

MARTYRS AND FANATICS: SOUTH AFRICA AND HUMAN DESTINY

by Peter Dreyer

(Simon and Schuster; 255 pp., \$11.95)

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In a recent press statement, Mr. Henry Oppenheimer warned white South Africa that it has only five years within which to resolve its political problems by peaceful means; otherwise the country must be ready for a massive blood-bath. Mr. Oppenheimer is the head of the extensive Anglo-American Corporation and a pillar of South Africa's corporate business community. South Africa has achieved the remarkable position of political leper of the world, an embarrassment to the liberal democracies of Europe, who have no racial memories. But she remains a secret paragon of these same democracies whose financial investments in South Africa rise every year. The hypocrisy within Western Europe's moral position becomes more obvious when we reflect that the political unacceptability of the South African state is based on a denial that global capitalism is exploitative and that it colludes in the perpetuation of human misery. Mr. Oppenheimer is a well-meaning Christian gentleman whose wealth was made from other people's degradation and agony. Perhaps he assumes his position at the head of a new crusade, having finally grasped the historical and continuing role his opulence plays in maintaining the bastions of apartheid.

Peter Dreyer's *Martyrs and Fanatics* is a disturbing book, not because it paints a grim picture of torture chambers and the bloody-minded nature of Afrikanerdom, but because it projects despair and doom and resorts to moral preachments based at times on a simple-minded psychology and mythomania:

"...The hour is late. Like the blinkered South African whites preparing to defend the fortress of the privileged, we are all doomed if we continue to indulge in the crasser aspirations and fears at the expenses of our fellows, the biosphere, and our souls."

Dreyer's book is again disturbing, not because it lacks an overview of the political situation in South Africa, but

essentially because it dismisses all possibilities of alliances of the Left and seems to invest the small Pan Africanist Congress, now torn by strife and dissension, with the potentiality for that same suicidal heroism which once culminated in the massacre of Sharpeville. He has particularly harsh words for the Communists, whose history he gives as one long period of vacillation, opportunism, gross political ineptitude, and criminal stupidity. This is an old story. We seem to see the Marxist Left only within the context of its conflicts with an almost insuperable opposition. In this context, its minor lapses become historical disasters; its dogmatic self-indulgences, massive intellectual intransigence. This has been the accusation leveled against all the Marxist parties of the West. Sometimes the charge is well deserved.

But Dreyer's book is a powerful appeal to our humanity, to that undying instinct of brotherhood that runs through the seismology of our common existence. It is a humanist document based on arguments marshaled with eloquence and moral vehemence that cannot but draw our admiration.

The book comes at a very critical time in global geopolitics, particularly with the defeat of Jimmy Carter and the election of Ronald Reagan to the American presidency. Secretary of State Alexander Haig affirmed at his confirmation hearing that the U.S. is determined to defend those friends who share America's values in Southern Africa. The emerging U.S. policy, which appears to base itself in the economics of strategic minerals, including oil, defines a new commitment to political hardheadedness. There is talk of the Western alliance forming special military units to defend the strategic mineral zones of the world against Soviet predation. And Southern Africa from the Cape to the Zaire Basin is alleged to contain some of the minerals most vital to Western industrial hegemony. This is the crux of the matter. The recent

failure of talks aimed at achieving a political settlement in Namibia and the hardening position of the Western alliance against moves to institute economic sanctions against South Africa define a fundamental priority. Economic power subsumes all political considerations. Apartheid is good for business if universal adult suffrage means a Communist takeover. Black rule spells instability and economic mismanagement. South Africa points at the eternal economic ills that plague black nations north of the Zambezi. These are seen as eloquent testimony not only to African incompetence, but to African eagerness to hand over perfect, benign, and well-nursed capitalist economies to Marxist-Leninist dogmatists.

Against the background of these considerations it is regrettable to note that Dreyer pays little attention to the economics of apartheid. This is a serious omission in a book that devotes a great deal of space to the history of South African racism. Dreyer provides a well-documented account of the extermination of the aboriginal Cape nations, stretching in time from the early sixteenth century to the unequal military clashes that reduced Chaka's empire to a whimpering chiefdom and a depressed Bantustan. The villain of the piece, Dreyer points out, is the Calvinist Dutch adventurer, the product of the combined forces of European predation and puritanism, a new breed of Israelite in the wilderness of Africa marching toward a Canaan of racial purity and white supremacy. Afrikanerdom is typified by the convoluted personal histories of Kruger, Smuts, Malan, Verwoerd, and Vorster. But the historical irresponsibility of Britain—her rather jaded imperialist mentality and the senseless war which strengthened the chosen-people syndrome of the Afrikaner—accounts for the present situation in South Africa. When at the end of the nineteenth century the Africans pleaded with the British colonial power to safeguard their interests, they did not realize that the limited guarantees granted them in the Act of Union would be negated by a relentless program of racial exclusivity and brutal exploitation. When Her Majesty's government talks today, one cannot hear the accent of her imperial past. A historical responsibility remains, and it is to be discharged by the African peoples—if not through direct political interference, then through sympathy

and solidarity with those who are the victims of her hardly benign historical neglect.

One of the major fascinations of the book, however, lies in the intimate story of two personalities. The first is Breytenbach, a young Afrikaner poet, who, during a European sojourn, joined a confused conspiracy against apartheid and later, under the trying conditions of solitary confinement, offered his services to the state. The other is Selby, a young Mosotho, a leader of the Soweto uprising of students in 1976. The tragic figure is Breytenbach, his poetic talents shackled by a nightmare of despair and betrayal; his tragedy is the tragedy of white South Africa. Selby's story is the story of hope, of the inevitability of the forces of history enforcing a relentless retribution, readjusting the scales, seeking the attainment of proper human values. For history has galloped at an unstoppable speed during this century. Revolutions have occurred; millions of serfs in Russia, China, millions of exploited peoples in Africa and Asia have been released from centuries of degradation and given the possibility of reorganizing their lives. Errors have been made in those revolutions. But the fact remains that the human spirit that released them continues to stir and to seek redress particularly for those errors that attempt to shackle the human soul with the strangling chains of dogma and political tyranny. In South Africa, too, the change will occur, even if it takes a thousand years. [VVV]

FOR THE RECORD: SELECTED STATEMENTS

1977-1980

by Henry Kissinger

(Little Brown and Co.; xiii + 332 pp.; \$12.95)

Donald J. Puchala

One reacts to *For the Record* very much in the way one reacts to Henry Kissinger himself. It is impossible to come away unmoved from an encounter with the man, his thinking, his words, or his actions. It is also difficult to come away unperplexed.

For the Record is a chronologically ordered selection of Kissinger's speeches, essays, interviews, and other pronouncements delivered between 1977 and 1980. Most address topics of

foreign policy—Soviet-American relations, NATO, the Middle East, international aspects of the energy question, and other current issues. Most transmit and amplify the uncomplicated message that there has been a shift in the global balance of military power to the advantage of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government is deriving substantial political benefit from its militarily advantaged status. Moscow could push even harder on political fronts in years ahead. The deteriorating position of the United States has resulted partly from Soviet doggedness but mostly from confused strategies, budgetary blockages, and political immobility in Washington. A global balance of power can be restored, but this will require massive investments in defense, greatly enhanced NATO cooperation, and clearer Western thinking about ends and means in foreign policy.

Disclaimers notwithstanding, what Kissinger obviously wants to put on record in publishing these statements is his disagreement with much of the foreign and defense policies of the Carter administration. For the debate about who in our era is "following in the footsteps of history," Kissinger wants to make sure that his preferred pathway is clearly marked. As such, the book represents counterpoint to the dominant themes of Jimmy Carter's policies. Most penetrating is the critique of the Carter defense policy, brilliantly expressed in Kissinger's congressional testimony on the SALT II Treaty. Kissinger chides an administration that "seems to have a far from settled view about the need for a strengthened defense. Witness the cancellation of the B-1, the nuclear carrier, and the neutron bomb; the closing of the Minuteman III production line; and the stretch-out of the MX, Trident and cruise missile programs....It is not a question of balancing the insistence of conservatives for higher defense with the considerations of liberals for a reduction in our military spending. The issue is what our country needs for its long-term security."

But it is not only defense policy that provokes the former secretary of state's disapproval. Kissinger questions the American abandonment of the shah of Iran: Should great powers treat their most loyal allies in such a manner? On China, Kissinger belittles the notion of a "China card": Can Washington really believe that a three thousand-year-old

sovereign state will permit itself to be manipulated in another's interest? On human rights: Who gains when the United States pressures and alienates some of its closest friends? And repeatedly on the Soviet Union: How many expansionist thrusts can be ignored in the name of détente?

NATO allies and Third World governments also come off rather badly as Kissinger puts his positions for the late 1970s on record. The allies are reprimanded for underestimating the gravity of the threat from the Soviet Union, for choosing to believe that détente is divisible, for shirking defense burdens, and for criticizing the U.S. "at one and the same time for risking détente and for paying inadequate attention to security." Some allies in particular are chided for their unwillingness to unify Western positions on energy questions. Europeans are admonished for their leanings toward the PLO. Kissinger displays little interest in the PLO, or in a West Bank state governed by them. Toward radical regimes in the Third World, Kissinger is harsh:

"As for the Third World nations now meeting in Cuba, when I was in office I never read their resolutions...which is just as well because I might have said something rather nasty....It seems to me nostalgia, not policy, to appeal to radical elements in the Third World...the Third World is not our escape route; we may not lose there but we are not likely to win there by repeating their slogans."

Whether or not one agrees with Kissinger's positions, the forcefulness and clarity of his arguments must be admired. All his points follow consistently from basic geopolitical assumptions. Relations among states are fundamentally contests for power, and expanding power can be contained only with countervailing power. The contest for power (call it "national security," if this sounds more acceptable) in contemporary world affairs is manifested primarily in the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. All other contests, and indeed most other relationships, must be interpreted as aspects of, or subordinate to, the Soviet-American competition. In Kissinger's estimation, singlemindedness is a statesman's virtue. Any distraction from the centrality of the bipolar contest could doom the West to capitulation or the world to nuclear disaster.

Yet it is this singlemindedness in