not occur often enough, for a year later the same editor complained that “One of the mistakes Europeans make is to omit Bantu intellectuals in their programme in things connected with the Bantu people” (*Bantu World* December 21, 1940:9).

4 Fluctuating Sentiments in the War Years

In the early 1940s editorials are filled with optimism, roused on more than one occasion by encouraging speeches from none other than Prime Minister Smuts. In 1942 he addressed a meeting of Members of Parliament and spoke of “the awakening of South Africa’s social conscience”. This, the editor of *Umteteli wa Bantu* assured his readers, was a summary of a general desire for an improvement of race relations; “a movement which has been gaining strength throughout the country for some time past” (*Umteteli wa Bantu* September 5, 1942:2).

No single impetus was more influential in fermenting the black liberal cause than the hopes which were aroused during the course of the Second World War. Firstly, the cause of the war itself was decidedly in black interest: if Hitler won the war, Prof Julius Lewin, lecturer in Native administration at the University of the Witwatersrand, told a gathering of intellectuals at the elite Gamma Sigma Club, “you will be slaves and stagnant in progress”. If Britain won, however, “Africans will receive back their independency (sic)”, albeit with a proviso quite in keeping with liberal thought: “but only when they are educated to administer themselves” (*Bantu World* August 3, 1940:6).

The liberal-minded Col. Deneys Reitz of the war-time Smuts Government was benevolent and encouraging to black liberals. In the face of racist opposition, stigmatised as a “Negrophilist”, his war-time liberal utterances together with those of General Smuts, again spurred the effusive *Bantu World* to flowery prose of liberal hope (*Bantu World* August 9, 1941:4; December 6, 1941:4).

Envisaging a “post-war world in which racial disharmony will be unknown” (*Bantu World* September

6, 1941:4), the particular expectations of black South Africans as articulated by the liberal elite were expressed by the editor of *Bantu World*: “non-Europeans” supporting the South African war effort, he wrote, anticipated the granting of “democratic rights, privileges and duties”. To this end, the education of public opinion should be begun without delay (*Bantu World October 18, 1941:4*). By 1943, “so great a man as Field-Marshal Smuts” was voicing opinions which were “pointing the way out of our inter-racial difficulties” (*Bantu World February 20, 1943:4*). The hopes of black South Africans were most clearly enunciated by Michael J.L. Kunene, in an article entitled, “There Is a Good Time Coming”. He exhorted blacks to join the forces to bring about not only the victory of the Allied Forces, but the victory of their own liberation, which was to be their reward:

Africans! I say wake up! This is a revolutionary war and a reformation must emanate as the consequence ... we are not laying down our lives for ourselves only, but also for the future African generations ... I can visualise a day when South Africa will afford freedom for her people no matter to what colour they belong.

... Our leader, the Rt. Hon. Field Marshall J.C. Smuts, has said time and again during this war that it is time that South Africa recognised the Africans (*Bantu World May 8, 1943:4*).

The decision to arm black South African soldiers, the previous denial of which had been cause for much resentment, prompted glowing praise and pride in *Umteteli wa Bantu*. More than contributing to the defeat of Nazism, wartime feats of African soldiers had “set up a milestone on the road to the realisation of African aspirations”. Most important was the praise from white South African soldiers of their black counterparts. The spirit thus cultivated was cherished as “one which cannot be brought about by political or legislative efforts” and was reiterated throughout the rest of the war (*Umteteli wa Bantu May 9, 1942:2; December 5, 1942:2; Bantu World February 27, 1943:4; March 4, 1944:4*). As part of “a more liberal attitude” displayed by the Smuts government, and especially Col. Deneys Reitz, during the war, the hated pass laws were relaxed as an experiment to determine their effect on crime. Spurred on by the success of this concession and the promise that the situation might become permanent, black liberal hopes flourished (*Umteteli wa Bantu July 4, 1942:2*).

In an editorial in 1943, black South African expectations for a post-war South Africa were most clearly spelt out:

In the struggle into which Hitler has plunged the world, Africans are playing a part which entitles them to a great measure of freedom than is the case today. After the war they will certainly not be satisfied to remain under the conditions prevailing to-day. There will have to be such radical changes in the Union's Native policy that the African people will be filled with a new hope and be proud to be citizens of South Africa (*Bantu World February 27, 1943:4*).

A growing sense of frustration and bitterness among Africans was clearly stated in the usually polite and liberal *Bantu World* in December 1948 when it became clear that African war hopes had been dashed. Hostile measures, such as the complete dissolution of the 'Native Military Corps' of the Defence Force, the exclusion of black South African ex-servicemen from increased war pensions given to white soldiers, and the refusal to make a grant for the feeding of African school pupils combined to clearly convey the antagonistic and unsympathetic attitudes which were to be directed at blacks in the place of the longed-for rewards hinted at by the Smuts wartime government (*Bantu World December 4, 1948:2*).

The caption to a photograph of an old and obviously dejected man on the front page of the *World* in 1960 is symbolic of the shattered expectations fostered during the Second World War. Described as a "hero of World War II", the caption declares ex-Sergeant Berry Gazi to be the first member of the Native Military Corps to have won the Military Medal for bravery during the course of his work as a stretcher-bearer. Now totally forgotten by the country to which he showed allegiance, he is penniless, in ill-health and out of work (*The World June 11, 1960:1*).

In the music arena, Peter Rezant recalls a poignant moment illustrating the general perception which existed at grassroots' level that the end of the war would mean the simultaneous end of Apartheid. The disillusionment which ensued when this was discovered to be false was great, and reality dawned for the average black man at the level of 'petty Apartheid', which regulated such matters as entry to venues and functions:

But in Cape Town ... the Coloureds and the Africans wanted to almost cause a riot, because they would not be allowed (*entry to the American pavilion at the Liberty Cavalcade*). They said, "But the war is over! And we thought Apartheid is finished, now (that) it's over! We want to go here, and it is a black band that is playing inside there!" (*Rezant - writer's interview: 8/4/98*).

A New Year's Day editorial in 1949 eloquently articulates the characteristic liberal traits of national inferiority, the faith in white goodwill, and the patience needed to see black aspirations realised as a result of white persuasion of black 'civilisation', as well as moderation and reciprocal goodwill, which typified the school of thought and which was to have repercussions for the next decade and beyond:

... the moulding of public opinion is essential to progress; and that, like any form of education, is a slow process. We who urge our fitness to govern ourselves cannot, without deliberately shutting our eyes, fail to see that there are still signs of immaturity among us ...

What will help us most is the growth of goodwill and sympathy among those who are able to do more for us than we can for ourselves. The late Colonel Donaldson was an outstanding example of that goodwill and sympathy translated into practice ...

There will be troubles and difficulties to be met during the coming year, but we can look forward with courage and hope to overcoming them with the help of our friends and our own honest efforts to be guided by reason (*Umteteli wa Bantu January 1, 1949:3*).

Margaret Ballinger was a white liberal within the Smuts-led United Party who was perceived to be a great friend of black South Africans. In parliament in 1943, she clearly enunciated the sinister intentions of the policy of segregation, singling out Hertzog's Native Acts of the previous decade as solely intended to force blacks "into a position that would enable Europeans to secure and exploit their labour" (*Bantu World February 27, 1943:4*).

The flames of black liberalism were intermittently fanned by statements from the white Liberal Party, whose policies included: the abolition of white supremacy; equal rights for all South Africans; the introduction of a qualified franchise for a "transitional period" (thereby favouring educated blacks); and above all, the conviction that such transformation should be effected peacefully (*Post June 16, 1957:4*).

In 1940 the book "South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit" ("A book that should be read by every intelligent and thinking African") by well-known white liberal and President of the South African Institute of Race Relations, Prof. R.F. Hoernle, was suitably prominently advertised in *Bantu World* (*Bantu World January 27, 1940:12*).

Successful ventures or accomplishments such as the opening of facilities for blacks, including

entertainment venues like the Bantu Social Centre in Durban, always involved gratitude expressed to ‘European’ friends for their help in their establishment (*Ilanga Lase Natal August 30, 1941:16*). This habit of drawing attention to ‘European’ presence as the symbol of success or status of a function aroused comment from a certain Rev. Mpitso in what appears to have been a speech criticising the practices of black pressmen. Rather than appear contrite, Walter Nhlapo is provoked to retaliatory comment:

The Reverend gentleman remarked that Bantu reporters only attended shows sponsored by Europeans and reported same (sic). In such gatherings they would name Europeans present and when it comes to Bantus, they’d say: “and many others” ...

The Rev. Mpitso is correct to an extent ... In European press (sic) the important people are included in the report. With Africans, everybody thinks himself more important than his neighbour (*Bantu World January 11, 1941:9*).

In 1954, a *Bantu World* editorial was devoted to a remark made by a white liberal ex-municipal official, Mr. E.H. Haveman, bemoaning the loss of contact between ‘the African’ and ‘the European’. Referred to by the editor as one of “the bitter fruits of apartheid”, he nevertheless reassures his readers that “complete apartheid is, of course, an impossibility”, and avows that “whatever else may create bitterness between the different racial groups in our country, it must not be ignorance born of lack of contact” (*Bantu World November 6, 1954:2*).

The influence of white liberals in the music sphere is significant. For example, Peter Rezant, leader of the famous Merry Blackbirds, a band which can be justifiably called the flagship of the ‘liberal approach’ in the jazz arena, was taught by George Louttit (note spelling according to Peter Rezant - see *Ballantine 1993:34; 1991A:141*), a member of the (white) Railways and Harbours Band. Rezant proudly states that this man “became my very good friend” (*Rezant - writer’s interview: 8/4/98*). John Mtshimbilikwana was “struggling with this trumpet”, and had been refused assistance from various other teachers, when he met a “gentleman” from England who was a trumpeter with the Municipal Orchestra in Cape Town. “He was the only (white) person that stood up and said, ‘I will teach you’, because he thought this would be a good thing to teach somebody of a different race group” (*Mtshimbilikwana - writer’s interview: 4/7/97*).

5 Education

There is only one force that can gradually sweep away the colour bar and that is the power of learning ... In every separate community there must be those who inspire their fellowmen to greater efforts to learn, then surely, in time to come the people will grow into a grand nation fit and able to take their place in all the affairs of the country (*Bantu World* January 20, 1934:14).

Couzens observes the black educational elite's characteristic adoption of the "great man' theory of history" together with the credo of "progress". S.V.H. Mdhuli, in his book, "The Development of the African", uses the word "progress" or its variants no less than 37 times in the total 57 pages of the book (*Couzens* 1985:27).

The necessity of education as a primary requisite of the 'progress' which would result in liberation was evident in newspaper articles throughout the 1940s. A *Bantu World* reader declared in 1949: "as long as our people do not realise the necessity of making education their battle-shield, so long shall we remain at our present state of backwardness" (*Bantu World* December 24, 1949:7).

In 1951, the entire 'Reader's Forum' page bore the bold headline: "Anti-illiteracy campaign is more important to Africans than the fight and wrangle in politics". The first letter referred to the apparent futility of ANC conferences, which in the writer's opinion had effected no meaningful change in the situation in South Africa (this after the formation of the ANC Youth League, which in Ballantine's view, inaugurated a period of 'militancy'):

Politics will benefit us nothing and I suggest that these mighty men should concentrate all their energies toward the educational improvement of our people.

... To my mind the government will only change its attitude when we are all educated (*Bantu World* March 24, 1951:5).

Ezekiel Mphahlele succinctly summarises the premise on which the desire for education rested: "The misconception was that if we were educated, as educated as he [i.e. the white man] is, he will take us as equal. Many people thought that. Also, the missionary schooling created that kind of feeling, you see" (*Mphahlele – writer's interview: 27/5/98*).

That western education meant an automatic capitulation to white culture was expressed on more than one occasion: here the American ‘negroes’ had followed the example of the Japanese and Turks by adopting European culture. For their efforts in this regard, European missionaries were as always the objects of black elite gratitude in an article entitled “Education Is the Key to National Progress and Salvation”:

... the greatest nations of to-day (sic) rose from obscurity, passed through slavery and oppression and faced and surmounted all difficulties and hardships such as are confronting us to-day (sic).

... European missionaries, following in the footsteps of the Great Master, are ceaselessly working for the emancipation of our race from ignorance and superstition.

... We must change and adapt ourselves to the new life. But we cannot do this unless we do what the Japanese did over sixty years ago. When the Japanese discovered that the ancient life of their race was not suited for the conditions created by Western civilisation, they decided to westernise their way of life (*Bantu World* November 16, 1940:9).

Generally speaking, the newspapers of the 1930s and 1940s are permeated with comments to the overall effect that the repressive laws initially imposed by whites had been to some degree warranted by virtue of the inferiority of the uncivilised and inherently ‘evil’ state of African primitiveness as opposed to the vast superiority of white civilisation. Closely linked to this trend was a perception evident in the press of the late 1930s and early 1940s and which was to evolve in significance and assertion in later years: indigenous, ‘tribal’ pursuits were encouraged by well-meaning but ignorant liberal white friends as well as sinister racists, to the detriment of the black’s goals of urbanisation. What is fundamentally an insightful but gentle voice of objection against essentially benevolent Europeans (who were evidently in the majority) in this article, was to become a veritable howl of assertive protest on the part of certain journalists, by attitude if not words, in the late 1950s, and particularly in the 1960s. In other words, for many thinking black liberals in these decades, ‘Africanism’ (as in a pride in being African, and therefore embracing African culture), was the direct antithesis of ‘Westernism’ (or a pride in being ‘western’, and therefore embracing western culture). It is the more subtle beginnings of this mindset which is verbalised in an editorial in the perspicacious *Ilanga Lase Natal* in 1940. The column was entirely devoted to a discussion of the current practice by Natal whites to encourage and promote Zulu *ingoma* dancing. These dances, the editor predicts, would soon become popular “as a branch of sport” and as a tourist attraction. However, they represented the antithesis of black progress:

All of our European friends and officials, we think, should be filled with the desire and efforts to raise the Bantu in the shortest time possible and this cannot be accomplished by encouraging us in the retention of those of our customs which are and were not elevating to us. These dances do not by any means raise the status of our people on the upward path.

We have seen some people who do not care for African education becoming enthusiastic in encouraging us to retain our old customs in preference to education and pursuit of projects likely to open our eyes to see the benefits of education ... Without this education we may dance ourselves as high as we can but this does not bring to our people progress and upliftment.

... there are more and regrettable effects in that this being arranged for Sunday afternoon these games have depleted the Christian churches of worshippers to an alarming degree as the example set by Europeans is irresistible for a people who are not trained to think for themselves (*Ilanga Lase Natal July 27, 1940:15*).

Five years earlier, Bantu World had perceived that possibly derisive white motives for the presentation of an ingoma function near Johannesburg, had been suitably rebuffed. The significance of the sub-heading “African Art Forcing Its Way to Realisation” lies in the fact that the writer of the front-page lead article displays some ambivalence as to whether the occasion’s promotion of tribal dancing is praiseworthy or not. Certainly the reason for the prominence of what is no more than a review is the fact that the compliments paid to African art, and the prophecy that the true art of South Africa will “spring from the black races”, emanate from none other than “Miss Sybil Thorndyke, the famous English actress”, of whom a large autographed photograph appears. However, lost in a mire of confusion resulting from the flattering praise from so eminent a source, but smarting with his own inferred humiliation caused by the display of tribalism (“one cannot help feeling that the object was to show the Pressmen of the Empire how backward the Africans were”), the journalist grasps at the flagship of the ‘liberal approach’, western music, as the sure and unambiguous interpretation of black standards and aspirations:

The playing of “I want to be happy”, “Tipperary” and “The more we are together” by the Bachopi Orchestra thrilled all those who were present and was loudly applauded.

... Here the delegates were told at the outset that the African also want (sic) “to be happy”, to enjoy life and participate in the benefits of civilised life. Nay, they were told that given a chance the African can develop his talent and thus make a distinctive contribution to the gathering achievement of the human race (*Bantu World March 2, 1935:1*).

Most tenets of black liberalism were characteristically expressed in a mild and benevolent idiom.

However, it must be noted that for some black South Africans, this hunger for education implied at least a modicum of protest or confrontation: some intellectuals perceived that they were fighting a psychological war against Government opposition to their progress. In 1939 *Bantu World* declared that: “Since 1910 Act after Act has been placed on the Statute Book to prevent the rising tide of African progress” (*Bantu World January 7, 1939:4*). In 1940, a review of the book, “Africa’s Peril”, is described as a true enunciation of the vicious goals of segregation (“he does not cloak his idea of segregation with fine, meaningless phrases. No, he calls a spade a spade”), and its clearly defined opposition to the liberal hopes of both black and white. Most particularly, the author of this book defines the black South African’s desire to be educated as the biggest danger to segregationist ideals. Important for the discourse to follow is one concept of liberalism whose significance to the discourse is to be magnified later, namely, the disownment of African culture and all that pertains to it. The (white) writer of “Africa’s Peril” declares that Africans are “entering on (sic) their greatest struggle - the attempt to become as we are, civilised men with equal rights. We must divert them to whence they came” (*Bantu World March 30, 1940:4*) (own underlining).

Es’kia Mphahlele says that the need to fight Government repression of black progress was not always coherently articulated, or perhaps even perceived as such, in the era under discussion. Nevertheless, it could be intuitively derived as a motive emanating even from those who had not had the benefit of education:

... for them, it was a way of helping you to stand against the white man. Not in any articulate way ... (instead it was deduced from) the way in which they said things to us; the way they said: “You have got to go to school, learn to read and write. You see the white man is ‘standing on his feet’” - which is a literal translation of the Sotho (phrase) which means, ‘he is out to resist you’ (*Mphahlele - writer’s interview: 27/5/98*).

By 1951, a more directly confrontational approach was used by H. Selby Msimang when he stated: “you will be impressed more than anything else that the Government and the white people of this country will go to any lengths to keep an African in a sub-economic strata (sic) as the only effective instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of domination over us ad infinitum” (*Ilanga Lase Natal January 20, 1951:20*).

6 Christianity

Christianity was an indispensable component of education (*Bantu World* December 28, 1940:5). Education without Christianity could not produce the ‘civilised’ status to which the educated black of the 1930s and 1940s aspired. In fact, education without Christianity resulted in a man remaining “uncivilized at heart”, and was positively dangerous to society, as Professor D.D.T. Jabavu declared at a meeting of the “South African General Missionary” (sic) in Pretoria in 1932. Significant to the discussion on American influences, is the comment that the ‘unChristianised’ but educated man is “merely an educated barbarian - a Chicago gangster” (*Bantu World* July 9, 1932:4). It was against “this type of civilisation” (i.e. the Chicago gangster-type) which Prof. Jabavu and another white Professor, J. du Plessis, were issuing warnings. The problem lay in the fact that the black population had absorbed “material civilization” of the “superficial” rapidly, without proper understanding of the “moral and spiritual precepts of the white man”. Thus it was essential that the blacks enter the “open door to the white man’s spiritual values” - which were synonymous with liberal theoretical ideals of “generosity, public spirit, self-sacrifice, a sense of justice, fairplay and a respect for religion” (*Bantu World* July 9, 1932:4).

In the 1930s editorials, many of which sounded like Christian sermons, were devoted to eloquent arguments for the necessity of embracing Christianity as the only salvation for both South Africa and the world. In the 1950s these were less likely to be found in editorials, but articles and short sermons about the importance of the role of Christianity in civilisation were still found regularly (*Bantu World* November 18, 1939:4; *Ilanga Lase Natal* August 31, 1940:15; *Bantu World* July 23, 1949:2; August 12, 1950:3; August 19, 1950:2; October 13, 1951:6; February 16, 1952:1; April 11, 1953:11).

An important facet of this belief in Christianity as the salvation for oppressed South Africans, is the fact that racism, as much as primitiveness, was regarded as an “evil force”. It was recognised that within Christianity in South Africa, there were elements of “racialism and nationalism”, which needed to be expunged (*Bantu World* July 11, 1942:4). The occasional voice of sympathy from within the Dutch Reformed church, commonly regarded as the bastion of Afrikaner Christianity, and from whose doctrine a scriptural basis for Apartheid was supposedly found, was eagerly reported. For example, in

1942 the Rev F.J. Berning Malan, at a conference significantly held at Fort Hare University, declared that legislation which resulted in the denial of common citizenship or full liberty to any citizens of a country was un-Christian (*Bantu World* May 16, 1942:4; July 11, 1942:4).

Coupled with the thesis on Christianity and its potential to gain full citizenship for black South Africans, was the reiterated point by *Bantu World* that the black African race in its primitive state was inherently evil, and that unChristianised urbanites who indulged in uncouth behaviour and crime were committing sins “as a legacy of our forefathers” (*Bantu World* August 19, 1950:2; August 9, 1941:4; January 14, 1933:1). Thus a national inferiority complex was a distinguishing trait of one school of liberal thought (*Bantu World* July 9, 1932:4; *Ilanga Lase Natal* August 31, 1940:15; *Bantu World* September 15, 1951:6), the spontaneous result of which was a rejection of Africanness, and was to persist into the 1950s and beyond.

Perhaps the single most striking feature of identification, or essence, of black South African liberal thought was the concurrent adoption of westernisation and Christianisation to the simultaneous exclusion of all forms of African culture and tradition. First promoted by the missionaries as barbaric, ergo evil, the intuitive response to all repressive Government laws was an immediate perception that white South Africans wanted, by their relegation of blacks to tribal life, to exclude blacks from the civilised, western status to which they (blacks) aspired and which had been insinuated by the missionaries to be their reward. This urge to demonstrate their ‘westernness’ followed a convoluted, but nevertheless evolving path, and the important point here is that this ideological feature was retained to greater or lesser degree by a substantial, predominantly intellectual, sector of the black population, throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.

Early missionisation involved an automatic and simultaneous rejection of Africanness: there were those for whom this remained true throughout the 1950s and beyond, and it is this sector that remained representative of the ‘liberal approach’. According to Prof. Mngoma this was especially the case with the majority of older intellectuals and a significant sector of young educated people of his acquaintance. Rare insightful individuals like Mngoma saw the value of promoting African culture, and specifically the incorporation of African elements into urban music styles, including African jazz and other

commercial styles of the 1950s, but he stresses that his view was not at all representative of the majority of the educated elite (*Mngoma – writer’s interview: 23/4/95*).

A somewhat misleading heading of an editorial in 1941, “A Plea for Bantu Music”, stresses the importance of the teaching of (by implication, *western*) music in the education and progress of the race. As such, Adams College in Natal is owed “a great debt of gratitude” for being the first African educational institution to recognise the importance of music as one of “those higher arts which make life ever so much more beautiful for the individual”, and, therefore, establishing the first black music department. It is strongly implied that these ‘arts’ denote a vital element of ‘civilisation’, or sophisticated western urbanisation. For over eighty years, the editor writes, the ‘Bantu’ have been fed “poisonous praise” of their innate musical ability, the result of which has been the development of “a careless attitude” and a “sense of complacency that has become a poison”. In a clear enunciation of the use of western music as part of a liberal strategy, the editor appeals to the school-going population of the 1940s “to take music more seriously than has been done by the generation now in its prime, and to go back to the standards set by those stalwarts of forty, fifty years ago, who felt so keenly that they had to prove that the Bantu could reach up to the heights other nations had attained and won us the praise we so little deserve to-day” (*Bantu World - Children’s Newspaper & Family Supplement February 1, 1941:1*).

On the subject of tribalism and ethnicity, as distinct from Africanism (or even from a more generalised pride in being African), there was no ambiguity. Black liberal thought was totally opposed to the “Demon of tribalism” and its promotion by any source, be it benign or sinister. To this end it would brook no interference with those perceived to want to promote tribal divisions, such as those whites who were promoting the written form and literature of individual black languages. To these people the *Bantu World* issued a stern warning: “The Bantu people must be given a chance to build their own languages. It is futile to force them into the conditions of the past. The caravan of their progress is passing on despite the puny efforts of those who live in the past and endeavour to clog its wheels” (*Bantu World September 3, 1932:4*).

The conviction that Christianity - as presented from within the ideological framework of the

missionaries - was a major tool with which to fight oppression goes hand in hand with the 'liberal approach of moral persuasion' in its original and unadulterated form. The subtle change in stance or concept of the *purpose* of Christianity in their struggle for freedom was for some black South Africans an important and pivotal psychological Rubicon, which, when crossed, heralded the end of early black liberal views so clearly articulated in the 1930s and to a lesser degree throughout the 1940s. Whereas Christianity was the differentiating feature of *white* civilisation (and was an essentially 'white' religion), the introduction of Separatist movements saw the inception of forms of African nationalism in religious worship. Secondly, and probably of more importance for this discussion on the 'liberal approach', is the fact that a gradual realisation was unfolding (from within at least some sectors of the orthodox black Christian denominations) of the failure of the Christianisation process to have achieved liberation.

Early signs of this tendency included an editorial in *Bantu World* in 1947 which reported on a conference of African Ministers. This series of meetings was held under the auspices of the African Ministers' Federation, an organisation established in the mid-1940s to co-ordinate efforts to achieve the long-held goal of leading blacks "out of the darkness of Africa's ancient life" (*Bantu World January 18, 1947:4*). However, the shift in ideological perception is articulated by the Rev. J. A. Calata, the president of the Federation, who, amongst other ills in black society, drew attention to "the tendency among the educated (blacks) to regard Christianity as a white man's religion whose purpose is to keep the black man under the white man's tutelage for all time" (*Bantu World January 18, 1947:4*). Events such as the "African National Day of Prayer", in May 1953, was a "united effort in praying for the African people". More than this, its existence was necessitated because "the African has reached the breaking point", and God was asked to intervene as he had "intervened among the Israelites of old". The most important objective of this praying was the achievement of African unity; "an African united front against all evils - persecution, oppression and all kinds of discrimination because of colour" (*Bantu World May 16, 1953:6*).

7 Cultural Elitism

Fanon states that the intention of the white "settler", synonymous with the white liberal, is to 'break in' the "native"; the task is not complete until the "latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the

white man's values" (*Fanon 1963:43*). "On the other hand, during the period of liberation, the colonialist bourgeoisies looks feverishly for contacts with the elite and it is with these elite that the familiar dialogue concerning values is carried on" (*Fanon 1963:44*).

In 1951, the characteristically petit bourgeois Bantu World complained that the image black Americans were receiving of Africans via the medium of "the bioscope" was commonly that of the "raw" African. Instead, "there should be those who are busy showing him (i.e. the black American) the cultured and Christian African. I personally do not object to the showing of the backward African, but I strongly object to a picture that leaves out the cultured African" (*Bantu World June 9, 1951:6*).

An apparent result of the predominance of black liberal thought was the creation of an elite band of educated blacks, for many of whom the demonstration of 'civilisation' with inherent social and political rewards, both potential and real, meant the simultaneous eschewal of African culture. "The elite initially wanted to be white and wanted to be as *un*African as possible in order to identify (with whites); in order to gain political favour. In order to gain acceptance in white circles, they had to adopt all sorts of manners (so as) not to be thought crude, (or) to be undeveloped" (*Mngoma - writer's interview: 23/4/95*).

The difficulties experienced by those aspiring to levels of Christianised urbanisation, but living amongst uneducated blacks frequenting shebeens, and by inference, part of *marabi* culture, is expressed in a letter to Bantu World in 1940. Here the age-old distinction between tribal and detribalised (or 'sophisticated', synonymous with 'urban' and 'rural') Africans is drawn, which Mphahlele highlights as the single most divisive factor in urbanising black South African societies until the beginning of the 1950s (*Mphahlele – writer's interview: 21/11/97*).

Just now, it is a question how (sic) the Bantu intend (sic) to master full urbanity despite such a conglomeration of traditions within and around him. The urban Bantu could have shown by now some vast difference between the rural ways of living and the urban modes of life, but the influx of territorial Bantu plays havoc in (sic) the general progress of the urban Bantu.

I think the only possible means to civilise the urban Bantu or to make him understand himself civilised is by enforcing some residential segregation between those called "detribalised" and those still "tribalised" ... The brewing and selling of kaffir beer by the Bantu in these urban areas should be totally prohibited for

it is the food (drink) belonging and appreciated mostly by the territorial Bantu under tribal laws, and it is now playing havoc with the urbanised Bantu who are mostly individualistic in outlook (*Bantu World* December 14, 1940:5).

At least officially, proponents of the ‘liberal approach’ avoided *marabi* and its environment. There are very few references to the music and its associated practices of drinking and improper dancing in the 1930s and 1940s. From this fact alone one deduces that such excesses were a by-product of urbanisation not to be advertised. In a front-page lead article in which Sybil Thorndyke praised African art, mention is made of a song by Shangaans in which shebeens were referred to. These shebeens, and presumably the musical practice of *marabi* associated with them, are declared to be “social evils created by the white man’s legislation” (*Bantu World* March 2, 1935:1).

The following article by Walter Nhlapo is most significant for the discourse and will be referred to again. It reveals his desire for black South African bands to raise their standards, and at the same time betrays his prejudice against ‘low-class’ entertainment structures like the *stokfel*. It allows the reader to glimpse the prejudice against jazz which still appeared to exist in at least certain elite individuals, and which his comments are obviously trying to overcome:

BANDS ON PARADE

Do you remember Monday, August 18 when six popular Bantu dance bands appeared at the Ritz Hall in what was billed, “Who’s Who?” Today we write about that night of nights when bands gave dancers one damn hot thing after another, until dancers’ limbs were wearied and soles worn-out (sic).

DISHEARTENING RESPONSE

A somewhat disappointing response to our appeal to fans of the bands to give ratings was more than anticipated. But some enthusiastic persons took full advantage of the unique opportunity to give us their ratings.

HOW WE RATED

...

We now know the developing and progressive bands and those fit to play in *Stockfells*.(sic) It has been an easy task for us to sift wheat from chaff but unfortunately we reserve our judgement, and as a result every band will think it played the best and put life in the dancers and wallflowers.

JAZZ AN ART

Whether you play jazz as blues, stomping, boogie woogie, swing or contrasting it is jazz, and jazz playing [though considered by many low and vulgar] is art. Have you heard Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Chuck Webb, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Jack Teagarden, Jimmy Runceford, Bert Ambrose, Jimmy

Dorsey, Louis Armstrong and many others on the records?

TASTY PLAYING

... One or two of our bands are on this fine rating, the rest should be liquidated to **Stockfells** (sic) (*Bantu World* October 25, 1941:9) (bold type as in article).

In 1940, “Aureole”, the music critic for *Ilanga Lase Natal*, referred to the proposed music department at Adams College. Obviously referring to the need to study serious western music, a tone of (albeit mild) protest, characteristic of this publication, is noted:

All that we have to do to advance in music is to study the art, for we are sure that we as human beings are quite capable of ‘speaking’ this language (*i.e. western ‘serious’ music*) of human beings if we but study. We shall not allow anything to keep us from what we can get at will and what shall enrich our cultural standard (*Ilanga Lase Natal* November 23, 1940:6).

Broadly speaking, both the B.S.C. (Bantu Social Centre) in Durban and the B.M.S.C. (Bantu Men’s Social Centre) in Johannesburg were institutions which functioned as symbols of the cultural ‘progress’ which epitomised the spirit of the ‘liberal approach’. A review in *Ilanga Lase Natal* in 1953 serves as a good example of the ‘high’ cultural tone engendered at the B.S.C. by the organisational secretary, Howard Mehlomakhulu, by the staging of a show which featured the soprano, Pattie Masuku, and tenor, Ignatius Themba, “two of Durban’s leading singers”, along with the Melody-Makers, Tango dancers, and a “dance and singing twosome, Petro Majola and Percy Mkhize”. The second half of the programme consisted of the play, “Exclusive Model”, written and produced by three whites. The columnist bemoans the fact that the hall was only half-filled. “Is it possible”, he asks, “that the Durban public is allowing itself to deteriorate in the appreciation of programmes of cultural value?” A typically elite lecture on the importance of cultural advancement follows, along with assurances that “progressive” black South Africans will support “whatever he (Mehlomakulu) does for the sake of the cultural advancement of our community”, which included the proposed establishment of ‘Sigma’ clubs, ‘Musical Revues’ (or variety concerts) and the founding of a Choral Society (*Ilanga Lase Natal* April 25, 1953:16).

The expression of liberal thought included a substantial measure of English ballads, madrigals, etc.

(*Mngoma – writer’s interview: 14/2/95*) as well as western compositions in the vernacular which were composed by Africans. An entertainment review from the *Bantu World* presents vocal music representative of the liberal approach and a subtle glimpse of how western styles were part of the strategy to achieve liberation:

The Follies, the main stay (sic) of the programme, depicted various phases of African life in dance and song. After an absence from the group, Snowy Mahlangu (Nee Radebe) made her debut that night.

The Pretoria Minstrels ably rendered the Negro Spirituals which were well chosen and received by the audience.

Phyllis Mqomo sang “Lullaby”, “My Task” and “On Wings of Song”. She has a sweet, cultured voice and received an ovation. She was accompanied on the piano by Todd Matshikiza, whose colourful playing was an inspiration to the singer.

The highlight of the day was the rendering of Mohapeloa’s Sotho compositions “Linoto” and “Obe” which were rendered with great dramatic effort by the Orlando choir. Mr Mothopeng, the conductor, is spectacular and thrilled the audience. ...

It was fitting for such a show to have “Plea for Africa” as its concluding item. – “Excelsior” (*Bantu World July 31, 1948:11*).

Apart from embracing ‘high’ or ‘serious’ western art, in the 1930s and 1940s the cultural demonstration of ‘civilised finesse’ in the entertainment sphere was ballroom dancing. This form of recreation was not *solely* the pre-occupation of the educated elite. However, there is sufficient evidence, both in newspaper references and from oral testimony, to attest that ballroom dancing was *perceived* - after some initial objection to its introductory association with foreigners (*Rezant - writer’s interview 8/4/98*) - to be the ultimate expression of urbanised sophistication. Its proponents included those who felt that they had already attained this status, as well as those aspiring to, or wanting to be seen to be associated with, the perceived cultural refinement of the upper echelons of society (*Radebe Petersen - writer’s interview: 17/10/94; Rezant – writer’s interview: 8/4/98*).

From the press reports of the Gamma Sigma Club, the association can be viewed as a couth and refined manifestation of the ‘liberal approach’, in which the activities of discussion, debate and public speaking are a demonstration of the levels of civility and sophistication of its participants. References to the activities of this association occur in the ‘Social Activities’ pages of the black

press. However, in recounting the events which led to its emergence in 1921, Couzens portrays workers' hostile and aggressive attitude to whites, which would most comfortably fit the 'radical' period - the beginnings of which Ballantine attests occurred approximately twenty years later. Couzens describes how Ray Phillips, an American Board missionary who won the confidence of many black South Africans and a staunch proponent of the 'liberal approach', describes a massive strike which was being planned in the then Transvaal. It was to involve approximately 200 000 miners and another 100 000 domestic and industrial workers. Their brief, amongst other plans, included the capturing of mines, the looting of shops and banks, and the killing of whites "in their beds". Phillips, who attempted to win the confidence of the "embittered native leaders", was met with the response which typifies Ballantine's 'radical' view: "You are not wanted here. You had better go back home. There's not a white man in South Africa who cares the snap of his fingers for the black man. Peaceful measures have failed. We are being forced to try violence" (*Couzens 1985:94*).

It is in the measures which were adopted in order to quell this proposed violence (such as the formation of the Gamma Sigma Club) that the genre of liberalism reminiscent of that which Fanon scathingly articulates, is enacted. "The colonialist bourgeoisies" (as represented here by Phillips), appears to have the same interests as the colonised elite - in this instance the educated 'petits bourgeoisies'. These two groups meet in order to achieve "non-violence", which Fanon declares, is "an attempt to settle the colonial problem around a green baize table, before any regrettable act has been performed or irreparable gesture made, before any blood has been shed" (*Fanon 1963:61*).

Cracks in the self-satisfied ideology of the 'liberal approach' were expressed occasionally, and most often these concerned the arrogance of those in black leadership, who were generally also those who promoted black liberalism most vociferously. For some, the perception existed that there were many among the educated leaders of the race who were more concerned with the achievement and retention of personal status than the welfare of others. This ethos had resulted in a "wild ... scramble" to gain "personal eminence and security in business, educational attainment, and the profession." Glimpses of an African nationalism are to be seen in this article:

Each person who succeeds in this “individual battle” feels he is liberated, powerful, honoured. He does not think of the Masses, and is not even prepared to co-operate (sic) with his successful upper ten comrades ... To put it better, the contention is that Africans must produce great men in education, in profession, and in business first, to prove to the European that the black man can do this and that; second, to make the masses point out to these men as examples of African latent power; or to be inspired by them.

It was salutary, therefore, to hear a different point of view stated clearly and strongly. Dr. E. Roux's point of view is that of African Trade Unionists, Mass leaders ... In “The Trek” he points out that African Intellectuals etc. can never have freedom and status and respect until the Africans as a whole move forward. ... The task of the intellectuals should be to go down and help the submerged masses, not to hanker after security, personal glory and wealth. Here are two points of view, and you may debate them (*Ilanga Lase Natal February 17, 1945:12*).

In a convoluted defence of black intellectuals who had been accused of egocentric motives and actions, the editor of *Bantu World* claimed in 1941 that a distinction should be drawn between these selfish men and those who, despite education, have “humble intentions”. These are the black South Africans to whom allegiance is owed, not only because they “had protected their lowly fellowmen from victimisation”, but notably because “They are the people who have won us friends among Europeans” (*Bantu World November 15, 1941:4*).

These sentiments were by definition class- and education-based, and invariably involved superior attitudes of the intellectual elite. The importance of these sentiments lies in the slowly evolving idea among, it must be stressed, a *few* black politicians and journalists, that black liberation would only be achieved by the unification of the masses and the elite. In an article by “Optimus” in 1946, the belief is expressed that, while the realisation that education would help to achieve progress had not weakened, the “present system of (predominantly church and mission-school) education” was cause for dissatisfaction: “The tendency in our education is to isolate the learned from the untaught, and to endeavour to foster a class-standard which will make the literate to look down upon the man-in-the-gutter” (*Bantu World April 20, 1946:14*). The ‘man-in-the gutter’, as representative of the masses, would be necessary for the liberation of the black South African race. It must be emphasised that this opinion was *not* the majority one amongst intellectuals in the mid-1940s.

The present upheavals at Orlando have, for instance, been allowed to go unchronicled and unchallenged by the educated section of the Orlando community. They have not even identified themselves with the struggles of their people. Instead, ostrichlike, they have hidden their heads in the sand (*Bantu World April 20, 1946:14*).

At least in theory, elite ideals seemed to embrace a need for this state to be achieved by all members of the population. An ‘oppositional stance’ did not imply the Africanisation of the masses; progress, the inevitable result of education in western norms and civilisation, was to be the tool by which liberation would be achieved.

At the epicentre of the elite liberal period, respected critic Walter M.B. Nhlapo unambiguously placed himself firmly within the domain of the ‘civilised’ elite that promoted the precepts of this social philosophy so vigorously. Evidently criticising both the format and content of a “Students’ Reception” at the fairly select venue, the Ritz Hall, at which the prestigious Merry Blackbirds and Jazz Maniacs played, he appears to bemoan the loss of the prestigious ‘school concert’:

Students’ receptions are not what they were years ago. In this city, the name is for mere exploitation and thus these once upon a time worth attending gatherings have degenerated socially and educationally.

There was a time when in these gatherings students rendered musical items; most schools participated and were attended by outsiders of a much more responsible type and the occasion was a top-hole. But now it is not so. They dance from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. And what a dance!

Merry Blackbirds and Jazz Maniacs were in attendance (*Bantu World* August 30, 1940:6).

With most of the ‘sketches’ presented by the vaudeville troupes, whose material showed the first signs of incorporating African elements onto the entertainment stage, Nhlapo remains unimpressed:

This fact our people must bear in mind. The plays we see ... on our vaudeville stage lack beauty of style, felicity of expression, power of description, keen sense of humour or other outstanding qualities that make plays enjoyable and successful. So far as I know there is no playwright but one, Mr. H.I.E. Dhlomo and I am becoming too annoyed with headless and tail-less plays (*Bantu World* January 11, 1941:9).

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