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# "The struggle to be independent": a history of the black press in South Africa 1836 - 1960

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
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STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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TITLE: "THE STRUGGLE TO BE INDEPENDENT" : A History of the Black Press in South Africa 1836 - 1960

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"THE STRUGGLE TO BE INDEPENDENT"

A HISTORY OF THE BLACK PRESS IN SOUTH AFRICA 1836 - 1960

The publication by Les and Donna Switzer of their book The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho: A descriptive Bibliographical Guide to African, Coloured and Indian Newspapers, Newsletters and Magazines 1836 - 1976 has meant, in its comprehensiveness and scholarliness, a great advance in our overall knowledge of the Black Press in South Africa and puts us in the position where we can begin to see the outlines of the black press's history. Roughly one can define three major periods in this history.:

1. the early origins which were mainly mission-controlled

2. the period from 1884 to 1932 when black newspapers were largely independent though often struggling to survive

3. from 1932 when whites exert increasing influence on the black newspapers (this date can perhaps be pushed back to 1920 with the founding of a newspaper by the Chamber of Mines).

It must always be borne in mind that the designation "black press" is a fairly arbitrary one: it is a category extremely blurred at the edges. Despite numerous efforts of segregationists, both black and white, in South Africa, social activity has never been completely racially exclusive. Thus, what are often referred to as "white newspapers" such as The Rand Daily Mail or The Sunday Times are incorrectly described as such - certainly in terms of their readership. What is discussed in this chapter, however, is a loose category covering those publications which, by and large, were or still are aimed at or cater for black audiences. The Switzers list 712 such publications between 1836 and 1976 and no doubt a further number will be discovered and added to this list in the future.

1. THE MISSIONARY ORIGINS

The origins of the black press are to be located in the early contacts between blacks and whites in the Eastern Cape in the early part of the Nineteenth Century. The first missionary to enter the Tyumie Valley in the Eastern Cape was Dr Johannes van der Kemp in September, 1799. After working amongst the people of Chief Ngqika he left at the end of 1800. Like van der Kemp the next missionary to enter into Ngquika's territory, the Rev. Joseph Williams, was also of the London Missionary Society. He died after two years however. The Rev. John Brownlee, who had broken from the L.M.S., next arrived in 1820 and set up station on the Gwali stream in the Tyumie Valley. In 1821 he was joined by the Rev. W.R. Thomson and Mr John Bernie, a catechist, both of the Glasgow Missionary Society. In 1823 the Rev. John Ross also came, bringing with him a printing press, a forerunner of those which were to help revolutionise the whole nature of communication in the country. Religious services were held, a school was opened. The Lord's Prayer was taught and the press printed an elementary spelling book, a small catechism, some hymns.[2] In 1824 a new station was opened by the missionaries which was to form the basis of the Lovedale Mission where so many of the teachings, the education system, the way of life, the aspirations and ideologies of the mission schools of Lovedale, Clarke-

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bury, Healdtown, Burnside, St Matthews etc. were key influences in the moulding of most of those blacks connected with journalism in the early days. Since the mission schools were to dominate black education for well over a century it is not surprising that black journalism reveals an almost equivalent influence during that period. These early missions thus laid down the basis for the literacy essential for the journalists and for the reading public; they were also instrumental in providing the technical skills for printing and publishing the newspapers. In turn, the newspapers themselves were self-conscious in their desire to help improve the rate and quality of the spread of literacy. The catechist Bernie began to make some of the earliest recorded contributions to written Xhosa in the form of a grammar and in the composition of hymns. Clearly one of the most important events in the history of South African written literature and literacy was the publication in 1865 of the Xhosa version of the Bible, largely the work of the Rev. J.W. Appleyard.[3] Criticism of this led to the appointment of a committee which subsequently produced what was considered to be a much improved version. One of the most important of this committee was the very first black ordained minister, Tiyo Soga, who can be seen as not only one of the first of blacks newspapermen but also of that class which was to dominate the newspaper for so long.

It is difficult to say which was the first black "newspaper". There are several early printed efforts which are, however, more in the nature of journals than newspapers and all have a strongly religious bias. The very first of these seems to have been a Tswana publication entitled Morisa Oa Molemo, published in Kuruman in 1836. None of its supposed nine issues seem to have survived.[4] In Xhosa, the first of such journals was Umshumayeli Ulendaba (Publisher of the News or The Preacher's News) issued quarterly, between 1837 and 1941, and printed at Grahamstown and Peddie.[5] This was edited and largely written by white missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and contained mainly religious subject matter.[6] Between 1844 and 1845 a second press, established at Lovedale, by the Glasgow Missionary Society, printed four issues of Ikwezi (Morning Star) which A.C. Jordan described as "the earliest records of anything ever written by a Xhosa speaker in Xhosa".[7] William Kobe Ntsikana, the son of Ntsikana, supposedly the very first Christian convert, wrote for the journal which seems to have ceased publication because of the 1846 war.[8] A monthly magazine, Indaba (The News) was produced from Lovedale between 1862 and 1865. Two-thirds of it was printed in Xhosa, one-third in English, whereby it was hoped to "stimulate the study of English among Africans". Circulation was between five and six hundred. It owed much to the efforts of one of its main contributors Tiyo Soga (1829-1871), the first great black literary figure of the Nineteenth Century, translator of Pilgrim's Progress into his home language, Xhosa, and co-translator of the Bible into the same language (a word of caution: our oral literature - the truly great tradition within South African literature - obviously predates the Soga literary events. References to literature which follow involve the growth of written and Westernized literature. It is largely inferior - or, rather, different - to the oral tradition).[10] In the first issue of Indaba in August, 1862, Soga produced an article entitled "A National Newspaper". Since it may be the earliest extant pronouncement by a black South African about newspapers it is worth quoting the first two-

thirds of the article verbatim.[11] Soga saw the newspaper as having a significant continuity with the traditional methods of obtaining news orally by means of travellers or messengers. The metaphor which runs through the passage is that the words will be like grains of wheat, full of sustenance, waiting to be harvested. At the end of the year all the pages will be gathered into sheaves, each volume bound for preservation and future sustenance. The living past and the present will thus be preserved for the future.

> So it is, night follows day!. Greetings Mr Editor! We hear that you will be reporting and publishing events. Is it true? So we are to have a national newspaper. The news will come right inside our huts. This is really welcome news. We Xhosas are a race which enjoys conversation. The sense of well-being among us (sic) to hear something new. When a man who has things to relate comes to a home a meal is cooked in a tall pot because the people want him to eat to his satisfaction so that the happiness which is the result of a good meal will open his heart and the sore parts will heal. As soon as that happens there will be a stream of news flowing out of the mouth. The listener will continually assent. So will the narrator be encouraged. Silence will at times reign, all ears listening. The damsel will constantly replenish the fire in the fire-place. When the news-retailer finishes there will be a general hum, expressing agreement, rejoicing and acceptability of the visitor.
>
> That is the essential nature of the Xhosa people. You too, Mr. Editor, will confirm this opinion the day you visit our homes in the rural areas. Once our people realise you are a man of words a conversationalist the tribesmen will surround you. Stiff pumpkin and pit-corn porridge (umga wesangcozi), a pumkin and maize dish (umxhaxha), a mixture of sour milk and broken bread (umxobo) will be placed before you to eat your fill. So I anticipate great happiness from the publication of the newspaper. We shall be having a visitor who will converse with us very agreeably. Where are our fellow-tribesmen? Sound the horn and invite our people to swarm round him. Say to them, "Here you are! You lovers of conversation."
>
> One advantage we shall reap with the coming of this journal is that we will be confident that the people now will get the truth about the affairs of the nation. As people who are always hungry for news often we find ourselves dupes of deceivers under the guise of relating genuine facts. We are fed with half-truths by travellers who pass near our areas. We are unreliable people Mr. Editor, to speak confidentially because we like to exaggerate. We have a sense of humour and we can talk until light shines as if it was day-time. When you examine the report you are surprised to discover that there was not even a grain of truth in what was being said. We should be careful of what is reported from our areas at first. We must at times accept it with reservations. Today with your

newspaper you are initiating an enterprise for banning falsehood. So we are pleased and grateful.

There is this again to say about this matter. Our kaffir-corn we collect into the corn-pits. We put our cattle in enclosures, the kraals. We pack clothes in bags or cases and keep our money in banks or boxes. According to our custom the female folk if I may tell you a secret, keep the savings of the homes by sewing them into their skin skirts. When there is need of making a contribution or payment of this thing we so much dread, called poll-tax, they rip open the secret pocket of the skirt. You may be amused at these things and yet they are true. I am trying with these illustrations to show that precious things are kept secure.

What are the corn-pits, the cattle kraals, the boxes and the bags? What are the skin skirts' pockets, and the banks for the stories and fables, the legends, customs and history of the Xhosa people and Cingo people? This is a challenge, for I envisage in this newspaper a beautiful vessel for preserving the stories, fables, legends, customs, anecdotes and history of the tribes. The activities of a nation are more than cattle money or food. A subscriber to the journal should preserve the copies of successive editions of Indaba and at the end of the year make a bound volume of them. These annual volumes in course of time will become a mine of information and wisdom which will be a precious inheritance for generations of growing children.

All is well today. Our veterans of the Xhosa and Embo people must disgorge all they know. Everything must be imported to the nation as a whole. Fables must be retold; what was history or legend should be recounted. What has been preserved as tradition should be restiled. Whatever was seen heard or done under the requirements of custom should be brought to light and placed on the national table to be sifted for preservation. Were there not several tribes before? Where is the record of their history and customs good or bad? Had we no chiefs in days gone by? Where are the anecdotes of their periods? Were these things buried with them in their graves? Is there no one to unearth these things from the graves? Were there no national poets in the days of yore? Whose praises did they sing? Is there no one to emulate this eloquence? In the olden days did not some people bewitch others? What were the names of the men of magic? Is it not rumoured that some were tortured severely and cruelly? Are there no people who have an idea of matters of this nature which happened under the cloak of custom? Are there no battles which were fought in those distant days ? Where were these battles fought and who were the heroes? What feathers were worn by the royal regiments? Are there no anecdotes connected with the brave men who wore decorations. Were there no hunting expeditions in those far-off days and why were the breasts of the eland and the buffalo eaten only by those at the great place? We should revive and bring to the light all this great wealth

> of information. Let us bring to life our ancestors Ngconde, Togu, Tshiwo, Phalo, Rharhabe, Nlawu, Ngqika and Ndlambe. Let us resurrect our ancestral fore-bears who bequeathed to us a rich heritage. All anecdotes connected with the life of the nation should be brought to this big corn-pit our national newspaper Indaba (The News).

In the concluding passages Soga pointed to an added function of the journal. The newspaper would help to stabilize society (just as the publication of the Xhosa Bible, for better or worse, helped standardize the language). He pointed out that in the previous month an unforeseen eclipse of the sun had nearly brought about a repetition of the 1857 Cattle Killing which might have had a "result which would have been perhaps tragic". Given white astronomical expertise such a journal could publish and warn about such future events and forestall catastrophes. The fact that this would be to the advantage of the colonial government he does not mention. He does, however, hint slightly at the power and status which literacy might bring.

> I cannot recount all we shall gain by having this journal. Those who have no pocket money should go to the forest and bring home dry wood which will be good as fuel so that the head of the family on newspaper day when the fire-wood is burning well he will lie on his back on the upper side of the hut and place one leg over the other and proceed to open the newspaper saying, "my family, will you please listen to the news".

Soga died in 1871, the year after a new monthly magazine, the Kaffir Express, to which he would no doubt "have been an outstanding contributor",[12] was started at Lovedale. The principal of Lovedale, Dr. James Stewart, leader of the expedition which was to found the Livingstonia mission in Nyasaland in 1875, took an active interest in the magazine.[13] The magazine was initially in English and Xhosa and the Xhosa section was entitled Isigidimi Sama Xosa (The Xhosa Messenger) The Kaffir Express spelt out its own purpose in 1871.

> But whatever may be the increase of their material wealth, "WITHOUT PRINTING THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE MUST REMAIN BARBAROUS". We are not forgetting that the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, a Hymn Book and a half dozen small religious works exist in Kafir - besides school books. But what is aimed at in the Kaffir Express, is to supply a monthly or weekly sheet, such as will gradually induce the habit of reading, and make it both a taste and necessity and[14] thus serve as an education in the wider sense of the word.

The article went on to record that the 'circulation reached at the present month is rather above 800 - and of these only 500 are native subscribers' and to lament that only 500 readers 'can be secured out of so large a population' whereas, at a subscription rate of three shillings per year, at least a thousand readers were needed. In 1876, however, Isigidimi Sama Xosa became a separate and independent Xhosa-language monthly, later fortnightly, newspaper, the 'first independent African newspaper in Southern Africa',[15] edited at different times by Elijah Makiwane, J.T. Jabavu, J.K. Bokwe and W.W. Gqoba, while The Kaffir Express continued in English only, changing its name to The Christian Express (In 1922 this was again changed to The South African Outlook which is still being published today, making it the oldest surviving continuous mission publication in the country). This magazine attracted over the years participation and contributions by most of the well-known names of the educated elite: Elijah Makiwane, John Knox Bokwe, Sol Plaatje, John Tengo Jabavu, and his son, Professor D.D.T. Jabavu, R.V. Selope Thema, John Dube, J.E.K. Mqhayi, H.D. Tyamzashe, A.C. Jordan and many others. But a process which had begun with the education and ordination of Soga and the training and Christianization of others was widening the gap between this group and those who refused or had not come into contact with this new influence. The influence of the missions was not confined to the actual starting of newspapers. (Since, although these above examples have frequently been called 'newspapers', they are not really full newspapers as we know them today - they were, however, important as examples of early leads-in to the proper newspapers.) Much more crucial has been their role as educators of early black newspapermen. Healdtown, Lovedale, Adams Training College in Amanzimtoti helped produce most of the key early black politicians and newspapers. At these institutions, men like Jabavu, Dube, Selope Thema, Rolfes Dhlomo imbibed Christian and Western 'civilizations'. The mission influence was thus survived long after most of the mission newspapers. This was because many blacks internalized the mission ideology and many of these men still dominated the black newspaper into the 1930's and 1940's. This is a key factor: successive white governments and proprietors have allowed a measure of freedom to their black newspaper-editors because such men have often been chosen for their innate conservatism. In other words social control in South Africa has been maintained not only through overt violence and compulsion, but also through a colonization of the minds of part of the oppressed population. One must, perhaps, be sympathetic towards many of these black leaders, however. One must remember what Dr. Shula Marks has called 'the ambiguities of dependence".[16] With little political power black leaders have had to walk an ambiguous tight-rope between collaboration with and resistance against their white oppressors. This has led to a variety of black responses.

> The decade of the 1870's witnessed the emergence of a deep cleavage in the eastern Cape African population, a cleavage that the Africans themselves recognized by the labels 'School People' and 'Reds' or 'Blanket People'- The School people were those who possessed some formal education, were Christians, or had otherwise assimilated prominent aspects of European culture. They generally regarded themselves as

> progressives ... The Reds were traditionally-oriented people who adhered to the older and more familiar patterns of life. Their name derived from their habit of colouring their bodies and clothing with red ochre. This was to become a positive symbol of their conservatism, as were their blankets which they wore in preference to western-style clothing.[17]

It is these 'School People' who were the founders of the early black press and the originators of the black press tradition. It was they who initiated a significant change in black response to white power. Perceiving the powerlessness of their people on the battlefield they resorted to the attempt to bring about change through political and other means. As one poet I.W.W. Citashe wrote in the newspaper Isigidimi in the 1880's:

> Your cattle are gone, my countrymen!
> Go rescue them! Go rescue them!
> Leave the breechloader alone
> And turn to the pen.
> Take paper and ink,
> For that is your shield.
> Fire with your pen.[18]

## 2. THE INDEPENDENT BLACK NEWSPAPERS 1884 - 1932

But whereas the new education, the new way of life, the new aspirations, the new labour systems were creating new class differentiations and divorcing sections of the population from each other, it also developed a class of blacks which, though Christianized and Westernized, began to perceive that it had interests not always entirely at one with the white missionaries, certainly not with the white colonists. This group began to see that their interests needed their own outlets of expression. While missionary publications continued to exist, often to thrive, a new era of independent newspapers began to develop.

The central figure in the first step in this new phase was John Tengo Jabavu (1859 - 1921). He was born at Healdtown and, like Selope Thema after him, began life as a cattle-herd. His parents, despite their poverty, were determined that he get some education and enrolled him in a day-school. He was a diligent pupil and acquired his Teacher's Certificate very early.[19] He became a teacher in Somerset East, soon became a local preacher and apprentised himelf to the local newspaper, the Somerset Budget and Courant, which brought him in contact with sympathetic whites, mostly English-speaking.[20] In 1881 he became editor of Lovedale's Isigidimi-Sama-Xhosa and in 1883 completed the Matriculation Exemption of the South African University. With the help of J.T. Irvine, a liberal King Williamstown trader and member of the Legislative Assembly from 1879 to 1883, who provided security for the newspaper when it started, and of two other King Williamstown traders, J.W. Weir and William Lord, and the attorney, Richard Rose Innes, all of whom provided advertizing for the newspaper, Jabavu started Imvo Zabantsundu, (African Opinion) a weekly in Xhosa and English, in 1884 in King Williamstown.

Innes was to claim in 1922 that he and Weir provided joint surety with a King Williamstown bank and that Imvo soon became overdrawn to the tune of a thousand pounds when Jabavu found he could not collect subscriptions effectively. Weir and Innes then arranged management for Imvo while Jabavu drew a salary until the newspaper found its feet and Jabavu could take over fully. This version, however, is open to some doubt as it is based largely on Innes' evidence alone and at other times he does not refer to this state of affairs. Jabavu certainly received active support and encouragement from liberal English newspapermen, including William Hay, who agreed to print Imvo on his Cape Mercury press, and Saul Solomon.[21]

It is clear that the starting of Imvo was not without its tensions. The beginning of the independent newspaper coincided with the early stirrings of dissatisfaction with the white-dominated churches and the moves towards independent black churches. In January, 1885, Elijah Makiwane (1850 - 1928) gave a lecture to the Native Education Association, a body begun in 1879 and which was described by Jabavu as 'perhaps the first Society launched among and by the natives themselves independently of the well-known missionary and magisterial props that have been ... so valuable to our people'.[22] In his lecture, given only a couple of months after the founding of Imvo (which had been in November, 1884) Makiwane hints at friction, criticism and opposition, and has to tread a delicate path of conciliation and assertion of independence.[23]

> I cannot however close my remarks on some of the questions of the day without returning to the Imvo Zabantsundu. You have all seen how well this venture has been received by the colonial press generally. I know that many others have received it with the same cordiality who have not expressed their feelings publicly. It is as evident that in some quarters it has been received coldly or with suspicion and that it has even encountered active opposition. So far as I know this cold reception is due to two causes: the first is that it is supposed to be started with a view of ruining Isigidimi - an opposition paper to that noble effect to which the natives owe so much. It is opposed secondly because it is supposed to be the organ of those lawless spirits who will not be controlled by missionary or European influence. It has even been asserted that those who are concerned in it will be found leading a rebellion very shortly. It is supposed to indicate that the Natives or a small section of them are not satisfied with what is being done for them. Now with regard to the second group of opposition I need say no more than has already been stated. There is no doubt that there is a party of Natives that thinks that we may do more for ourselves, that it is not healthy for us to depend so much on the health of others and that an attempt ought to be made to stand on our feet. In so saying they do not despise the help which has been so freely given. On the contrary they believe that for some time they cannot be entirely without it. I need not add that I hope that the number of these who are inclined to do

something for themselves as well as receive help will increase.

A man ought to take help only as long as it is necessary. It ought to be the ambition of everyone to do without help and to reach a stage in which he will give himself help. I do not of course mean to say that anyone will be wholly independent of the help of others. I do wish, however, that it be plainly understood that missionary influence is highly valued by those who are supposed to be represented by the Imvo. That this section of Natives thinks that efforts of self-help are not inconsistent with the sincere desire to follow the guidance of European friends. With regard to the Imvo being an opposition paper to the Isigidimi all I need to do is express the belief that no-one who is concerned with starting it or supporting it had such a thought. I believe I am correct in saying that what led to the starting of the Imvo was the belief that the Natives required a professionally political paper which the Isigidimi is not and perhaps could not well be and that a paper issued more often was required and that there was plenty of room for the two. I know that some of those who have taken active interest in the support of the Imvo are much more concerned with the success of the Isigidimi than that of the Imvo Zabantsundu. What is of more importance, however, is the reception the Imvo is to get from the Natives themselves. I know that good wishes have been expressed from various quarters but two things are especially necessary - the one is that there be as many paying subscribers as there are well-wishers and the other is that the editor receive contributions in writing as often as possible in order to make the paper truly representative. The chief burden must fall on the class represented by the members of this Association. This Association I think is under the necessity of supporting the two papers warmly. In any case, the Imvo is a great effort and the man who has had the courage to face what is involved in starting such a venture will deserve praise even if he should fail.

The lack of independence of the black editors of Isigidimi was indirectly hinted at by an article in The Christian Express in 1876 which, tentatively apologising in reply to a criticism, stated that the newspaper 'has for two years and a half been edited very properly and very well, too, by a "superior" native - but under supervision of course. The article in question was carefully revised, every word of it, by a white skin and whatever blame there be, must fall on a skin of that colour.'[24] From Makiwane's talk can be seen some of the pressures on the early editors and writers: the moral pressure from liberal 'friends' with the hinted charges of 'ingratitude'; the violent objections from white colonists and administration that the striving for a measure of independence by the black elite would end in rebellion (a position which we will see reoccur late in official discussion concerning Levi Khomo's Northern Transvaal newspaper); and perhaps unstated radical pressure from elements within their own class, or from

more traditional sections of the population.

While Isigidimi was, by 1888, to founder under the competition, Imvo was to help Jabavu become the most powerful black politician in the Cape up to the end of the Century. The practical success of Jabavu and his newspaper was not inconsiderable. As his son wrote in his father's biography, 'it is difficult to separate the doings of Tengo Jabavu from those of the Imvo'. Their intervention, for instance, prevented an uprising in Pondoland and secured the release of Chief Sigcau from Robben Island 1886-7. The Native Disenfranchisement Bill was 'effectually destroyed' by the Imvo-Jabavu partnership and a deputation consisting of Jabavu, Rev. Elijah Makiwane and Rev. Isaac Wauchope secured a relaxation in the Cape Pass Laws. It was perhaps the success of early deputations which led to the persistence of this form of protest into the early part of the Twentieth Century - and to the failures of the deputations against Union in 1910 and the Native Lands Act 1913. Jabavu and Imvo also challenged the imprisonment in May 1887 on Robben Island of Chiefs Maqoma, Gungubele, Matanzima, Edmund Sandile and others for 'sedition'. 'The charge never was and never could be proved, and eventually the chiefs were released in 1888.'[25]. The newspaper and Jabavu also played a part in opposition to the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and Jabavu himself probably regarded Imvo as being of more than usual importance. 'The Natives, it must not be forgotten, have no representation in the Parliament of the colony,' he wrote in 1894.[26] Initially, Jabavu found his allies amongst the English-speaking politicians of the Cape but finally swung round into a relationship with the Afrikaner Bond and these sympathies eventually led to the banning of Imvo by the military authorities when martial law was declared during the Anglo-Boer War in 1901. According to Trapido, the paper 'whose finances had become precarious already by before the war suffered a blow from which it never recovered.' It resumed publication a year later but its influence had already been cut into before the war by a new newspaper. Imvo still exists and is thus the oldest surviving continuous newspaper founded by a South African black. But its subsequent history is a sad one and it is now owned by Perskor - a long way from the independent black newspaper it once was.

The new newspaper was Izwi la Bantu (The Voice of the People) and it was begun in November, 1897. Izwi la Bantu seems to have traced its origins to a conference which was held in 1887 to oppose the Voters Registration Act.[28] It seems to have blamed Jabavu for scotching the idea of a permanent organisation of Africans to defend their political rights. Certainly, it was a paper started with at least one of its objectives to oppose the politics of Jabavu. The newspaper undoubtedly helped in the foundation at the end of the century of the South African Native Congress (whose president was Thomas Mqanda and most prominent executive member, Walter Rubusana, later to become the only black ever to become a Provincial Councillor). It seems likely that Izwi la Bantu was first edited by Nathaniel Mhala (or Umhalla)[29] and amongst its founders may have been Thomas Mqanda and R.R. Mantsayi.[30] But there is no doubt that A.K. Soga, son of Tiyo Soga and a Scotswoman, soon took over as editor and was probably editor till its death in 1909.[31] Izwi was often more radical than Imvo, especially just after the Anglo-Boer War, and it took a prominent part in the early agitation for the creation of an African university. According to Trapido, Soga's analysis of

Cape politics was 'far more complex than Jabavu's' and he 'combined a Presbyterian ethic and a mistrust of Anglicans, with a sometimes populist, sometimes socialist hostility to capitalism and stressed the need for Africans to assert themselves and work for their own improvement.'[32]. Soga gave his reasons for his split with Jabavu in a letter to Imvo in 1898:

> Dear Mr Jabavu, - I think it was in 1884 when your paper the Imvo first came out since when I have also been a friend. Our relations have never suffered any alteration, and I still admire you as a man who has done much, and may do more yet for the elevation and enlightment of the ignorant masses of Natives of this country. But now politically we have come to the parting of the ways, and no one regrets it more than myself. Whilst I still entertain my friendly feelings towards you, I must confess that in relation to your present position as a partisan and advocate of Messrs. Merriman, Sauer, Hay and Molteno, I am inimical to you, and do not hesitate to denounce your defection from the ranks of moderate men, to the ranks of the most bitter of partisan and personal politicians in this country. For 14 years you have taught your supporters from that sacred pedestal on which you have been placed as spokesman and representative of the ignorant Natives of this country to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, or, in other words, to study measures without regard to man and principle before partisanship. Where are we now and whither are you leading the people? You are certainly not with Innes, whom you profess to admire so much, and who, it must be admitted is a personal symbol of all that is moderate amongst politicians and men to love peace, also would you not be found in the ranks of those who from none other than motives of prejudice, and the most extreme and bitter personal animosity have not hesitated to jeopardise the interests of their constituents and the sacred interests of the country. I say the sacred interests of the country, and because you are well aware that there is nothing to be gained by allegiance to the Dutch party in this country, but, on the contrary, there is everything to be feared in the oppression and degradation of the Natives by adding to the strength and aggressiveness of the Dutch, let individual Boers be what they may. All history cries aloud against your action, and would to God your attempts and those of Hay and others whom we reckoned as friends be most abjectly confounded in the near future.[33]

Soga was, too, a leading figure in some of the early movements which eventually led to the formation of the South Africa Native National Congress in 1912. Aside from Soga, Walter Rubusana was Izwi's most important political correspondent and the poet S.E.K. Mqhayi was also a frequent contributor under the pseudonym, Imbongi Yakwo Gompo.

Towards the end of the century, the Eastern Cape was being emulated in importance by other areas to the north. The key figure

amongst the Amakolwa, the School People, in Natal, was John Dube. His early life reflects the continuous interaction and mutual influence between South African and American blacks. Dube went twice to the U.S.A. before 1900 and visited Booker Washington's famous 'Negro' self-help college at Tuskagee. He returned to Natal where he started the well-known 'Zulu Christian Industrial School' called Ohlange Institute in 1901.[34] Dube was to write an interesting novel around 1928 (Insilaka Shaka). He lived until 1946, a powerful figure in Natal and national politics.

Possibly Dube's most important achievement, however, was the beginning, in 1903, of the newspaper Ilanga Lase Natal (still going now with a circulation of 100 000!) H.J.E. Dumbrill has described its history in the following terms:

> Armed with determination and his own dynamic personality, Dr. Dube set out to tell his people of the need to establish a national newspaper which would serve as their mouthpiece. The response he got was fantastic. Kraal heads sold their cattle, donations poured in and, in no time, a fund was established. The birth of Ilanga was now no longer a dream but a reality. When, on June 3, 1903, the newspaper was established, Dr. Dube decided to call it 'Ilanga Lase Natal' because he wanted it to act as 'a guiding light' among the Zulus.
>
> Ilanga was first printed at Ohlange, Dr Dube's own home. He was its first editor. The news in the paper reflected the lives of the African people, making representations to the authorities and never advocating violent methods in the struggle for the elimination of the problems of those days. For distribution of the newspaper, donkeys were used and, at times, school boys from the neighbourhood were employed to sell it in places like Phoenix, Durban and other neighbouring areas.
>
> Production of Ilanga Lase Natal during the early days was by no means an easy task. The staff employed was small and the machinery used was outmoded.
>
> Dr Dube's first test of courage in his new venture came in 1906 when the Bambata rebellion hit the country. As the sole mouthpiece of the Zulus, suspicions abounded, especially in official circles, that Ilanga might have instigated the rebellion. A close watch was kept on what the paper disseminated. But through his able pen and clear-mindedness, Dr Dube dispelled all fear and suspicion that his paper was out to cause trouble. No sooner had he achieved this success than he found himself again arousing the ire of the Government of the day. This was as a result of a column he was conducting in the newspaper, called 'Vukani' (Wake Up). In it Dr Dube urged his people to 'get up and progress' towards civilisation like other races. Unfortunately, the Governor of Natal saw it differently. He thought the column urged the people to wake up and revolt against oppressors. Of course, Dr Dube succeeded in convincing the G.G. that the column spoke no agitation.

After a few years of its founding, Ilanga fell into the hands of another illustrious leader, Mr. Skweletu Ngongwane, who took over its editorship after Dr. Dube had resigned to found another historic establishment, the Ohlange Institute. By now there was no doubt that the work of pioneer Dube was set to grow from strength to strength.

It may be interesting to know, in those days, journalism was an unknown thing among the African community. So it should be no surprise to learn that the editor was everything - reporter, sub-editor, general manager, columnist, the lot.

Mr Ngongwane edited the paper until it was bought over by the Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd. He was succeeded by Mr. Ngazane Luthuli, an old friend of Dr. Dube's, who followed in the latter's steps with forthrightness and dedication to the service of the Zulu nation. Mr. Luthuli was editor of Ilanga for 30 years.

Ilanga was moved from Ohlange to Durban in 1936. It was produced in an old building in Grey Street and printed in the premises of the Natal Mercury. Its masthead was of the same type as that in the Mercury. Even in the ownership of the Bantu Press, Ilanga never deviated from its policy of seeking to help Africans. Only recently an African girl graduated as a doctor of medicine under a grant offered by the then-owners of the paper.

Upon the retirement of Mr. Luthuli, Mr. R.R.R. Dhlomo, a noted Zulu author and journalist, was offered the editorship of Ilanga. Mr. J.K. Ngubane, who had worked as assistant editor to Mr. Luthuli was transferred to Johannesburg.

Under Mr. Dhlomo, Ilanga assumed a 'new-look'. Its circulation was gradually increasing; it was becoming more acceptable and recognised as the 'Voice of the People', and it had a bigger editorial staff than before.[35]

To the north-west, after the earliest production Morisa Oa Molemo, published at Kuruma in 1836, we find the Molekudi wa Bechuana (The Bechuana Visitor) described by Solomon Plaatje as 'the first newspaper published in the Sechuana language, from 1856 to 1857' Plaatje wrote that he had a file of these issues which were 'one of the author's most valued treasures.'[36] With the advent of European missionaries and colonisers life was changing, slowly at first, much more rapidly after the discovery of the Kimberley diamonds in 1886. The changes and their connection with the history of newspapers and literacy are poignantly reflected in the memories of Solomon Plaatje.

> The next Sechuana paper was Mahoko a Becwana (the Bechuana News), a monthly review of current news and religious comments. It was issued by the Mission Press at the Kuruman Moffat Institute and ran successfully for a number of years. The Revs. A.J. Gould, R. Price, John Brown and various other agents of the London Missionary Society each succeeded to the editorship, and the little sheet increased in size and

> popularity until it became a fair-sized periodical with a very smart cover. During the first week of each month the native peaseants of Bechuanaland, and elsewhere, used to look forward to its arrival as eagerly as the white up-country farmers now await the arrival of the daily papers. How little did the writer dream, when frequently called upon as a boy to read the news to groups of men sewing Karosses under the shady trees outside the cattle fold, that journalism would afterwards mean his bread and cheese.[37]

Certainly, journalism became Plaatje's profession but it provided him with very little bread and cheese for he struggled all his life to make a living from it.[38] Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje (1876-1932) was a remarkable man. Educated to the level of Standard Three on the Berlin Mission Society's station at Pniel near Barkly West he learned to speak ten languages and became a court interpreter in Mafeking where he was caught in the siege during the Anglo-Boer War. During the siege he kept a diary which chronicled the events of his everyday life during that period - the only known diary of the siege written by a black. He was later to translate five plays of Shakespeare into Setswana and he wrote the first novel in English by a black South African. This novel is called Mhudi and was completed in 1920 (published in 1930). The novel can be seen as part of the same process which produced the early newspapers - the result of a particular kind of transition from preliteracy to literacy - and containing much of the ideology and approach of the contemporary black elite. Plaatje also collaborated with the famous linguist Daniel Jones on one of the first South African books on linguistics- a Setswana reader translated into phonetics. He travelled extensively in Britain and the U.S.A. as a result of two political delegations to Britain, the first in 1914, the second in 1919. His greatest work was probably his political book Native Life in South Africa, a sharp attack on the iniquities of the 1913 Natives Land Act.[39] Plaatje, however, made his name first as a newspaper editor.

The founder of Mafikeng (in 1857) was Molema, brother of Montshiwa, Chief of the Tshidi Barolong. Molema's son was Silas Molema (1852-1927), who, educated at Healdtown, returned to his home Mafikeng in 1878 and organised the first day-school amongst the Baralong, 'teaching Natives to read and write English'. He was subsequently appointed private secretary to the Paramount Chief.[40] Silas Molema can thus be seen as one of those born into the traditional elite with access to a measure of power and wealth (through land and cattle) who managed to translate themselves into part of the new elite. After the Anglo-Boer War there seems to have been a general feeling amongst the African population that outlets for expression were crucial if political, economic and cultural interests were to be maintained. Silas Molema therefore decided to start a newspaper and to 'call up' Solomon Plaatje as editor.[41] In fact, Molema took over an existing newspaper.

The newspaper, Koranta ea Becoana (The Bechuana Gazette) was started by George Nathaniel Henry Whales, of Mafeking, who was also owner of The Mafeking Mail.[42] Whales published only twelve issus of the paper before he sold it to Molema and Plaatje on 5 September, 1901, for the sum of twenty-five pounds. He continued to print the newspaper, a weekly in Setswana and English, until the new owners eventually acquired

a press. The rent for the newspaper office came to eighty-four pounds per annum. While Koranta seems to have run effectively for some years, by July, 1904, it may have been in some difficulties as Molema and Plaatje borrowed six hundred and fifty pounds at twelve percent interest from one Charles Wenham, Molema supplying 'thirty head of mixed cattle' as security. By January 1906, Whales was contemplating taking back the newspaper so it was clearly in trouble. Certainly by the end of the year Molema's lawyer is first advising sale, then complaining that he had 'no alternative but to take possession of the Printing plant' and asking for the key of the building. By February, 1907, Whales claimed to have 'purchased the copyright of the Koranta' but the situation is confused since F.Z.S. Peregrino's Cape Town-based newspaper The South African Spectator had announced that it had 'combined' with Koranta. By the end of 1907 Whales was also bankrupt and chief Badirile was contemplating buying the plant and Erf in 1908. Finally, Molema's lawyer seems to have made an offer for these in March. When exactly Koranta ea Becoana ceased to be issued is uncertain though a guess would put the date at long before 1908 - much more like the beginning of 1907 or, rather, sometime in 1906. It was, however, to haunt Silas Molema until at least 1914 when he got a 'Final Demand' notice from lawyers in Mafeking acting on behalf of Gaseitsiwe, Chief of the Bangwaketse, who was claiming one hundred pounds 'being certain payment made to you by the late Chief Bathoen in connection with the 'Koranta ea Becoana' about May, 1905'. Plus interest of eight percent! Thus it was that these early newspapers either succumbed to lack of capital and readership or merely limped along. The 'first native-owned paper' in Setswana thus came to a sad end - even more sad is the fact that only copies of the 1901 - 1902 issues survive.

Plaatje did not give up. By mid-May, 1910, he was preparing to start again with a newspaper in Kimberley. At that time, he borrowed one hundred and eighty pounds, possibly as expenses for his new venture. As surety he gives 'a list of assets belonging to me at present'. These consisted of one buck wagon and gear, one double-horse-power Bakkies pump, one single horse-power Bakkies pump, two steel ploughs with gears, twenty-two assorted cows, seven young oxen, twenty yearlings and six calves. Not a vast fortune and already borrowed upon! Tsala ea Becoana began publishing in June 1910 as a Setswana-English weekly financed by a group of prominent men whose syndicate was based in Thaba Nchu. As Jabavu was one of these, it may have been the reason why Plaatje agreed to edit Imvo for a short while in 1911 while Jabavu was absent.[43] Tsala ea Becoana (Friend of the Bechuana) significantly changed its name to Tsala ea Batho (Friend of the People) in 1912 as a consequence, perhaps, of the founding of the first black national political organisation, The South Africa Native National Congress (later renamed the African National Congress). Plaatje, however, went on the 1914 delegation to Britain to protest to the British Government concerning the 1913 Natives Land Act and, in his absence, the newspaper faltered and failed. Tsala ea Batho had not been an isolated event - in Basutoland (now Lesotho), H.S. Tiale founded Mochochono (The Comet) in 1911.

The Anglo-Boer War and its aftermath brought with it several other attempts to start newspapers apart from Plaatje's. One of the most interesting and most curious was The South African Spectator, begun

in Cape Town in December, 1900. Its proprietor and editor was Francis Zaccheus Santiago Peregrino. He was West African by birth (born in Accra in 1851), at least partially educated in Britain from where he went to the United States. There, in Albany, New York State, he started a newspaper for blacks called The Spectator. By the 1890s his eldest son, Francis Joseph Peregrino, had settled in Cape Town. On the outbreak of the war in South Africa he seemed to feel the country might become a land of opportunity so he emigrated to Cape Town with his wife and younger children in 1900. On the way he attended the first Pan African conference, held in London. The newspaper he started was a curiosity, with some amusing advertisements and often written in a quaint style. It is, however, a useful and interesting record of its time.[44]

The first African-owned, indepedent newspaper in the Transvaal was Leihlo La Babathso (The Native Eye). This newspaper had a rather curious and interesting history which illustrates the problems and tensions in setting up an independent black newspaper at the time.[45] From the 1890s various black clergymen broke away from their parent, white-controlled churches to start a number of separatist churches. In 1893 Maake Mangena Mokone, a Wesleyan minister began the 'Ethiopian Church'. In 1896 the Rev. J.M. Dwane, who had also seceded from the Wesleyan Church and joined the Ethiopian Church, was sent to America to confer with the Bishop of the African Methodist Church, a black American Church begun perhaps over one hundred years before and which had up to 700 000 members by the beginning of the Twentieth Century. On Dwane's return the African Methodist Episcopal Church was started, incorporating amongst others the Ethiopian church.[46]

The A.M.E. Church and the Ethiopian movement made many whites extremely nervous and drew fire from white and some black missionaries and clergymen. Dr. Stewart, founder and principal of Lovedale, described the A.M.E. in September, 1901, as 'anti-white' or 'anti-European' and Rev. Elijah Makiwane, in calling it 'intensely anti-white' said that 'Those who have urged me to join the movement based their arguments mainly on the consideration that Africa was intended for the Africans and that it is now in the hands of the whiteman'. He stated further that the movements of Dwane and Mzimba (another breakaway minister) had the same aim of 'the freeing of the African from bondage.' Although other voices, such as that of the Special Magistrate of King William's Town, who wrote in 1901, claimed that there was 'no element of danger in these movements', the general white opinion was reflected in The Port Elizabeth Herald (13 August, 1902): 'Educated Negroes in the United States conceived the idea some time ago of taking in hand the continent from which their ancestors had been stolen ... a scheme was reduced to writing and found its way into print ... after a little time one heard nothing about it; but the idea was there, and the Ethiopian movement is but a different expression of the idea.'

These accusations bedevilled the A.M.E. Church's attempts to get recognition for their church by the Transvaal Government after the Anglo-Boer War (although it had been officially recognised by both the Cape government and the South African Republic before the war). In 1902 Luke Nyokana, for instance, wrote to the Secretary of the Native Affairs that the 'A.M.E. Church is generally misunderstood by people ... There are other societies who distinguish colour but not the A.M.E.C. In the

last Annual Conference we had last December under the patronage of the Right Reverend Bishop L.J. Coppin D.D. (a black American who was the first bishop of the South African A.M.E. Church) a white brother was ordained a Deacon ...'[47] But the antagonism against the church continued to build up to such an extent that a special conference was called by the A.M.E. Church in August, 1904, to 'dispel false rumours and misrepresentations'. One Speaker complained that 'We are generally accused that we dislike white men in our midst, and that we will have only black men in our churches. Now, this is untrue.' Another divined what he believed the true cause - white interests. 'The danger we think of and see is the hearts of those who hate black Africans, for they have some evil schemes, and shout out danger! danger! danger! native rising! native rising! Arm the burghers with 500 rifles! when they know there is no danger at all, except that which is known and revealed to them in that pitiable condition.'[48] Whether there were any grounds for the fears of the whites that revolution was imminent and possible (and such seems somewhat unlikely) and what exact motives they may have had for raising the 'black peril' cry, it was certainly taken seriously and the whole tone of the period is epitomized most famously in John Buchan's novel Prester John. Though this was first published in 1911 it is based on Buchan's stay, as Lord Milner's political secretary, in the Transvaal between 1903 and 1904. The story is of a black clergyman who goes to Scotland for education, returns and, under the guise of religion, begins a revolution.[49]

While the A.M.E. Church and the Ethiopian movement, connected or not, were tentatively asserting elements of independence (their general demands were to be recognised as marriage officers, to be allowed to run schools, and to have greater access to land), other groups of blacks were beginning overtly to assert their political rights after the Anglo-Boer War. These included the Transvaal Native United Political Association (Iliso Lomzi). In the Northern Transvaal the Transvaal Native Vigilance Association was formed and this is the geographical area in which Prester John was set. On 3 December, 1902, the Zoutpansberg Native Vigilance Association was formed[50] but it seems that the Transvaal Native Vigilance Association was founded in Pietersburg on 1 July 1903 - certainly that is when its committee was elected, the Rev. William Mpamba being elected President.[51] Like its contemporaries this association seems to have been formed mainly by the educated elite of the area who saw the need for new political institutions to adapt to the wholly new social system brought by the whites. They seem initially to have attained a measure of support, however lukewarm and reluctant, from some at least of the local chiefs. At the very same meeting, immediately after the election of the committee, a newspaper was proposed: 'After this each of them (the committee) expressed his thanks for the honour of being elected servants of the association and asked assistance from all members to raise their native people. It was proposed that this assistance should start a newspaper. Some members proposed that we should have our own machine. After a long discussion it was agreed that Mr. W. Brown (a printer in Pietersburg) should publish it for them.'[52] Thus the connection between early political movements and independent newspapers as their mouthpieces was very explicit. The Secretary of the Vigilance Association was made the first editor of the newspaper which must have started soon afterwards. His name was Levi J.E. Mogale Khomo.

The newspaper was presumably called The Native Eye because it would keep a vigilant watch over the interest of the local blacks just as its parent body proposed to do. Almost certainly a monthly,[53] it was published in English and Northern Sotho.

Beyond the fact that he was educated by the Rev. Mabille in Basutoland and that he was a member of the Swiss Mission Church and a friend of the local missionary, the Rev. Creux, not much is known so far about the early life of Levi Khomo. Only extracts from one or two issues of The Native Eye survive so it is difficult to assess fully its stance. It seems to have proceeded without too much controversy for some months until April, 1904.

But on 2 April, 1904, Levi Khomo wrote to H.S. Marwick, Assistant Secretary of Native Affairs, asking, in his capacity as editor of Leihlo and Secretary of the T.N.V.A., for an interview in suitably humble terms: 'I also beg you to admit that you are going to deal with a child as I, from my point of view, regard every native a child in comparison with a whiteman. Therefore, prepare to advise me and not frighten me.'[54] Granted an interview on 8 April, 1904, he was slightly less humble. He raised the fears of blacks that they would be undercut on the labour market by the imported Chinese labourers, that blacks were being turned off local white farms, that not enough space had been allotted for locations, that widows and boys were being made to pay taxes and he asked about the outbreak of The Plague. Finally, he raised the subject of the Ethiopian movement and suggested that most blacks were against its recognition by the government.[55] The position is curious: we see here Levi Khomo distancing himself, the Native Eye and the T.N.V.A., from Ethiopianism; this is also clear in a letter to Marwick from E.H. Schlaefli, of the Pretoria Municipal Native Pass Office: 'I take the liberty to warmly recommend you Levi Khomo for one reason: He is opposed to the Ethiopians and their methods. I am of opinion that the Ethiopians will be a source of great trouble in the whole of South Africa and I am very glad to see that Khomo, as well as the Editor of the Bechuana Gazette (Solomon Plaatje) are one in condemning them. As you are aware, the Ethiopians belong to a secret society, a kind of free masonry; their influence must be neutralized at all costs, and I rejoice to see enlightened Natives up on arms against this American Masons.'[56] On the other hand, the A.M.E. Church distanced itself from the T.N.V.A. The first resolution of the special conference already mentioned, in August, 1904, was explicit on this side.

> Whereas we have been erroneously misrepresented as being connected with the Transvaal Native Vigilance Association, a political body of Pietersburg, and whereas its organ, 'The Native Eye' has been wrongly affiliated with the A.M.E. Church and its views and objects relegated to us, be it resolved that the African Methodist Episcopal Church has no connection whatever with the T.N.V. Association, not even with its official organ, 'The Native Eye', except that while they are a political body for the black people, we are a religious body for this much maligned and unfortunately misrepresented section of his Majesty's subjects, a thing we cannot be held responsible for.[57]

Clearly both the T.N.V.A. and the A.M.E.C. were trying to disassociate themselves from partially discredited contemporaries, to legitimise themselves in government eyes while pressing ahead with statements of their grievances.

Levi Khomo returned to Pietersburg determined to tell his people what had transpired during the interview. Without the permission of the Native Affairs Department he circulated a pamphlet summoning a meeting of all chiefs and members of the T.N.V.A. to be held on May day at the Pietersburg Native Commissioner's Office. The chiefs and members were advised to 'come with clean bodies and tidy clothes as there will be whitemen present.'[58] Wheelwright, the local Native Commissioner, immediately banned the meeting and wrote an interesting letter to his superior, warning against the T.N.V.A.

> To use Komo's own words, the object of the meeting is to 'break up the Ethiopian Church.' I do not think this is their object at all. I think it is simply to build up a 'Native Vereeniging', which will take up agitation on native matters of various kinds. These people know that the Government suspects the Ethiopian church, and very naturally an association of this kind must in self defence disclaim any connection with the preachers of that propaganda. I think we would be making a mistake in suspecting the Ethiopian Church simply as the only source from which native sedition and agitation is preached. There is no doubt they do, but on a very much greater scale is agitation carried on by educated natives of other denominations who have nothing to do with the Ethiopians. These people are building themselves up into a strong party, and will have to be watched very carefully.[59]

He went on to write that the local whites are unanimous in connecting Leihlo with Ethiopianism.

What happened hereafter is not totally clear. Although the government had prohibited the meeting not all the chiefs were so informed and so, on May 1st, some of them turned up. Soon after, Levi Khomo himself, we are told, 'became deranged', 'took ill'. Wheelwright himself wrote that, on that morning, 'the editor of The Native Eye had to be arrested for theft, the circumstances surrounding which action tending to indicate very forcibly that the man's mind was considerably deranged. From more careful enquiries it would appear that some of the Natives had themselves noticed this condition. I attribute the manner in which the meeting was convened directly to the state of Levi Khomo's mind.'[60] Why did Levi Khomo crack up? The evidence is slender. An article in The Native Eye,[61] perhaps, though unlikely, even written by Khomo himself, gives a little information.

> It is true that Mr. Khomo is arrested. It is understood that he commandeered a single-horse trap, belonging to Captain Bedy of the S.A.C., and drove round the town.

He left them after a short while and took a horse belonging to a Jew, but as the saddle was small he could not ride it, but led it, and was immeditaely arrested by a policeman who was coming after him. He slept in gaol that night, the following day, through Mr Creux's advice, he paid £25 bail. He was tried on Tuesday, and he was defended by a lawyer, he was found not guilty, and his money was returned.

Some people say that this 'pitso' was called for the purpose of 'fighting for natives', others say it was for separating the natives from the A.M.E. Church. Mr. C.L. Wheelwright witnesses the last matter.

It is strange that we should be forced to apply for permission before we can meet! Also that we should explain that we wish to hold a meeting for, but white men are free, and are not guarded as we are!!! Even the Boers who are just back from the field, are today preparing to meet on the 23rd May/04 in Pretoria; and it is not known what for. We shall see. We, of the Eye, are born to live and die in this land, although we are persecuted and not trusted ... We are glad that our secretary fought humbly and faced the worst, he has the responsibility of the 'Eye' and the Association. We shall stand by him.

Long live the 'Eye'.

Although we do not know the nature of his 'derangement' it is not unreasonable to assume that it was this last month of expectation, aspiration and final frustration in the face of government intransigence that was the last straw which broke Khomo's back. Certainly, he was finally 'kept under surveillance' not long afterwards. His successor, as Secretary and editor, was Simon Molisapoli who said that Khomo 'squandered all the funds of the association during the period of his "mens delirium".'

In August, Molisapoli asked permission for a general meeting of 'shareholders' in order 'to transact certain business political and financial,' and when this was for a while refused he published some of the correspondence in The Native Eye and made it very clear in a letter to the authorities the middle role he saw for the educated elite.[62]

Sir, you cannot imagine how seriously this attitude of the Government in refusing to sanction an open meeting of some of his Majesty's most loyal subjects is being taken by everyone of those subjects and what inconvenience it is causing our honourable and loyal undertaking and, sir, should the Government ever entertain any doubt as to our work we are always open to criticism, and advice, but we must repudiate as strongly as possible any imputations that ours is a honourable and disloyal undertaking. Perhaps, sir, when you come to understand us better which can only be when the department of which you are head in this district make use of us as an intermediate between it and the natives, the majority of whom are so ignorant of their obligations to the government as the man in the moon.

Leihlo carried on until the end of 1904. It then failed to appear for two months at the beginning of 1905 and Moisapoli asked for permission for a meeting to discuss the finances with the 'shareholders'. Most of the considerable debt (perhaps £250, perhaps £850) was cleared. The meeting discussed whether to buy a complete printing plant, a suggestion which seems to have been accepted. Whether Leihlo reappeared or for how long it continued is uncertain. Levi Khomo's fate has still not been unearthed. But the story of Leihlo and of its editor is full of the problems, contradictions and frustrations of its time.[63]

It must also be remembered that it was not easy to run a newspaper at that time. The son of Silas Molema, Dr. S.M. Molema, in his biography of Plaatje,[64] described the difficulties of Plaatje's second newspaper.

> There were no journalists or clerks; and Plaatje was the sole worker doing the job of three or four people besides being editor. He collected the post, opened and read letters from his readers and kept records of money sent by subscribers. He read papers of other publishers and editors; Government gazettes and papers and translated all from English into Tswana and Xhosa. Using a typewriter he arranged all ideas and news, proof-read various communications and letters and after correcting, editing them sent everything to the printing presses. Besides this he re-read forms and proofs analysing and deciphering mistakes and again sent the correct version to the printers.
>
> When all news, information, ideas etc. were finally printed on thousands of reams of paper and folded properly, the papers were bound, addressed, stamped and sent to hundreds of subscribers. This massive task of reading, typing and printing the paper was a daily burden for as soon as the first edition for the day was complete the following week's daily publications had to be arranged and prepared for.

In Johannesburg, a crucial turning point was about to be reached. In 1910 there returned to Johannesbrug Pixley ka Izaka Seme, (born in Natal of a Christian family). Educated at Columbia and Oxford Universities and at the Middle Temple, London, where he was called to the bar, Seme, together with three other early black lawyers, Alfred Mangena, R.W. Msimang and G.D. Montsioa, founded, in Bloemfontein, on 8th January 1912, the African National Congress. Its significance is described by Selope-Thema (later first editor of the Bantu World).

> It was a gathering of tribes that had never met before except on the battle fields. It was a gathering of chiefs who had never seen each other before. And they came from the four provinces and the High Commission Territories. It was a gathering of educated Africans who had never exchanged views before. It was a gathering, if I may say so, of the departed spirits of the African race, among whom were such men as Sandile, Tshaka, Moshoeshoe, Cetyewayo, Moroka, Khama, Sekhukhune, Sotshangana and Ramapulana.[65]

Newspapermen John Dube and Plaatje became first ANC President and Secretary-General respectively. Only Jabavu remained aloof. Seme concluded an article of his in 1906 with the following poem:

Oh Africa!

Like some great century plan that shall bloom
In ages hence, we watch thee; in our dream
See in thy swamps the Prospero of our stream;
Thy doors unlocked, where knowledge in her tomb
Hath lain innumerable years in gloom
Then shalt thou, walking with that morning gleam,
Shine as thy sister lands with equal beam.

Seme 'conceived the idea of establishing a newspaper which could be used as the mouthpiece of the national organisation' which he saw as 'the regeneration of Africa'.[66]

Two newspapers were being printed and published in Johannesbrug at the time - Morumioa, founded and edited by D.S. Letanka, and Molomo Oa Batho, founded and edited by L.T. Mvabaze. Seme persuaded Letanka 'to merge his newspaper with the proposed company'. Seme, Letanka and the Queen of Swaziland were the promoters of the company and the newspaper. Abantu-Batho was launched in 1913 with C. Kunene as English and Zulu editor and D.S. Letanka as Sotho editor.[67]

It must be remembered the conditions under which the A.N.C. and Abantu-Batho were founded. Selope-Thema describes the period.

> The conditions under which Africans lived and worked, particularly in the Northern Province, shocked him (Seme) and stirred his mind to action. In those days the black man of the Northern Provinces was treated as a beast of burden. He was knocked and kicked about with impunity. In the magistrate's courts his voice was hardly heard and his evidence hardly believed. He was stopped at street corners by policemen demanding the production of his pass and his tax receipt. He was not allowed to walk on the pavements and had to dodge motor cars in the streets. He was not allowed to travel first, second or third class on the trains. He travelled in trucks almost similar to those used for cattle and horses. His education in the primary schools, which were few, did not go beyond Standard 3, and not beyond Standard 6 in the training schools which were only two in the Transvaal and none in the Orange Free State. Politically he had no voice in the making and administration of the laws. Economically he was kept in a state of abject poverty.

Establishing a black newspaper, given all this, was thus not easy. Unfortunately I have not managed to lay my hands on any early copies of Abantu-Batho, since no libraries have files on it - a reflection of the prejudice against or sheer ignorance towards black newspapers of the time. It is not easy therefore to assess the stance or influence of Abantu-Batho. White reaction to early black newspapers, however, is

interesting. The Resident Commissioner in Basutoland wrote to the well-known segregationist-liberal Howard Pim in 1908: 'I think I allude in my last report (1906-7) to the native press and its attitudes. I felt it necessary to do so but did not want to make too much of it. The native press in South Africa is going to be always with us, and they are certain to criticize the white man as freely as he criticizes them. It is not an unmixed evil - it is quite as well to know what they are thinking about'.[68]

What one does know is that in 1921, partly to counter the influence of Abantu-Batho and partly as a result of an African miners' strike, the Chamber of Mines started its own newspaper Umteteli Wa Bantu. In several languages, it was distributed in the compounds and on the streets. At first free, it was clearly meant to undercut and undermine Abantu-Batho. In addition the Mines tempted away several Abantu-Batho compositors with donkey carrots.[69] Editorial policy was fairly strictly controlled. One of the paper's black editors has said 'you know the whole thing was circumspect in that it had to agree with mining policy so that there was no question of going beyond the boundary, you understand. You had to protect the interests of the mines: low wages and one thing and another, (inaudible) down any others who tried to pop up their heads, you understand ... I had been told, you understand, how far I had to go, you understand. And not beyond that. Any contentious matter I used to refer to the board of the N.R.C., you understand'.[70] The paper was also useful in countering the impact of the huge black 'trade union', the I.C.U., which sprang up in the 1920s under the Nyasa, Clements Kadalie. The Industrial and Commerical Workers' Union started its own newspaper, The Worker's Herald, and Kadalie appointed H.D. Tyamzashe as editor. Interestingly enough Tyamzashe tells us, in unpublished monograph, that he managed to resist A.W.G. Champion's attempts to dominate the paper and refused 'to publish every bit of clotted nonsense that flew from his (Champion's) erratic pen.'[71]

It should be noted that the years 1917 to 1920 were years of a good deal of militancy among black workers and even sections of the urban petit-bourgeoisie. This militancy culminated in the 1920 African mineworkers' strike. The response on the part of many white liberals was to attempt to organise and rationalize their hitherto disparate approach towards blacks. The Twenties thus became a classic period for the establishment of 'liberal' institutions such as the Joint Councils (1921), the Bantu Men's Social Centre (1924), and the Institute of Race Relations (1929) where the petit-bourgeoisie could be 'bought off' while workers in mine compounds and elsewhere were entertained by way of church, sport, and the new cinema world. There is no doubt there was real concern amongst many whites that if the militancy were allowed to go unplacated revolution was a distinct possibility. That Umteteli wa Bantu was started in the year of the major strike was no coincidence. Its original function was clearly stated in an editorial on 30 August, 1924:

> Rather more than four years ago Umteteli first appeared to educate white and black and to point out their respective and their common duties. At that time much of the Native press was bitterly anti-white in policy ... the need for a

> mediator was felt by a number of far-seeing natives, men prominent among their people and gravely concerned for their people's welfare, and it was due to their representations that this paper was launched. We are charged to preach racial amity, to foster a spirit of give and take, to promote that will to co-operate, to emphasize the obligations of black and white to themselves and to each other, and generally to create an atmosphere in which peace and goodwill might thrive.

The culmination of this whole process of 'defusing native passions' in the realm of the media can be seen in the early Thirties with the takeover of most of the independent black newspapers.

## BANTU PRESS (PTY) LTD AND THE LOSS OF BLACK INDEPENDENCE

The year 1932 is the key turning-point in the history of the black press. This was the year of the founding of the Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd. with its 'national newspaper' The Bantu World.[72] The idea originated with a man of 30 years of age called B.G. Paver.[73] Having failed at farming in the Bethal area (it was the time of the depression), Paver (while working for an advertising company) conceived the idea of a central organisation to take over most of the existing black newspapers and to co-ordinate advertising in these newspapers. He saw that there was a huge potential market amongst the blacks for local manufacturers - the blacks he believed, were no longer satisfied with what was called 'Kaffir truck' - cheap goods specially made for 'kaffirs' - but many preferred to buy 'European' goods. He was to see the black press as a magnificent medium for advertisers to tap this market. In fact, Paver did not look first at the newspapers. After his farming failure he made for Durban which he saw as a potential central point for bicycle manufacturing on a large scale. He worked out a comprehensive scheme in terms of which a big enterprise could be produced catering for the increasingly urbanised blacks. It was his idea that the schemes the breweries used for selling beer could be used for selling bicycles: the idea was to 'tie up' (like tied-houses) hundreds of small retail outfits all over the country dealing primarily with 'kaffir truck'. This plan was given the brush-off by those he approached and he went to work for the advertising company in Cape Town. It was when this company collapsed that Paver happened to notice some copies of black newspapers in the company's basement where filed copies were kept. His first reaction was to look at them from the advertiser's point of view: but this soon changed - a crucial turning-point in black press history.

> I wanted the advertising agencies to offer these people a square deal, to put a little bit of money in and get the sole rights and push the advertising and they would work on the commission. They couldn't see any joy on that (sic) so what I had to do was to start the hard way from 'tother side. I had to go over into the publishing side and show that it could be done, get the newspapers to come in with me and then deal with the agents and say, Well, this is what the prices are now going to be.

On similar lines of thinking, Paver was to set up the Bantu News Agency to establish 'tied houses' for distribution (this was at first done by agents, teachers and businessmen). This news agency was part of the whole larger scheme to sew up advertising, printing and distribution but was eventually incorporated into the Central News Agency.

> I realised the CNA know-how and that sort of thing would be at an advantage and to them it would give a very big opening for the development of African literature: school books and all sorts of things - the whole thing would have tied up.[74]

He persuaded J.D. Rheinallt-Jones, head of the South African Institute of Race Relations, of the viability of this idea. Howard Pim was drawn in, and later the Argus Company and the Maggs family took out substantial numbers of shares. The idea was to take over the existing black newspapers and to start Bantu World, the first copy of which appeared on 9 April, 1932. By 1936, Imvo, Ilanga, Ikwezi le Afrika and Mochochonono, with a measure of reluctance from writers and owners, had been gobbled up.[75] Umteteli, the Chamber of Mines newspaper, remained independent as did the Communist newspapers Umsebenzi and later Inkululeko. It must also be remembered that this was long before the days of African radio-broadcasting.

An unpublished memorandum[76] proposing the setting-up of the Bantu Press makes interesting reading (this memorandum was, without doubt, written by Paver). Beginning with the observation that between 1921 and 1931 the literacy rate among black South Africans had increased from 9,89% to about 12,4% it continues that "The present is the time to foster this desire for reading matter". Perceiving that one of the functions of the black newspapers is 'the moulding of native opinion' the memorandum believed that the present black owner-publishers were 'on the eve of valuable political and commercial developments', but 'lack the ability to guide the political situation and to exploit the commercial opportunities presented'. The Bantu Press and the Bantu World had therefore three main functions:

1. Commercial: 'The keenness of competition is forcing all commercial interests to seek new markets, and in the opinion of advertizing authorities, a large and increasing amount of advertizing is likely to be carried by the native press'.

2. Circulation: 'Improved printing, layout, editorial contents and the creation of an efficient system of sales distribution 'would' result in an enormous increase in circulation'. Certainly, whereas Ilanga and Imvo averaged about 3 000 in circulation at this time, by 1933 Bantu World had reached a circulation figure of over 6 000 and nowadays has a circulation of over 100 000.[77]

3. Political: 'Rapidly increasing literacy brings in its train a real need for the development and sane guidance of Bantu opinion as expressed in the native press' and 'their importance in the moulding of native opinion makes their control a matter of the utmost importance to South Africa's future well-being.' Yet further, their function was 'to maintain a progressive yet moderate policy on political and economic questions.'

At first Paver had much difficulty persuading people of the value of advertising in the black press. It was not that there was resistance to advertising. There was

> No resistance, there was just no reaction whatsoever. It was so unheard of, something so completely out of its time and context that, I mean, people thought you were mad ... so it was heartbreaking trying to make an impact and the way it was done was to ... I thought up an idea of a trade exhibition for the African population and in the height of the Depression I took a whole block of an Engineering firm who had packed up, the property wasn't being used ... and they agreed to let me have it for free because they hoped it would sell provided I whitewashed the place ... and even then resistance was so great to taking stands that we had to think up a whole system of package deal to get people advertizing ... We had to give them a translator, an African ... the space ... we had to give them 5 000 leaflets ... Now, the catch about the leaflets was: the leaflets were a reprint of an advertisement in the paper. If you'd asked them for the other way around they would have said, 'No, Nonsense' ... that really broke the ice.

This trade exhibition was held in 1933 - among the companies etc. represented were the 'Railraods, Henwoods, Ackermans'. Bechuanaland and Basutoland sent carving, weaving and pottery. 'They played ball.'

Since this agreement was that the advertising would run a few weeks, there was a doubt that it would continue. So to give further impetus, to break inertia, Paver had the idea of fitting a small van with a projector and screen (with a white to run it). Advertisers in the newspapers of Bantu Press got a free slide - the first slide-advertising to tap the black market. The van travelled over 4 000 miles on the venture. As Paver repeated, this was the 'only way one could break this absolute, this complete ignorance' of white commercial interests. 'It wasn't resistance: it was just disbelief'. This was partly how Paver got the Company moving: his other task had been to organise his ideological backers like Pim, Rheinallt-Jones etc. Fortunately, these could be largely relied on as Paver himself says, 'I was so damned busy that I couldn't be sitting around engaging in conferences and meetings and things. I really didn't have time ... I had to do everything, nobody was doing it ... it was quite new ground.'

R.V. Selope-Thema became the first editor with Paver and Le Grange managing directors.[78] Le Grange brought from America the idea of putting news, not adverts, on the front page and Bantu World was the first paper to introduce this to South Africa. A social gossip page and a woman's page appealed to the emerging black middle-class. Bantu World, representing, more, commercial capital, often took somewhat different stances from Umteteli, representing largely mining capital - the latter being, practically, forbidden to criticize mine management or condone strikes.[79]

At this stage it is crucial to understand two differing trends, one amongst whites, one amongst blacks. Among white liberals one can distinguish at least two strands of thought and action: on the one hand,

there was the more conservative group of liberals among whom were people like Rheinallt-Jones (later Native Senator), Rev. Ray Phillips (an American Board missionary who had written regularly for Umteteli and who was given £5 000 a year by the Chamber of Mines to use among the blacks as he saw fit), Howard Pim, Edgar Brookes and others (men of the Joint Councils). Their liberalism was elitist: blacks were acceptable but only if they reached certain 'civilized' standards. (It is this group which won control of Bantu World.) Slightly more radical were other liberals, rather more democratic. The main representative here is W.G. Ballinger. Ballinger was a young Scottish trade unionist brought out to sort out and organise the I.C.U. when it got into financial and other difficulties - an unenviable job which incurred him the enmity of Kadalie and other blacks. Though more radical than Rheinallt-Jones et. al. he was nevertheless not pro-communist (perhaps he is best described as a product of the British Labour Party). His first year's salary was paid by Mrs Ethelreda Lewis, the novelist, well-known for her Trader Horn. Behind-the-scenes manipulation by Mrs Lewis persuaded Kadalie to purge the I.C.U. of communists and this obsession was her main driving force in her encouragement of Ballinger.

Amongst the blacks there were at least three strands of thought (which are pretty well perennial divisions amongst South African blacks.) Firstly there were those who went along with the white liberals, co-operated with Joint Councils etc. Secondly, there were the communists, radical but multi-racial. Thirdly, there were the Africanists or the African Nationalists - early strains of this philosophy can be seen in the early John Dube, in the 'Mayibuye i'Afrika' ('Come back, Africa') cry of the early A.N.C. and in the Garveyism which possibly influenced the I.C.U. It was later to surface more positively in the 'Africa for the Africans' cry of the Congress Youth League founded in 1944 by Anton Lembede, W. Nkomo and others, and later to include Nelson Mandela, A.P. Mda, Yengwe and others. In the late Fifties the Africanists of the A.N.C. split off to form the P.A.C. under Robert Sobukwe.

The importance of these distinctions is to be seen in the early opposition which Bantu World encountered. For a while it was threatened by a weekly called The African Leader. The African Leader prided itself that it was African-owned and African-run - it was established early in 1932, a few months before Bantu World. Because of the Depression and poor printing Abantu-Batho had collapsed in 1931. It's printing press was bought by George Hashe, an African businessman. In a letter to the English novelist Winifred Holtby, Ballinger describes Hashe as 'somewhat illiterate, who has made money as a compound (Native) official and had visions of getting very rich as a newspaper proprietor'[81]. The former editor of Abantu Batho, T.D. Mweli Skota, was the editor of African Leader and Msimang was soon to join it. Clearly its Africanist philosophy is related to its black commercial interests. In other words the white commercial interests of Bantu World were pitted against the incipient black commercial interests of the African Leader. The African Leader collapsed within a couple of years.

But a further interesting struggle developed from this point - between the left and right-wing liberals. Ballinger had been approached

by Howard Pim to join Bantu World. Ballinger made certain proposals and conditions which Pim and Paver could not accept. Ballinger therefore joined a man from Durban called MacDonald and proposed to begin a newspaper for blacks called The African Defender in which could be incorporated the failing African Leader. Ballinger was scathing about the Bantu World, charging it with being controlled by the South African Institute of Race Relations.

> ... as a certain Mr. Charley Maggs of Pretoria is reported to have said when endowing Brookes' effort (to raise money for SAIRR) 'the Inst. is the best insurance against Native disorders in the country'. Maggs is a very wealthy business man. He is the behind-the-scenes-owner of the Bantu World, a pseudo Native weekly launched first over a year ago. I was consulted during the preliminaries prior to the launching and asked if I would assist with voice and pen. Then a change came over the scene. I was dropped because in the first place I no longer counted due to illhealth, but in reality because I suggested an editorial policy that should:
>
> (1) Attack the Chamber of Mines one man wage rates in favour or the average family minimum wage (2/8 per day as compared with minimum decency of /6 per day) or in other words the subsidisation of Mine Labour by the agriculture of the Reserves.
> (2) Definite attacks on White Labour Policies.
> (3) Vigilance Committees to combat Pass and Night Raiding.
> (4) Abolition of the Master and Servants Act.
> (5) Fostering the growth of an Industrial Union.
> (6) Cooperative Marketing and Retail Stores.
>
> and in general a challenge to present conditions right up to the uttermost limits, stopping short of only useless martyrdom. The Bantu World has been a sad disappointment to those who had dared to hope for at least a moulding of Native opinion on sound radical lines.

Ballinger had told Pim that the Bantu World had failed to 'serve Native interests because of a fear that advertisement revenue would suffer the pull of the important Maggs' commercial interests plus the fact that Prof. E. Brookes was on the Board of management to use the paper to propagandise on behalf of the Institute of Race Relations'. The African Leader had a bond of £100 with a Printing Machinery Company. This Company informed Ballinger that 'the Bantu World, through Mr. Maggs, and the Umteteli wa Bantu through its backer - the Gold Producers Ass. has asked where to get possession of the African Leader - 'lock, stock and barrel' and 'put it into cold storage'.[81]

Thus mining and commercial interests, with their attendant liberal ideology managed to squash both more radical liberal ideology plus black commercial interest and 'Africanism'. It should be noted that this was done with the help of black editors and staff - relatively willing or relatively unwilling.[82]

During the 1940s the Bantu World continued to grow despite the

fact that it was twice bombed by the Ossewabrandwag during the war. It's growth, helped as it was by a Government subsidy, shows the importance Government attached to the control and 'right management' of the Black Press. The paper was also printed for the black soldiers in North Africa, then flown to Cairo and the paper printed there so that Bantu World had the unique distinction of being a newspaper printed at both ends of a very large continent.

The main purpose of the management, however, was revealed in a pamphlet entitled Black Gold, A New Market and its Media, published by Bantu World about 1946. This was the logical culmination of Paver's original ideas in setting up Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd. It was a pamphlet aimed at the white businessmen of the post-war era and its title referred to the vast market of Africans who were 'acquiring more and more knowledge and appreciation of manufactured merchandise'. Pointing out that the weekly circulation of the Bantu Press Group of newspapers was 75 000, and that this group could get in touch with more Africans per week than any other medium and was therefore ideal for business advertizing, the pamphlet described the 'rapid and romantic rise of the Bantu Press group of newspapers,' detailing the purchasing power of the African market and the advertizing rates which were the key to the door of that new market. As regards its prize jewel, The Bantu World, the pamphlet pointed out that it 'still appeals mainly to the more advanced and educated Bantu people, whose interests reach out beyond the immediate problems of any individual language group' and suggested that, in glancing at a specimen copy of The Bantu World the businessmen would 'see that the educated Bantu likes a good newspaper, a balanced newspaper, a responsible, quiet-spoken newspaper'. Thus, in advertizing for advertizing, the pamphlet offered the prime attraction: 'a successful invasion of the Bantu market has been made a very simple matter, thanks to the complete coverage of the Bantu Press Group'. Editorial policy would conform at all times to this for the Bantu Press was 'not a propoganda medium but an organ of education, enlightment and appreciation' which guided 'the Bantu people on lines of sane and steady progress within the commercial system of today'.

During the Forties there was started in Durban a new newspaper Inkanla ya Bantu - proudly proclaiming it was African-owned and African run. It was edited by a journalist and writer of considerable talent, Jordan Ngubane, later in exile in the U.S.A. This paper supported the Congress Youth League, the ginger-group within the A.N.C. begun by Anton Lembede and others. It was largely responsible for Albert Luthuli's crucial victory over Champion in the elections for President of the Natal A.N.C. - a vital step towards his ultimate elevation to National President of the A.N.C. Inkundla died about 1951. There does not seem to have been a successful independent black newspaper since.

One interesting example of the effective control exerted by Bantu Press Company management was in the case of Mochochonono started by the Tlale family in Maseru in 1911. The editor, N. Tlale, was out of favour with the Basutoland authorities somewhere around 1950, seemingly for his handling of the ritual murders affairs. Several meetings were held between the Resident Commissioner, the Attorney-General and representatives of Bantu Press. Meanwhile Mochochonono was being printed from an old engine run on diesel oil. Since Tlale was 'veering more to the left than we liked', pressure was applied: promises of new facilities in ex-

change for moderation of editorial policy. Tlale refused to co-operate, the engine failed and Mochochonono died. The Basutoland Government was uneasy without a 'responsible paper' so the British Government subsidized Mpotletsane, a newspaper Bantu Press printed in Johannesburg.[83]

The Fifties saw the spectacular rise of the 'glossy' magazine Drum which made famous the names and work of many of our best black writers - Can Themba, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Nat Nakasa, James Matthews, Casey Motsisi, Henry Nxumalo, as well as Nigerian writers like Cyprian Ekwensi. Its music critic Todd Matshikiza was to produce the famous 1950s musical 'King Kong'. Before long most of them disappeared into exile, committed suicide or died of alcohol. It is possible that the success of Drum and Zonk, with their racy township's style and numerous photographs, owed much to rising literacy rates. These magazines marked a departure from the rather formal and intellectual newspapers and were geared to a greater mass appeal.

It is very interesting to note that Paver himself, through Bantu World, launched a large 'each one, teach one' literacy campaign after the Second World War. (This involved participators taking a kind of pledge to teach, as in a temperance society).

About 1960 the Argus Company took over most of the Bantu Press holdings. The Bantu World, up till then a weekly, was turned into a daily, The World, which was a crime and sports paper along the lines of the British Daily Mirror until its banning in 197 . The changing of this newspaper into a daily was opposed by its founder, Paver, who thought this was coming too soon and who hence foresaw the degeneration of the newspapers into sport and crime sheets as 'inevitable'. (Paver resigned and went into black newspapers in Rhodesia.) Like Drum, the later expansion of circulation of the sensation-bound World was probably linked to growth in literacy rates - indeed the decision to change its character and format seems to have stemmed from a desire to tap the now-literate urban masses market rather than the educated elite as formerly. Paver's objections are interesting: he wanted to merge with Drum and he felt that to start a daily would change the whole structure of the newspapers which had been 'growing with the people' and would introduce 'disturbing features'. He further believed that Africans had not got to the stage where sufficient news could be generated for a daily - correspondents would have to be trained, the 'structure' was not there. He also pointed to a very interesting potential change - from a newspaper with a partly rural readership to a primarily urban paper.

> So the result would be that either you produce a paper which was entirely urban in its outlook and presentation and things like that and it would tend to dissipate what I was trying to do with the whole thing ... And basically I was right ... but the African newspaper enterprise that I conceived didn't come to pass ... basically because of that ... Well, I felt that the magazine should be part of the whole complex and there wasn't really room for two magazines ... there was room for one good super magazine - at that particular stage. Later on, you could have women's magazines as a separate thing ... Bailey's idea, again, was that of a continental club which became a disaster because there again what was good for Kenya wasn't good for here ... It was pioneering at the wrong time.[84]

With television the future of newspapers seem to lie in the black market. Already the Argus Company seems to be thinking along those lines.

'COLOURED' NEWSPAPERS

The first known 'Coloured' newspaper was The Citizen[85] published in 1895 in Kimberley by a member of a troupe of American Jubilee singers who had been on tour in South Africa.

> The Citizen of 1895 was a triple-column, four-page paper, that carried reports of various meetings, and concerts that were held. In addition to these, it contained articles on culture. These articles had a distinct American flavour. The Praises of various American institutions were profusely sung. Since the Jubilee hailed from the Fish College in America, their Alma Mater naturally received pride of place in the columns of 'The Citizen'. This first effort in Coloured journalism lasted four issues. It was indeed a crudely produced paper that had types of all shapes and sizes jumbled across its pages. Printers of that time used to quote 'The Citizen' as an example of how printing should not be done.

This was followed, in 1900 or thereabouts, by the South African Spectator edited by a fascinating character, F.Z.S. Peregrino. Peregrino was born in Accra (his uncle was a Methodist 'bishop'). He went to Britain, worked in some kind of steel foundry works, then moved to the U.S.A., where he worked in a steel mill in Atlanta, Georgia. Here he set up a newspaper called The Spectator. In 1900 he arrived in Britain for a Pan-African Conference and seems to have come to the conclusion that, with the Anglo-Boer War still going strong, he had a role to play in Cape Town. Within a few weeks of his arrival he had established the South African Spectator, full of amazing American-worded advertisements. Peregrino was constantly asked to move from his premises and his difficulty in finding alternative accommodation led him to found an accommodation agency and to propagate ideas of self-help.

In 1903 Dr. A. Abdurahman was instrumental in starting the African Political Organisation. This organisation, one of the first black political 'parties', founded the A.P.O., a paper which seems to have lasted into the Twenties. It was this newspaper which helped the founding of the Coloured Teachers' Association (after a letter by 'A Coloured Teacher' proposing such a scheme). In 1913 The S.A. Referee was begun and managed to last a year - it contained political articles by Peregrino so that the entry of politics into sport is a relatively old South African custom!

In March, 1919, the South African Clarion was started and supported the South African National Party (where the A.P.O. threw its weight behind the South African Party). According to 'Gemel', it was generally believed 'that this publication which was well-written and circulated throughout the length and breadth of South Africa, was the means of bringing the Pact Governement (Nationalists and Labour) into power'. The Clarion lasted only just over a year. It was folowed by

The Sun. 'Gemel' indicated that the paper's attraction was similar to that of the black newspapers of the time.

> The novelty of a Coloured paper made almost every intelligent Coloured man and woman a reader in the Cape. Much of the 'Sun's' popularity and success at the time was due to the space devoted to social news. It was something new to see one's name in the paper ... For the first time the progress of our people was being chronicled. The idea for the establishment of a debating society was first given voice to by a writer of the Cape Literary and Debating Society, which may yet produce some public speakers of note.

Amongst the blacks, Ilanga Lase Natal would publish lists of who was seen at Lutuli's cafe and in Bantu World 'Gossip Pen' (Godfrey Kuzwayo) would detail the social activity (holidays, illnesses, visits) of teachers, nurses, doctors, writers, ministers and others.

In May, 1936, the Cape Standard first appeared on the streets. 'It has tried to make the Coloured child ambitious and race conscious; it has fostered in the Coloured youth the benefits to be derived from healthy exercise. In its fight for equality of opportunity it has reflected Coloured opinion, and stated the cause of the Coloured man in a fair, sane and lucid manner.' 'Gemel' finished his article by putting the history of Coloured newspapers into perspective.

> The most powerful newspapers in South Africa to-day had many years ago just as humble births as the coloured newspapers have had. The non-European press has a future which rests entirely with the support accorded it by the thinking Coloured men and women, and it behoves every reader to help make it a mighty weapon of a unified people fighting for equality, justice and freedom.

The Cape Standard died soon after the war but The Sun, founded by A.S. Hayes and C.L. Stewart in 1932, and taken over by Samuel Griffiths in 1936 (the United Party owned it between 1947 and 1950) carried on until 1956. By 1954 its circulation was only 2,000, however. Its rival in that year was The Torch, circulation of 4,000. This paper was started by a group of 'Coloured people' who 'felt the need for an independent, non-party newspaper caring for the interest of, primarily, the non-White peoples of the Union'. This was not entirely true, as the newspaper was representative more of the policies of the Non-European Unity Movement than of being neutral. Since its demise in 1963, a new newspaper The Cape Herald, founded in 1965, has become the leading newspaper in this field.[86]

## INDIAN NEWSPAPERS

In 1903, V. Madanjith started a newspaper in Natal called Indian Opinion. In 1904 Mahatma Ghandi, an attorney in Johannesburg, took over the newspaper and transferred the whole enterprise to a farm at Phoenix in Natal. When Ghandi left South Africa he gave the earliest of Indian newspapers to a trust, the Phoenix settlement trust. In English and

Gujurati, the newspaper had attained a circulation of about 4 000 by 1954. It is still in existence. In November, 1940, Dhanee Bramdaw started the English-language newspaper, The Leader. By 1954 it had a circulation of over 13 000 and accounted for 70 percent of the annual circulation of the three current Indian newspapers. It also has survived, as has the entertainment magazine The Graphic begun by K. Pillay in Durban in 1950. One of the oldest papers Indian Views, begun in 1914 by M.C. Anglia, went under in 1972.[87]

The Black Press's Perception of Itself, 1930-1950

After the early Thirties, with the newspapers largely white-financed, most of the writers (with individual variations admitted) tended to be middle-class and moderate, liberal rather than radical, nationalistic against tribalistic. (The exception was the Communist press which frequently attacked the other papers - and was attacked in turn.) An anonymous article (possibly by H.I.E. Dhlomo), on the Afrian Press written in 1953 to celebrate the 50th birthday of Ilanga Lase Natal described the press as 'a legitimate, sedate and moderate organ of Protest and as the Voice of the People' but also claimed that it was 'a better watch-dog of African interests than political and social bodies. It (was) more alert, articulate, militant and informed.'[88] In T.D. Mweli Skota's extraordinarily useful book The Black Folks' Who's Who, a compilation (written in the Thirties) of short biographies of prominent people, the word 'progressive' applied to a black was the most frequent praise-term. The poet and playwright, H.I.E. Dhlomo, for isntance, was described as 'a young man of fine personality, very progressive in his ideas'.[89] Although it is easy to condemn all these men for going overboard for 'European civilisations', for frequent imitation of white models, nevertheless the basis of their philosophy contained an element of realism. They perceived that one of the factors which helped the whites conquer the blacks of South Africa was the latter's lack of unity, the fact that the whites had managed each time to isolate 'tribes' and deal with them separately, often with the assistance of black allies of 'collaborators'. The men of the newspapers tended to believe that 'the black man' would be strongest if 'he' was organised into a unity, crossing tribal lines, avoiding separatist tendencies. The ambiguity of the European imitations lies in the fact that it also partly contained the seeds of African nationalism, of a Unity movement.

A letter from Orlando in 1940 by Simon Lalaza defends the black newspapers in terms of the handicaps they suffered compared with the white press and points to their nationalist role: 'We owe these Bantu papers gratitude, because they have opened an essential and new way towards progress and are invaluable agents for unifying and inspiring a sorely divided people like the Bantu'.[90] R.V. Selope Thema had reiterated this idea many times before. 'It is', he wrote in 1929, 'the duty of those of us who have access to the Public Press to call the attention of the leaders of our race, particularly at this juncture when the fate of our race hangs in the balance, to the things that are detrimental to the unity and solidarity of the race'.[91]

The aims of these writers in the early days of black journalism are summed up by M.T. Moerane (later editor of The World) in 1953.

> It is a matter for great satisfaction to note that the Ilanga has maintained its delicate but invaluable policy of being both a Forum, for a people with few other facilities for making their views and aspirations heard, and an Educational instrument of uplift.[92]

The black press saw its objectives, therefore, as being a forum for opinions and protest and as an educational instrument.

The Press and Black Literature up to 1950

With the kind of circulation achieved by the newspapers, it was not surprising that black writers gravitated to the press. Complaints about the lack of publication outlets were frequent. Describing the discussion of the African Authors' Conference held in the Transvaal in 1936, for instance, J.D. Rheinallt-Jones, after mentioning the difficulty Sol T. Plaatje had over many years in getting his novel Mhudi published, goes on to write:

> For the African author ... the comparatively small reading public in the Bantu languages is an additional hindrance. Thus it occurs that publishers will not publish meritorious material because it can only command a small reading public, and the reading public is not being extended because of the lack of reading matter. Instances were given of the disappearance of manuscripts through lack of publications.[93]

Similarly Walter Nhlapo was to complain in 1938:

> There are many authors but the difficulty is that their medium of publication is lacking. In this transition period of the world's affairs, where can they find a medium, since there are few publishers and these are for a certain kind of literature and no more?[94]

Most of the well-known early black writers were also journalists: the newspapers gave them both a public platform and a measure of social status in the aspirant urban middle-class. Poems, both in English and African languages, appeared fairly frequently in the newspaper columns and the occasional short story was not known. Journalism gave writers a certain measure of social status.

Although the artists thus had some influence on the lay-out and content of newspapers, the corollary was also, in some measure, true: newspapers probably influenced the writer's style. Firstly, the papers had, for commerical reasons, to appeal to its readership and private wrangling of conscience could not be greatly tolerated. As the influential pen of 'Scrutator' (R.V. Selope Thema) was to write:

> My advice to these who want to use the pen as the vehicle of expression is, start writing on subjects of personal appeal and of general interest to the reading public.[95]

In addition to this emphasis on public pronouncement, the newspapers tended to encourage the essay form and a discursive and moralistic style (partly in conformity with its educative function discussed earlier). H.I.E. Dhlomo's descriptive pieces, for instance, have been known to bring tears to the ideas of their readers. Essay competitions, run by the papers, also encouraged this. One competition run by Umteteli wa Bantu in 1934 attracted 561 entries.[96] Because the newspapers appeared weekly they relied less for their impact on the immediacy of their news than on comment. Journalists tended to be philosophical and moral commentators rather than reporters in search of contentious local items. Due to space limitations the very short story was encouraged and brief, rather than extended, efforts in all fields were the order of the day. The autobiography form (so important in South African writing) probably owes much to the newspaper eulogies and obituaries of prominent men. (R.V. Selope Thema himself wrote an autobiography - as yet unpublished at the time of writing). Public themes, such as the anniversary of Mendi Day or Dingaan's Day or the Orlando Train Disaster of Christmas 1941, were standard subject matter. The poet Obed S. Mooki, for instance, made a habit of writing praise poems in English to prominent people, dead or alive. The humorous column was also a popular favourite. R.R.R. Dhlomo was the major exponent of this: under the pseudonyms Rollie Reggie (in Ilanga in the Twenties), R. Roamer Esq. (in Bantu World in the Thirties) and Rolling Stone (in Ilanga in the Forties and after). He probably picked up the technique from Stephen Black, the editor of Sjambok between 1929 and 1931: Black used to write a column, conducted in the form of a debate between two Africans, (a teacher and a preacher), Joshua and Jeremiah.

The systems of using pseudonyms allowed writers both to vary their style and to write more than the unsuspecting readers realized: a few writers could hence dominate a whole newspaper. This tendency was taken to such an extent that the editress of the women's pages of The Bantu World was, in the late Thirties, Rolfes Dhlomo, undoubtedly male in all other respects! Indeed as is predictable, the newspapers were largely male controlled. A picture of the 15-strong staff of Umteteli wa Bantu in 1930, for instance, features an all-male cast. B.W. Vilikazi was to lament the lack of women writers in an article in 1933.

> Why can't our educated ... patronise the Ilanga and express their views and exchange ideas ... Why can't they tell our womenfolk about this and that? To be a writer does not mean much, nor does it cost money. We want the wisdom of their heads.[97]

The women's pages tended to confirm the woman's peculiar and subordinate role: concentrating on articles such as how to behave at English style tea-parties and emphasizing religious ideas of acceptance of suffering and such like. I have found the poems of only one woman, Rahab S. Petje. Her writing is not without an element of sharpness. An example is her poem 'Africa's Song of Freedom'.

Sing songs ye children of Africa,
Songs of mirth and songs of love,
Songs of praise for your native land;
For the Lord with His merciful right hand,
Has blest us with freedom and love.
Forget ye sons, of slavery!
Ye daughters forget your orphanage!
Arise and show your bravery!
For lost are the days of strife with age,
And liberty is at hand.
How long have we longed Oh Africa!
Have we longed for the joys of our land?
How long have we struggled with thee Oh Fate!
With thee Oh Fate! Thou cruel Fate,
'Gainst struggle, hate, and strife?
Let us with our banner unfurled,
March to the graves of our dead.
With hand overflowing with offering,
With hearts full of mirth and joy.
Then Oh then
Let us with one voice our prayers raise.[98]

To a large extent, the newspapers must also have been responsible for the spread of some terminology and language style. The early papers (although often fascinated by the American blacks - with frequent articles on 'Negro' politicians and writers) tended to put across 'standard English', in terms of their middle-class and 'civilized' aspirations. It is not till the Fifties, with Drum and later The World, that language becomes racy in some conformity with the townships slang. There are, however, early elements of American influence (often because of 'Negro' influence within the separatist churches), one example being the ending of a poem called 'A Bantu Lament' written in 1933 by Simon Lekhela; where the growing nationalism is also present.

Hasten, Black folk, time now arrives,
Let unity our ideal be.
Union our destiny decides,
Endeavour for it each colleague.
By fate or chance depressed we are
Oh Spirit Great! we trust in Thee.[99]

Journalism and literature were, for a long time in South African black literary history, Siamese twins.

There were numerous literary writers, both in English and African languages. In English, the productions of Sol Plaatje and H.I.E. Dhlomo were by no means isolated events. There were many other writers: R.R.R. Dhlomo and others wrote short stories: W. Nhlapo, Obed Mooki, 'L.D.R.' and others produced many poems. The novelist Peter Abrahams was first published in Bantu World in 1936 as a 'schoolboy poet' and B.W. Vilikazi and others frequently contributed poetry in African languages. All these names became fairly well-known.

Although an early attempt to form a journalist and writers society in the Thirties failed, the spirit of comradeship and cohesive-

ness which then prevailed has been continuous ever since and the early days of writing and journalism were a necessary tempering fire for the achievements of Drum, Classic and the 'flowering' of black literature after 1950. In 1953 M.T. Moerane (later editor of The World paid tribute to Ilanga Lase Natal:

> Our gratitude goes to the Builders to whom the torch was handed - The Bantu Press, Ex-assistant Editor J.K. Ngubane, Editor R.R.R. Dhlomo, H.I.E. Dhlomo, R.C. Mkhize, Msimbithi, Busy-Bee, Joe the Cow, Rolling Stone and many other Free-Lances and Contributors, Subscribers and readers who have supported this great venture for fifty years. Nobly have they played their parts in this stupendous Drama.
>
> And what a Drama! Nay, the story of Ilanga is an epic of the mighty deeds of a great people, struggling relentlessly against the odds uncounted, pitting themselves against principalities and powers, a panoramic pageant whose glories shall yet be sung, for the history of the last 50 years of Natal is mirrored in, nay, bound up with J.L. Dube and the Ilanga. In 'those days' Dube fought and won freedom of expression for the Africans, but not before he was arrainged before the highest citizens of this Colony in Her Majesty's name. The Amaqadi warriors rallied ... Dube had won the Freedom of the Press.[100]

There is an element of humour here: Jordan Ngubane was Jo the Cow, Herbert Dhlomo was Busy-Bee, and Rolfes Dhlomo was Rolling Stone. But there is also a strong measure of truth, even if couched in highly rhetorical terms: the full story of the South African black press has yet to be written. When it is, the debt of the newspapers and the literary artists to one another must occupy at least a small section. And, finally, mundane as it may sound, the story of the newspapers could, one day, be deservedly embodied in a drama or an epic.

TIM COUZENS
JOHANNESBURG
JANUARY, 1990

NOTES

1. G.K. Hall, Boston, 1979. There is comparatively little secondary material. Fairly helpful (though not always totally accurate) are:

   a) 'Bantu Journalism in South Africa', E. Rosenthal (South African Institute of Race Relations, pamphlet No. 14, 1947).
   b) 'The Non-European Press', A. Friedgut, in Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa, edited by E. Hellman, 1949, pp. 484-510.
   c) 'The Story Behind the Non-White Press', B. Bunting, Pioneer, Cape Town, 1960.

   Also useful for information on ownership, circulation and history of newspapers extant around 1954, is Annexure VII of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Press, Government Printer, Pretoria, 1962-1964. For a most comprehensive bibliography, see the Switzer's book The Black Press, cited above. For much of the following information thanks must go to Harold Kumalo, D.S. Harrison, B.G. Paver and the later T.D. Mweli Skota for their patience in the hours taken up interviewing them. Quite a lot of the information recorded here was first published under the title of 'A Short History of The World (and other Black South African Newspapers)' in Inspan I, 1, 1978, pp. 69-93.

2. R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa 1824-1955, Lovedale Press, 1971, pp. 1-8.

3. Ibid., p. 26.

4. Les and Donna Switzer, The Black Press, p. 261.

5. Albert S. Gérard, Four African Literatures, Berkeley, 1971, p. 30.

6. Les and Donna Switzer, The Black Press, p. 275.

7. Albert S. Gérard, Four African Literatures, p. 30.

8. Les and Donna Switzer, The Black Press, p. 246.

9. R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa 1824-1955, p. 26.

10. For an early biography of Tiyo Soga see J.A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, Andrew Elliot, Edinburgh, 1877.

11. Indaba, August 1892. Translation amongst papers of J.J.R. Jolobe, Archives of the University of South Africa, 10.3.3.1.

12. R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa 1824-1955, p. 36.

13. Ibid., p. 39.

14. Kaffir Express, 1 September, 1871.

15. Les and Donna Switzer, The Black Press, pp. 45-46.

16. Shula Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence: John L. Dube of Natal', unpublished typescript, presented at Conference, Oxford, October, 1974.

17. H. Davis, 'Elijah Makiwane and the School People'. See also Hunt Davis.

18. Albert S. Gérard, Four African Literatures, p. 41.

19. T.D. Mweli-Skota, The African Yearly Register, R.L. Esson, Johannesburg, 1931, p. 23.

20. S. Trapido.

21. See, for instance, The Port Elizabeth Telegraph, quoted in Imvo Zabantsundu, 30 April, 1891, for an example of such a sympathetic response: 'We are glad to notice the very sensible criticisms which appear from time to time in the Imvo with reference to the administration of our various official departments. We believe it to be a good thing that our educated Natives should have an organ in which their grievances, real or imaginary, may be ventilated. We are thus enabled to know where their difficulties lie, and how far their complaints have any real foundation.'

22. Imvo, 21 January, 1887.

23. Imvo, 9 February, 1885.

24. The Christian Express, 1 May, 1876. See also The Christian Express, quoted in Imvo, 16 January, 1896, for a later and more relaxed expression of the starting of Imvo.

> After a time the necessity for more frequent publication, and also for paper with a greater variety of secular and political information than the Isigidimi afforded became apparent. We could not venture on this at Lovedale, especially on the troubled questions of general politics. Mr. Jabavu received the support of a small syndicate of gentlemen in King Williamstown interested in the natives, and thereafter the Imvo Zabantsundu sprang into existence. Its creation was rather a relief to us at Lovedale as the running of a purely secular newspaper does not lie within our proper sphere of work. Some time thereafter the Isigidimi Sama-Xosa having served its purpose in its day and generation was quietly laid to rest. Up till that time it had been the longest lived of its race, having gone in one form or another, for nearly nineteen years, whilst some of its native predecessors, begun in the early days of missionary effort, scarcely survived half as many months.

25. D.D.T. Jabavu, John Tengo Jabavu, Lovedale Press, Lovedale, 1922.

26. S. Trapido.

27. Ibid., p. 339.

28. Ibid., p. 343-334.

29. Ibid., p. 333. It is amusing to note that Umhalla seems to have been editor until at least April, 1898, as the following advertisement appeared in the Johanneeburg newspaper The Standard and Diggers News, 11 June, 1898.

> Mr. N.C. Umhalla, the editor of that influential and up to-date native newspaper Izwe Labantu, thus writes under date 26th April from East London: 'I have used Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Indigestion and General debility. I attended to the instructions very closely, and within three weeks was quite well again and strong. I would recommend Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to people of weak constitutions, and providing they follow closely the directions as to diet etc., I am sure they will be benefited. N.C. Umhalla.'

30. E. Rosenthal, 'Bantu Journalism in South Africa'. South African Institute of Race relations, pamphlet No. 14, 1947.

31. The following notice appeared in Ilanga Lase Natal, 13 August, 1909:

> We regret very much to hear of the likelyhood of 'Izwi la Bantu' of East London, Cape Colony, closing down. The Basutuland Star and the Spectator imply that such is the case. We know that Mr. Soga, the brave and talented Editor has done his best; the fault probably will be found in the people who are directly concerned, not doing their duty - for if one out of every ten of them was a paying subscriber, the 'Izwi' would live and fulfil its work in serving the interests of the native people of the Eastern province. Should the paper cease, those people will find out how seriously they have neglected their own interests; they will find that it is a bad thing to go back on the path of civilization, and we advise them not to try it, for they will have to pull forward again some day at greatly increased cost. If possible, it would be better to run the 'Iswi' as a monthly journal of convenient size for binding, to make it more of an educational serial than a newspaper. Should Mr. Soga and friends decide to make it a monthly serial, they would probably find good and faithful helpers with supplies of valuable copy; why not try it? Do not let the literary talent die down ever so little. There is in South Africa many a little rill of literary ability which could find a channel in a South African native monthly journal. We earnestly hope that the 'Voice' will still be heard, and be well spoken of throughout the land.

32. S. Trapido.

33. Letter to Imvo, 3 August, 1898. The Editor of Imvo (Jabavu) replied as follows.

> We are sorry to part with Mr. A.K. Soga, and see no reason why we should not knowing that they have introduced and supported all the bad un-English laws that have been directed at the Natives for the past twemty years - since the Molteno Ministry. During all these years the combined Sprigg-Rhodes, which now masquerades as the League party, has been fought by Messrs. Merrimen, Sauer, Hay, the Moltenos. This is undeniable. We ourselves have supported these fairminded upholders of British justice and right dealing, and are glad to find Mr. A.K. Soga supported us. Now Messrs. Merriman, Sauer, Hay, the Moltenos are upholding true British principles of right and justice in regard to the Dutch section of the Colonists who have been betrayed by those who pretended to be with them. Mr. Soga holds they have been wrong in doing so. Hence all these fears. To prove to us in these circumstances the enormities of Dutch domination is profitless as spilt ink, for we distrust the Dutch just as much as we distrust the League for but yesterday both have been leagued against our friends and ourselves. The Dutch have good grounds for losing confidence in their erstwhile friends, but those grounds are quite apart from the reasons that made our friends and ourselves have no confidence in the late allies of the Bond. At present we are simply brought together by the no confidence we feel in the English friends who have been in the Bond service. Mr. A.K. Soga, if he had any views in politics, is at liberty to throw them overboard on a passing incident such as the No Confidence or the abortive Redistribution Bill, but he must not expect us to be as flexible. For these and other reasons, we fail to see the reason for the crocodile tears he sheds in our behalf.

34. Translated by J. Boxwell as Jeqe the Bodyservant of King Tshaka, Lovedale Press, Lovedale, 1951.

35. Unpublished typescript 'History of Ilanga Lase Natal', 3 pages, presently in the possession of T.J. Couzens.

36. Sol. T. Plaatje, Sechuana Proverbs, Kegan Paul, London, 1916, p. 4.

37. Ibid., p. 5.

38. See, for instance, the correspondence of Plaatje in the Silas T. Molema and Solomon T. Plaatje Papers, Historical and Literary papers, Univesity of the Witwatersrand Archives, Johannesburg.

39. For background to Plaatje, see Introduction to Mhudi, Heinemann African Writers Series No. 201, London, 1978. Also, English in Africa volume 3, No. 2, September 1976, whole issue and B. Willan.

40. Solomon T. Plaatje, Sechuana Proverbs, p. 6. See also T.D. Mweli-Skota, The African Yearly Register p. 51.

41. Quotation from film interview with Morara Molema. Extract to be incorporated in television film to be made on the life of Solomon Plaatje by the University of the Witwatersand, Johannesburg.

42. The following account is based on documents in the Silas T. Molema and Solomon T. Plaatje Papers, University of the Witwatersrand Archives. See, for instance, Aa 3.6.1. and Aa 3.6.2.

43. Imvo, 8 August 1911.

44. For a discussion of its content and some biographical detail, see C. Saunders, 'F.Z.S. Peregrino and The South African Spectator', Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library, XXXII, 3, March, 1978, pp. 81-90.

45. Unfortunately, the records of the Secreatry of Native Affairs in the State Archives, Pretoria, are undergoing complete revision and volume numbers etc. are being changed. The old numbers under the NA reference are here given in the hopes that the files will be traceable.

46. Untitled typescript on the history of the American Methodist Episcopal Church, NA 533/04B (Volume 43).

47. NA 938/02 (Volume 8).

48. The Transvaal Advertizer, 23 August, 1904.

49. For a fuller discussion of Prester John and contemporary political and social movements, see T.J. Couzens, '"The Old Africa of a Boy's Dream': Towards Interpreting John Buchan's Prester John', Africa Prospective, University of the Witwatersrand student-staff publication, No. 13, November, 1979.

50. NA 2019/04 (Volume 47). Memorandum on 'Native Meetings' by Acting Commissioner for Native Affairs, 2 September 1904.

51. NA 2019/04 (Volume 47). Letter from S. Molisapoli to The Native Commissioner 29 August, 1904.

52. NA 2019/04 (Volume 47). Copy of Minutes, furnished in letter by S. Molisapoli, date 1 July 1904, but almost certainly a mistake for 1 July 1903.

53. The only two known surviving issues are dated October and November, 1904. NA 2410/04 (Volume 49) and 2914/04 (Volume 50).

54. NA 749/04 (Volume 43). Letter from Levi Khomo to J.S. Marwick, Assistant Secretary of Native Affairs, 2 April 1904.

55. NA 749/04 (Volume 43). Notes taken at Interview, 8 April, 1904.

56. NA 883/04 (Volume 43). Letter from E.H. Schlaefli to J.S. Marwick, 25 April 1904.

57. The Transvaal Advertizer, 24 August, 1904.

58. NA 849/04 (Volume 43) Handbill, dated 18 April, 1904.

59. NA 849/04 (Volume 43) Letter from C.L. Wheelwright to Secretary of Native Affairs, 21 April, 1904.

60. NA 849/04 (Volume 43). Letter from C.L. Wheelwright to Secretary of Native Affairs, 3 May 1904.

61. NA 849/04 (Volume 43). Translation of article in The Native Eye, 1 May, 1904.

62. NA 2019/04 (Volume 47). Letter from S. Molisapoli to Native Commissioner, Pietersburg, 22 August 1904.

63. NA 459/05 (Volume 52).

64. Unpublished typescript biography in Tswana by Dr. S.M. Molema.

65. R.V. Selope-Thema, 'How Congress Began: The Life of the Late Dr. Pixley Seme', Drum, July, 1953, p. 41.

66. 'The Regeneration of Africa', The African Abroad, 5 April 1906; quoted in T. Karis and G. Carter, From Protest to Challenge, Hoover, Institute Press, Stanford, 1973, p. 71.

67. R.V. Selope-Thema 'How Congress Began: The Life of the late Dr. Pixley Seme', Drum, July 1953, p. 41.

68. Letter to Howard Pim from the Resident Commissioner's Office, Maseru, Basutoland, 22 April, 1908 (the signature is difficult to decipher). Pim papers, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

69. Interview with T.D. Mweli-Skota, Sun Valley, Pimville, 24 September 1974.

70. Interview with Harold Kumalo, Kliptown, 1 October, 1974.

71. H.D. Tyamzashe, Summarised History of the Industrial and Workers' Union of Africa, unpublished copy in the South African Institute of Race Relations. On Page 3, Tyamzashe writes about Champion's attempt to take over the paper while Kadalie was in Europe:

> He installed himself Editor of the paper and 'ORDERED' the writer to publish every bit of clotted nonsense that flew from his erratic pen. The climax was reached when Champion endeavoured to compel me to publish a libellous article.

Tyamzashe censored the article and nearly lost his job.

72. I owe much of the information which follows to two interviews with D.S. Harrison (a business-manager of Bantu World in the Fifties), Roodepoort, 25 August 1975; and with B.G. Paver, Pennington, Natal, 10 December 1975.

73. Mr. Paver's memory is accurate. It can be checked by, amongst other things, a letter from J.D. Rheinallt-Jones to R. Muir, General Manager of Argus Company, 16 September 1931 (Rheinallt Jones paper, Box 47, University of the Witwatersrand archives), in which Rheinallt-Jones noted two significant recent changes. The first was:

> A complete transformation within five years of the range of goods stocked by those traders who cater specially for Native customers. I have examined traders' stocks and have questioned the traders themselves, and I find that Kaffir Truck has become a minor part of Native trade.

The second:

> There is a wave of enthusiasm for Education. Never have Native schools been so full. In the Transvaal alone the number of pupils in Standard VI has risen from 400 in 1929 to 1 400 in 1931. A very significant advance! For it means that all over the country there has suddenly developed a new reading public, and one that offers a new market for books and newspapers.

He later added that 'it would be unwise at first (my italics) to interfere with their i.e. the present black owners nominal Editorship' and that 'the time may come when we shall be glad to have steady leadership provided by these papers'.

74. Interview with B.G. Paver, 10 December, 1975.

75. Abantu Batho collapsed in 1931. It seems to have been saved for a time about 1929 by some 'self-sacrificing action' on the part of Josiah T. Gumede, President of the A.N.C. A committee was proposed to float a new Company: it comprised such illustrious names as Gumede, Selope Thema, Mvabaza, Plaatje, Letanka, Champion, Horatio Mbelle, Mini and T.D. Mweli Skota, the last editor. (See memorandum, 'Affairs of the Abantu-Batho, Saffrey papers File D3, S.A.I.R.R.) For a sympathetic historical view of the left-wing press see three articles by B. Bunting in New Age, 20 November, 27 November and 4 December, 1958.

76. J.D. Rheinallt-Jones papers, Box 47, University of the Witwatersrand archives.

77. For circulation figures and much historical background, including financing of newspapers, see Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Press, Government Printer, Pretoria, 1962-1964, Annexure VII. This deals with the position of the black press up to about

1956. The circulation figures (pages 84-85) for The Bantu World increase from 16 000 (1945) to 25 000 (1949) to 33 647 (1955). The Ilanga Lase Natal equivalents are 13 000 (1945), 15 000 (1949), 27 490 (1955).
Of course, the newspaper claimed a much greater readership. The Bantu World, 21 October 1933, for instance claimed a readership of 40 000 and stated that 10 000 had seen its free 'bioscope show'.

78. To the question, why Selope Thema was appointed, Paver replied.

> I liked Thema's personality. He was frustrated ... but he was very earnest and sincere about the development of his people. He was a politician but he was about the most balanced of a whole crowd of, well, what one might call the intelligentsia of that day and they were very thin on the ground, you know, there were damned few.

Paver summed up his own attitudes to his Staff on the question of control:

> I didn't interfere with the editorial, I had the sane approach that as long as the chaps, you know, realised that flying for the moon wasn't going to get anyone anywhere ... that it had to be done slowly, slowly, catchee monkey and there had to be moderation. They had to do the editorials and so the policy was really a co-operative one. We used to have meetings and when I had new reporters I would brief them ... There was a lot of goodwill and faith ... I couldn't presume to put a blue pencil through what was said. It had to be done by my personality, by these chaps realising that ... and I had to say to them, well you know you'll have Native Affairs officials who are proficient in your own languages reading this.

The fact that there was a measure of political control, however, is indicated by a letter (ambiguously worded?) Paver wrote to Howard Pim on 15 February 1933:

> I must thank you for your advice regarding P. ka I. Seme. You may be sure that I will watch him very carefully in future. I do so earnestly wish to help these people, and it is not easy to know who is most worthy of the paper's support, that I am more than sorry when we appear to be misleading in our efforts.

(Pim papers A881/B12/47, University of the Witwatersrand archives.)

79. For a perception of this clash, see, for instance, 'What Africans Read', in Inkundla ya Bantu, First Fortnight, September, 1946. That Bantu Press was closely associated with the liberals of the Race Relations Institute is testified to in a letter on Institute

paper from Edgar Brookes to Rheinallt-Jones in which Brookes suggests a kind of affiliation membership for the Press 'in view of its special character from our point of view'. (Rheinallt-Jones papers, Brookes to Hones, 2 June 1934. University of the Witwatersrand archives).

80. Hashe was described by the African Leader, on 19 April, 1933, as follows:

> One time an Assistant Compound Manager (commonly known as 'Induna') of Durban Deep Roodepoort Mine. In the first month of last year, Mr. Hashe, prompted by a sense of patriotism, reclaimed, for the Bantu people, the printing plant of the 'Abantu Batho' Ltd. This plant was about to be lost to our people when Mr. Hashe came out and reclaimed it for his people.
>
> Mr. Hashe was born in 1881 at Middledrift Dist. of King Williamstown. His father was a Councillor and Chief Speaker of Chief Willima Shaw Khama. He is one of the Children of Cungwa.

81. W.G. Ballinger to Winifred Holtby, 7 June 1933. Recently discovered box of Ballinger papers, University of the Witwatersrand archives. See, also, Ballinger to Rheinallt-Jones, 30 December 1931; Ballinger to Winifred Holtby, 14 June 1933; and Howard Pim to Winifred Holtby, 21 June 1933. The extent to which Pim and Ballinger were at odds is indicated by Ballinger's affirmation that he 'cannot submit' to Pim's 'economic pressure' and that it 'looks as if Mrs Lewis has been right and I have trusted him a little much': though Pim maintains only that it was 'a curious and difficult position but we remain on friendly terms'.

82. Two other newspapers appeared about 1936: The African Liberator and The African Defender. The former seems to have been in the nationalist line of the African Leader. It claimed a circulation of 6 000 and the March-April 1936, issue stated:

> Our first attempt was to infuse new life into the defunct African Leader. Secondly we collected over £40 to start the African Defender in 1933. Both these were colossal failures. Our last attempt was to organise the African Writers and Journalists Association which was stillborn. Today we decided to have no deliberation but took our courage in both hands and fill the crying need. That we are doing beyond our expectation is proved by the fact that in our short career we have made some remarkable achievements. We have converted Professor D.D.T. Jabavu B.A. President of the All African Convention from a willy nilly upholder of White Leadership for Africans into a staunch self-respecting African national leader. We are disarming hostility and suspicion. We are giving the Trade Union movement a greater impetus. We are giving the Co-operative movement a greater upsurge ... It is necessary that the oppressed and exploited Africans should

> have an independent champion not a champion of the Octupus which would drive all Africans underground or to slave under Boer farmers. It is essential that oppressed and confused Africans have their defender. It is essential that all allies of the downtrodden slaves - the white workers the natural allies of Blacks and the European Liberals have a mass organiser. Hence our stand.

The latter was Eddie Roux's paper which sold out 10 000 first issue copies because of the black interest in the Italian-Abyssinian war. Both papers soon failed, however. Eddie Roux and The African Defender did, however, produce an interesting little literacy reader called The Mayibuye Reader which taught English through snippets like, 'The pass-law is bad. The old laws are good', and 'Black men and white men are living in Africa. The black man is still not free. Some white men are free.'

83. Interview with D.S. Harrison, 25 August 1975.

84. Interview with B.G. Paver, 10 December 1975.

85. The following account owes much to an article by 'Gemel', 'Coloured Newspapers that I have known,' in the Cape Standard, 29 March 1938. I have not yet traced the exact influence of Coloured newspapers on literary writers: Peter Abrahams, however, published his first poems there.

86. See Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Press, 1962-64, Annexure VII, pp. 2-20.

87. Ibid., pp. 144-161.

88. Ilanga Lase Natal, 20 June, 1953.

89. T.D. Mweli Skota, The African Yearly Register: The Black Folks' Who's Who, R.L. Essen and Co., Johannesburg, p. 143.

90. Bantu World, 7 September 1940.

91. Umteteli wa Bantu, 9 March 1929.

92. Ilanga lase Natal, 13 June 1953.

93. Bantu World, 14 November 1936. much of this last section has appeared as an article, 'The Black Press and Black Literature in South Africa 1900-1950', in English Studies in Africa, XIX, 2 1976, pp- 93-99.

94. Bantu World, 20 August, 1938.

95. Bantu World, 18 January, 1936.

96. Umteteli wa Bantu, 15 December 1934.

97. Ilanga Lase Natal, 17 March 1933.

98. Bantu World, 14 March 1942.

99. Umteteli wa Bantu, 10 June 1933.

100. Ilanga Lase Natal, 20 June 1953. For editorials and tributes to Ilanga on its 50th birthday, see the issues of 13 June, 1953 and 20 June 1953.