

*A GIFT
WHICH
HELPS TO
BRING THE
OUTSIDE
INSIDE*



Tladi calls this "Dance of the third creation"

Breaking down barriers

— BOOK REVIEW BY COLIN GARDNER

ONE of the many forms of apartheid that are beginning to dissolve is the one which has divided those who have stayed inside the country from those who have been living elsewhere. The exiles have started to return — one is very conscious of the high-profile political leaders — but of course most of those who have been living abroad are still there.

Many South African exiles are talented

people. In the realm of culture (literature, music, the fine arts) the division of labour and talents between those in exile and those inside, sharpened as it has been both by state censorship and by the cultural boycott, has been almost complete. To take a striking instance: for a quarter of a century many people in Europe and the USA have correctly recognised as one of South Africa's very finest poets a person whose work has

only just become publishable here — Dennis Brutus.

Stronger Souls is a volume to be welcomed because it so obviously represents a breaking-down of the barriers between outsiders and insiders. It is published in Cape Town, but the writer is Vusi Mchunu, who went into exile in Botswana in 1976 and has worked mainly as a cultural activist in Europe (particularly Germany), and the artist is Lefifi Tladi, who left the country at the same time as Mchunu and now lives in Sweden and has held exhibitions in many European cities. An introduction is contributed by Dennis Brutus himself.

What is the book like? It is thin (60 pages), beautifully produced (one wonders if there isn't a donor or sponsor somewhere in the wings) and enjoyably thought-provoking.

Tladi's graphics in bright pure colours are very impressive. Employing a style which is both African and modernist — almost as if Africa has learned again from Matisse what it originally taught him — he has achieved a subtle combination of vigorous movement and classical calm. One has a sense of Tladi creating in Sweden, looking back across at South African passions and aspirations with a mixture of commitment and detachment.

In Mchunu's writing one is more conscious of the commitment, of restless



"Between us"

energy. In his essays — most of which are addresses delivered to cultural groups in Germany — he covers a wide range of subjects, sometimes mixing biography with criticism and with aesthetic and social theorising. His poems are a little uneven. A few of them are short personal lyrics — touching but not very memorable — but most of them are directly related to the struggle for liberation. (No harm in that, by the way: a large part of the world's store of art has been associated with struggle or dedication of some sort.) Several of the poems are praise songs to cultural or political heroes. Some of them don't quite achieve a full poetic resonance; they seem to be partly trapped inside the facts which brought them to birth. But the more successful ones do manage to give the *izibongo* form a new lease of life. A poem addressed to the newly independent Namibia, for example, is both praise and litany:

O Mother of mothers
 Mother Namibia
 Source
 Root
 Spring
 Precious one
 Keeper of our navel string
 Cool shade on the sands
 Warm current on the seashore
 Treasured one
 it is us
 it were us
 who emerged from the reed
 who floated on the lilies of the
 swamps
 who ride the back of the Kunene
 who crush Mopani thorns under our
 soles
 us
 your desperate offspring
 we season special meat for you
 we chant Morenga! Witbooi!
 we patiently perform the rites as it
 should be
 we sit facing Christian shrines
 we sob in silent meditation
 we invoke the freedom fighting
 Lamb
 as it should be
 still serrated chains sever our wrists
 bare ribs howl in the desert wind . . .

The book concludes with an interesting conversation between Vusi Mchunu and Lefifi Tladi, recorded in Stockholm in 1987.

Stronger Souls is a fascinating pot-pourri, a serious mixture of tones and urgencies, a gift from the outside — or rather, a gift which helps to bring the outside inside. ●

FW must have known of secret funding

PRESIDENT F.W. de Klerk could not have been telling the truth when he told me at his Libertas Press conference that he was unaware of the Government's secret payments to Inkatha and Uwusa until the Weekly Mail disclosed them on July 19.

Nor did he give an adequate reply when I asked whether he had been aware, as State-President, that his government was violating an international agreement by secretly funding anti-Swapo parties during the Namibian election campaign.

It is "Mr Integrity's" failure to come clean on these two issues that raises serious doubts about his government's ability to be an impartial referee of the transition process, and which gives weight to the ANC's demand for an "interim government of national unity."

*ALLISTER
 SPARKS
 CHALLENGES
 DE KLERK
 ON INKATHA
 PAYMENTS*

In reply to the first part of my question, whether he knew about the payments to Inkatha and Uwusa before the Weekly Mail report appeared, President De Klerk's denial was categorical: "As the Ministers involved have stated publicly, and as I believe the Minister of Finance has stated publicly (immediately before the press conference), I was not aware until it was disclosed. And the procedures prevalent did not require me to know."

Yet Mr De Klerk's own speech that very evening (July 30) shows this cannot be true. "I remind you", he said, "of my speech in Parliament on March 1, 1990, when I disclosed information about an investigation of secret projects which I had instituted in November 1989.

"As a result of it, numerous secret projects were cancelled. Uwusa is an example . . ."

So by his own account he knew about the Uwusa part of the scandal!

And since he instituted the investigation in November 1989, it must at least have included a report of the first R100,000 payment to Inkatha made on November 5, 1989.

We don't know when the investigation was completed, only that the President said in his speech to Parliament on March 1, 1990, that "a report on this investigation is expected soon". If it reached him more than two weeks after that, it must also have listed the second payment to Inkatha of R120,000 made on March 15.

What is more, President De Klerk made it clear in that speech to Parliament that the report, when it was received, "would be submitted also to hon members of the Cabinet."

So they all knew.

President de Klerk also told Parliament: "I believe that covert actions should be limited to the absolutely essential minimum. I shall see to this as soon as the inquiry I have ordered has been completed."

Two weeks later the second big payment to Inkatha was made for its King's Park rally. Does that mean it was considered part of an "absolutely essential minimum" category of projects — and if so what price President De Klerk's assurances now that secret projects are to be cut to a minimum.

The President's reply to my Namibian question was equally disturbing.

The question was: "Were you, as State President or as Acting State-President, aware that your Government was secretly funding anti-Swapo parties during the Namibian election campaign in violation of the New York Agreement that the Government had signed on July 20, 1988, which set out the principles for a peaceful settlement in Namibia that included a pledge of non-interference and to ensure that free and fair elections were held?"

De Klerk deliberately obscured the issue by focussing on when the agreement was signed, not when the election was

