

CHAPTER 4

V Lovett Cameron, *Reverse the shield* (1926)

Norman Giles, *Jim Crow's brethren* (1932)

Magda Joubert, *Karooos* (1939)

Ethelreda Lewis, *Wild deer* (1933)

WHITE POLITICAL CONFLICT IN THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

Establishing an appropriate chronology for the four novels analysed in this chapter has proved problematic.¹ As against the specificity of events in chapters 1 to 3, in this case one has to rely on probable election dates as markers. As V Lovett Cameron's *Reverse the shield* was published in 1926, it can therefore relate only to elections earlier in the twenties. However, since the novel celebrates an SAP victory, the 1924 election is ruled out. Of the two other previous elections, those of 1920 and 1921, the earlier is the more likely, as by 1921 the Unionist Party had already been absorbed into the South African Party, and the protagonist would have been distinctly uncomfortable with this alliance. *Jim Crow's brethren* by Norman Giles is very hard to fit with any certainty into a particular year in the decade. For one thing the New Citizen party, as the novelist explicitly states, does not correspond to any known party at the time. Secondly, the defeat of the Nationalist candidate by the SAP in the protagonist's fictional district does not necessarily signify a corresponding turn of events in the overall electoral situation. However, the one indication that a fresh election had to be called soon afterwards leads me to associate this novel with the 1920 to 1921 period, and thus, taking its

later publication date into account also, I have placed it second. As Magda Joubert's *Karoo* refers explicitly to Smuts's *Holism and evolution* and later (though abusively) to his vision of a united Africa, and as the National Party is clearly in government for the duration of the novel, it must almost certainly be based on the 1929 ('Black Manifesto') election. Accordingly it has third place in this sequence. Ethelreda Lewis's *Wild deer* provides no election markers at all. However, as it was in London in 1929 that Lewis heard Paul Robeson, the Negro singer from the United States on whom her protagonist, De la Harpe, is modelled, it seemed reasonable to place its era in the very early thirties. Furthermore, as the novel steers away from party political concerns, while revealing, on the other hand, a good deal of anti-communist sentiment, it provides a helpful bridge text to Van der Post's *In a province* in chapter 5, which is centrally preoccupied with the imminent dangers of communist influence (bearing in mind that *In a province* is set in the late twenties).

Contextualisation

To commence contextualisation in this chapter I need to return first to the pre-twenties period. There will also be some unavoidable overlap with the contextualising material for chapters 2 (Boer Rebellion); 3 (strikes of 1913, 1914 and 1922); and 5 (black rural protests). I have tried to ensure, however, that such overlap is kept to a minimum through brief cross references. The main focus here is the shaping of white political conflict via the viewpoints of Smuts, Hertzog and Malan, together with the elections of 1920, 1921, 1924, and 1929 in which these conflicts were fought out. As in chapter 3, I have tried to spread my consultative net widely. Once again, the square bracket abbreviations given for each of my sources (listed alphabetically below) are used for all references in the chapter. Also, as before, there is no need to repeat publication dates in these references.

T R H Davenport (1977) *South Africa: a modern history* – [Dvt]

H Gibbs (1949) *Twilight in South Africa* – [Gb]

D W Kruger (1975 [1969]) *The making of a nation: a history of the Union of South Africa 1910–1961* – [Kr]

T Dunbar Moodie (1975) *The rise of Afrikanerdom: power, apartheid and the Afrikaner civil religion* – [DnM]

J D Omer-Cooper (1987) *History of Southern Africa* – [OC]

Christopher Saunders (ed) (1994) *The Reader's Digest illustrated history of South Africa* (3rd expanded edition) – [RD]

M Roberts & A E Trollip (1947) *The South African opposition 1939–1945: an essay in contemporary history* – [Rs-Tp]

T Dunbar Moodie gives a useful account of the 'Afrikaner civil religion'. One of its main ideas, he explains, was that the British Empire and the Zulus inadvertently acted as God's agents in causing suffering to the Afrikaners. This suffering was in fact a sign of God's favour. (Moodie notes, however, Hertzog's lifelong scepticism about the assumptions in this apparent working of 'God's finger' (36). Akin to a stage of being tested by fire, the suffering was thus related to the idea of resurrection. The resurrected 'volk' would find their new identity in the creation of a republic, structured along the lines of the Transvaal republican government, which was regarded as liberal in the extreme. As 'natives' were certainly not to be regarded as among the elect, there was no need to consider the extension of liberal policies to them. In the civil religion outlook Englishness was simply equated with imperialism, capitalism and equality; all these would be confounded, however, by the establishment of the Afrikaner people's republic. Smuts was seen as the 'handyman of the Empire' (DnM:16); and thus inevitably also labelled by Nationalists as a supporter of Johannesburg capitalism.

Hertzog, whose political vision was not quite consonant with the bigotry of the 'Afrikaner civil religion', declared in 1912 that he was prepared to 'support British policy only so long as it was good for South Africa' (OC:160). In his view the two white groups should develop as two separate streams, which would enable their separate language and cultural traditions to be maintained. South Africa should, he thought, be ruled by true Afrikaners, but the English could also fit this description if their primary loyalty was to South Africa, and not to England. It seems, in fact, that Hertzog was a misunderstood figure in relation to the English since his nationalism was *not* intended to be exclusively Afrikaner: throughout his public career he emphasised complete ethnic equality between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans (DnM:78). Like Hertzog, Botha deplored the British jingoism of the opposition Unionist party. Instead, together with Smuts, he favoured the method of conciliation and an 'integrationist' pattern of political organisation. However, Botha's support in the Transvaal, though not in the Cape, was broken by his suppression of the 1913 Boer Rebellion.

(NB In 1912 the South African National Native Congress (forerunner of the ANC) was formed.)

Hertzog and his supporters left the South African Party (SAP) in 1913 when he refused to denounce the Boer Rebellion. His consequent move was to form the National Party (NP) in 1914.² In accordance with his beliefs, Article 9 of the Party's Programme of Principles stated:

the foundation of our welfare rests on the unity of the European population of the Union ... [We] must be one People, but this unity need be no more than a social and spiritual unity, with complete retention of our many-sided ethnic riches stemming from language, history, religion, customs and morals. (DnM:78)

With regard to blacks the Party envisaged 'the supremacy of the European population in a spirit of Christian trusteeship' (81). Because the NP's nationalism was hard to distinguish from 'the white South Africanism professed by the South African Party' (OC:160), it did not have much support at first, as reflected in the 1914 election results: SAP: 54 seats; Unionists: 40 seats; Nats: 26 (at least an increase on their original 7). Thus, although World War I came 'at the most inopportune time for South Africa' (Kr:79), Botha and Smuts could maintain South Africa's support for the Allies without being much troubled by the Nationalists' growing strength (DnM:85-86).

(In 1915 Clements Kadalie founded the ICU – see chapter 5)

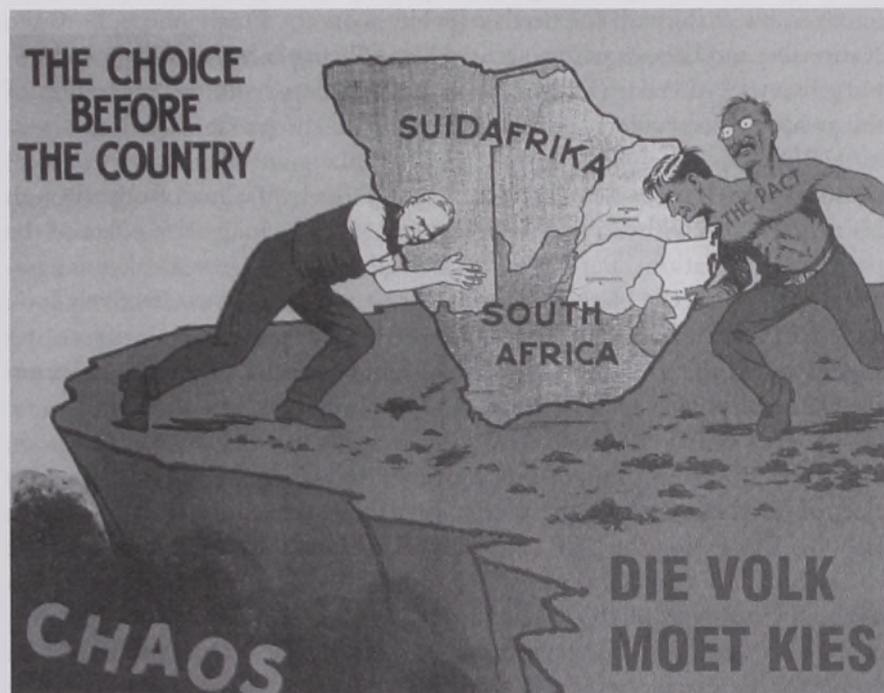
In 1915 Smuts became prime minister after Botha's death. Early in his new role, however, he faced a barrage of problems including his opponents' refusal to believe, in terms of the Treaty of Versailles, that the Dominions were now free and equal partners of Britain (Kr:113). Continuing political agitation caused Smuts to call two general elections within a year of each other, which are significant for two of the novels considered in this chapter. In the first of these elections – on 10 March 1920 – the SAP won, but the National Party made heavy gains. Smuts was able to continue as prime minister, but only because of Unionist support (DnM:86), and loyalty to Britain became an even more troubled issue. Smuts's SAP also lost its Afrikaner character more and more as his approach came to resemble that of the Unionists. A further consequence was that the more pro-British the Unionists became, the more belligerent was the pro-Republican reaction (Kr:111). Not only did Smuts seem to be out of touch with Afrikaner aspirations (111), but the Labour Party rejected him as being on the side of capitalists and mining magnates (113).

Hertzog then suggested a coalition, promising not to demand secession for the time being, provided free Republican propaganda was allowed. Smuts, however, would not agree (DnM:86). Nevertheless, by popular demand, a conference was held in Bloemfontein on 22 September 1920 to try to achieve reunion of the two Afrikaans groups. Not unexpectedly the conference also foundered on the question of Republican propaganda, and the related question of defining the relationship between the Union and Britain. Ultimately the conference succeeded only in accentuating Afrikaner division (Kr:115).



Generals Smuts and Hertzog

When the Unionists were eventually absorbed into the SAP in September 1921, the Nationalists felt they at last had clear proof that the SAP was merely the Unionist Party in another guise (Kr:116). To re-affirm his support base, the now insecure Smuts was induced to call for a new election in February 1921, scarcely a year after the previous one. He scored most gains in the cities



Anti-Pact poster

through warnings of secession, a prospect which led many English-speaking workers to desert Labour and join the SAP (DnM: 87). On the other hand the weak link in Smuts's support was the group of largely Afrikaans white urban working-class people on the Witwatersrand (89). These results gave the New SAP (that is the original SAP combined with the Unionists) 79 seats and the Nationalists only 45 (87). However, while Smuts now had a clear majority, his party had become widely regarded as the expression of English and capitalist interests (OC:167).

(NB On 21 May 1921 the New Israelites were gunned down at Bulhoek – see chapter 5)

The Rand Revolt (fully discussed in chapter 3) revealed how precarious Smuts's position was, since the white miners, most of whom were Afrikaners, complained that employment for whites was gravely threatened (DnM:90). Hertzog cleverly exploited a phrase from Smuts's parliamentary reason for delaying martial law ('let things develop'), in order to make him seem indifferent in his attitude to the needs of white workers. Furthermore, both the Nationalist and Labour parties accused him of being in league with Johannesburg financial interests (DnM:90). Naturally Smuts's ruthless repression of the armed white strikers seemed to confirm all the worst suspicions about him (RD:264). The following year (1923) Hertzog and the Labourites went ahead to form a parliamentary pact, prepared for by Tielman Roos through his negotiations with English Labour (Kr:155). The long-term effect of the pact with the National Party was that the Labour Party grew weaker as a political force, since the National Party saw that it could just as effectively look after Afrikaner workers' interests (154). Also, because the majority voting swing was in the growing urban areas, Smuts's anti-Republican attack on the Nationalist Party was thus now rendered impotent.

In 1924 Smuts was successful in having his book, *Holism and evolution*, published.³ On the political front, however, he failed miserably. In the June election the Nationalist/Labour alliance won 81 seats altogether (Nats: 63; Labour: 18) leaving the SAP with only 53, a result which can be seen as the 'white backlash' that had been gaining momentum ever since the suppression of the Rand Revolt of 1922. Thus Hertzog was able to form a new government with a comfortable majority (RD:318), and the NP was to remain in power for the next eight years (Rs-Tp:5). Hertzog lost little time in producing adequate discriminatory industrial legislation, as well as taking positive steps against 'poor whiteism' (DnM:91). In 1926 he took the next step by placing before parliament his desired segregation policy in the form of four closely related pieces of legislation (OC:172). (NB This topic is dealt with in detail in chapter 5.) However, he could not achieve the necessary two-thirds majority (Kr:151).

At the Imperial Conference in London, also in 1926, the Balfour Declaration established for the British dominions the principle of full autonomy and equality of status with Britain (OC:173). Nevertheless, while Hertzog was content with this guarantee of the country's autonomous status within the Empire, the young Nationalist intellectuals continued to murmur and were not appeased (Kr:156). For similar reasons the Republican wing of the Party

in the Free State and the Transvaal gradually began to lose confidence in Hertzog's ability to further their political ends (156).

In 1927 Hertzog made some progress toward his segregationist ambition by means of the Native Administration Act, which 'placed all Africans outside the Cape under the unlimited authority of the government without the need to refer to parliament' (OC:172). In the same year the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) membership reached 100 000, an awesome threat to Hertzog's plans, one would have thought, yet he refused to ban it. At the sixth Communist International in Moscow the plan for a 'Workers' and Peasants' Republic' in South Africa found favour, and a programme of mobilising rural Africans began. In the following year the ANC also began organising workers in the rural areas of the Western Cape. (The implications of these three initially vigorous movements towards some form of black liberation are dealt with fully in chapter 5.)

In 1929 Smuts expressed his vision of a 'Great African Dominion stretching unbroken throughout Africa'. Tielman Roos cleverly exploited the situation as an election tactic, claiming that through Smuts's plan, the whites would be swamped by a huge black majority in a 'Black Kaffir state extending from the Cape to Egypt' (OC:174). The Nationalists then had an excuse to denounce Smuts in what came to be known as the 'Black Manifesto' and their campaign persuaded the electorate: in the general election on 18 June Hertzog won an overall majority by making the preservation of White South Africa the main campaign issue (174). In relation to his segregation programme, however, Hertzog again lacked the two-thirds majority required at a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament. Thus he was still unable to get his four Bills passed (Kr:151), and the enterprise was delayed till 1936 (see chapter 5).

The year 1929 was that of the Wall Street crash. A comparison of prices reveals how frighteningly insecure the economic situation was: in 1929 the price of wool was 14 pence per pound; by 1932 it had dropped to 4 pence per pound. In the same period the price of maize dropped from 15s 4d per bag to 9s 4d per bag. Hertzog's first positive step against 'poor whiteism', gravely increased on account of the depression, was to set up a commission in 1929 to investigate the problems of poor whites. The Union government and the Dutch Reformed Church each matched the grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Five commissioners travelled the country between 1929 and 1932 gathering data (RD:332), which issued in the submission of a five-volume report in 1932 (332).

Several major developments took place in 1930. Dr J van der Merwe formed a parliamentary Republican Union to promote republicanism within the National Party (DnM:94). Hertzog made further headway towards his segregation dream by amending the already restrictive Native (Urban Areas) Administration Act of 1923 whereby segregation was made compulsory in 26 urban areas. The ANC executive resigned in response to Josiah Gumede's close ties with communists (see further details in chapter 5). The Women's Enfranchisement Bill was passed and all European women now had the right to vote (Kr:156). It is very likely, however, that this Bill was introduced more for the expedient purpose of gaining additional white votes than to promote women's rights.

(NB As the comments that follow are mainly necessary as a bridge for contextualisation in chapter 6, they have been kept to a minimum.)

The final legal form of the Statute of Westminster, enacting the Balfour Declaration, was adopted in 1931 (OC:173). As the dominions were now regarded 'as equal to Britain' and were to 'enjoy unfettered independence' (Gb:175), Hertzog hoped to have met the republicans' objections in his own party. On the contrary, many Afrikaner nationalists believed that Hertzog, like Smuts, was proceeding to sell out the Afrikaners to British interests (OC:173), and that the principle of Christian nationalism – that South Africa be a republic – was being violated.

Also by 1931 Hertzog's National Party was in a somewhat shaky position on account of the gold standard problem. When Britain was forced off the gold standard, the Union refused to follow suit (Kr:158) because Hertzog wished to maintain South Africa's 'sovereign independence in the economic sphere' (DnM:120). In 1932 Hertzog remained adamant, encouraged by the conviction of Havenga, his Minister of Finance, that South Africa was able to withstand all the onslaughts on gold. However, in a fiery speech at the Blood River celebrations on 16 December 1932, Tielman Roos demanded the formation of a national – that is *non*-party – government; and the immediate abandonment of the gold standard (Kr:162). In response to this speech investors sent more than 2 million pounds sterling out of the country in three days (RD:334). The government clearly had no alternative but to accede, and so at the very end of 1932 Havenga announced South Africa's departure from the gold standard (334). The drought of 1932 to 1933, one of the longest and severest of the century, coinciding with the general state of economic depression in the West, was a further prompting to a new political dispensation.

Accordingly, in March 1933 Hertzog was forced into a coalition with Smuts's SAP (RD:264). Tielman Roos's apparent wish to become premier was the *immediate* spur that led to talks between Smuts and Hertzog in Jan 1933 (334). However, it is also important to note, especially in relation to South African politics of the World War II period, that in 1932 Hertzog read Spengler's *Decline of the West* with its idea of civilisation as doomed because of the democratic party system. According to Spengler, the only hope for a new purified state lay in the 'youthful-minded, uncorrupted element of the populace' (DnM:124). Thus Hertzog came to believe that only through the formation of a 'People's Party' in South Africa would there be the chance of survival for modern civilisation (which for Hertzog spelt white civilisation). After that achievement it would be possible, he believed, to resolve the black problem.

In the general election called in May 1933 the Hertzog-Smuts alliance won a resounding victory (OC:175), which resulted inevitably in 'Fusion', the formation by Hertzog and Smuts on 5 December 1934 of the United National South African Party, later to be labelled simply the United Party (UP).⁴ In this arrangement Hertzog was prime minister, Smuts his deputy. D F Malan, whose views had for a long time clashed with those of Hertzog, and who had already become a member of the secret society, the Afrikaner Broederbond in 1933 (RD:335), broke away to form a 'Purified' (*Gesuiwerde*) National Party. Incidentally, many Afrikaners – including Hertzog himself – were shocked at the way the Broederbond 'unashamedly propagated its neo-fascist nationalist ideology' (335). In a warning letter to his son, Albert, Hertzog wrote that he foresaw only national destruction ahead (if the Broederbond persisted with its policies) (335). For Malan and his followers national unity was to result from the republic. Hertzog, on the other hand, believed that only *after* national unity had been achieved, would the time be right to launch the republic (Rs-Tp:16).

Hertzog regarded the Cape African franchise, unique in South Africa, as opening the way to eventual black domination in South Africa. Therefore, for ten years he had worked towards the removal of this most inconvenient and anomalous obstacle (RD:338). The threat posed by Hertzog's Nationalist government to the Cape African Franchise led to a revival of African political activity (339), which culminated in December 1935 in the founding of the All-African Convention. However, their protests were in vain. On 6 April 1936 the Native Representation Act finally abolished the Cape African Franchise, allowing instead for a Native Representative Council consisting of 12 elected

and four nominated blacks; five officials together with a Secretary for Native Affairs (OC:175).

The yearning of Afrikaners for unity amongst themselves reached a climax through the need to celebrate the centenary of the Great Trek in 1938. The idea of actually recreating the Great Trek was originated by Henning Klopper, founder of the Broederbond. The Centenary Trek started on 8 August 1938 on Cape Town's foreshore, attended by a crowd of some 100 000 people. Klopper himself was astounded by the overwhelming response (RD:336–337). Here was the long sought opportunity to elaborate the development of the Afrikaner volk ethos into what Dunbar Moodie terms a civil religion, since by this time most Afrikaners believed that they belonged to an elect people (DnM:21; OC:178). Although the 'fusion' United Party government had agreed to undertake erection of the Voortrekker monument, Malan's Nationalists seized on this event to forward *their* policy. Not surprisingly, feelings ran high against the English (Gb:176–177). In Malan's speech at the 1938 Day of the Covenant celebration at Blood River, he envisaged Afrikaners as engaged in a new Great Trek to the towns where they faced a new Blood River in competition for employment with blacks (OC:177). Thus, although the aim of the centenary celebrations had been to heal the breach in Afrikanerdom (Rs-Tp:16), and Prof A C Cilliers' proposal to form a new Afrikaner party was well supported by many Afrikaners, Malan's *Gesuiwerdes* were cool in their response. The question of Afrikaner unity would continue to be a most vexed and contentious matter (Gb:177).

The novels

V Lovett Cameron: *Reverse the shield*

(published in 1926; set c.1919/1920)

Andreas, the favourite son of a Free State farmer, Jan van Reenen, shows exceptional possibilities for leadership. His postgraduate education in the United States has made him aware of how narrow is the perspective of his fellow-countrymen; his aim, then, is to foster a spirit of enlightened Afrikaner nationalism. Jan is adamant that Andreas has not been influenced by the English, a belief that is to be thoroughly confounded by the development of the plot; however, Andreas himself at first overlooks the need to gain English support for his movement. Although he resists the marriage that has been planned for him with the predikant's daughter, and has on several notable

occasions to oppose his rabidly anti-English father, he remains loyal to his people, and even, finally, to the treacherous predikant.

An accident of fate (or Providence?) puts an Englishwoman, Alethea Dale, in his path. Having rescued her from near-drowning in a flooded river, and defied his father about her staying to recuperate on the family farm, Andreas is the only one with whom she can converse, and a mutual fascination grows. Unfortunately this part of the novel is particularly unconvincing – we simply have to accept that his fascination with her will lead him eventually to be persuaded by her views. Her belief in the idea of reincarnation, referred to as immortality in the novel, introduces an important strand of the author's preoccupations, even though the imagined previous lives of Andreas and Alethea are not essential to the plot. The kind of nobility of mind attributed to Alethea and the self-sacrificing death of her fiancé, Maurice Fairleigh (whom she had come to join in Rhodesia), tips the novelistic scales in favour of the English. To highlight the author's belief in the overall superiority of the English, the author brings Alethea and Elsie Kok, the predikant's daughter, together in discussion – a situation in which no opportunity is lost to insist on the cultural inferiority of the young Afrikaans woman. Elsie is astonished at the range of subjects discussed by Andreas and Alethea (not least of which is 'immortality' (77–78)).

A by-election offers Andreas the chance to be a candidate for the Nationalist party (note: there is a discrepancy here: we are informed that the deceased Wessels had been a member of parliament for ten years already, yet Alethea's letter is dated 1912): avoiding platitudes and outworn attitudes, he proves himself a persuasive politician. When he has to win the confidence of his party supporters (in competition with an alternative longstanding candidate), he aims to lift them above the 'rut of political obsession' (95) and fire them with hope for a 'united Dutch [sic] South Africa' (96), a 'virile Afrikaner nation' (109). He is portrayed as having no difficulty in tearing his soporific competitor's speech to shreds.

Alethea, however, is a passionate defender of the need for English-Afrikaans unity; as she puts it, in the very misleading language of the time, 'the two races must combine' (125). She feels that the Afrikaners should be grateful for what she regards as their generous treatment by the English after the Anglo-Boer War, a sentiment which is clearly endorsed by the novelist. For her there is no obstacle to their being loyal to the British Empire, the benefits of which she claims they already enjoy. The Nationalists she views as blind fanatics and wishes that Andreas would rather use his influence in support of the SAP. However, the unlikelihood of Andreas's conversion to her cause is emphasised

by his growing fame. He seems like one carrying a 'flaming torch' (166). Indeed the whole town revels in him and in his 'glorious message' (180). Since he is denounced by the Unionists, and lauded by his fellow Nationalists, it would have required a devastatingly Damascus-like experience for him to undergo a conversion, especially after his unprecedented triumph in securing three-quarters of the vote. Alethea is clearly intended by Cameron to be a force of this kind, but her uniqueness is more asserted than imagined. A hint of Andreas's capacity for impartiality and mature leadership is nevertheless given by the courteous way in which he deals with his opponents when his own followers break up an SAP meeting.

Finally, but of course only after Maurice's death, Andreas's love for Alethea prompts him to accept her point of view and to shift to the South African party. (Alethea has recognised that there is no way of extricating him from dedication to Afrikanerdom; thus the Unionist party would not fulfil his needs.) As a result of Alethea's 'gentle influence working in his soul' (278), Andreas comes to feel that nationalism is a lost cause and that the Nationalists are impractical dreamers (279). Conversely, and conveniently for the authorial enterprise, the SAPs are now regarded by him as 'the only hope for the regeneration of the country', provided they operate under – what else? – the 'aegis of the British Empire' (279).

Violent antagonism is aroused by Andreas's shift of allegiance, and the novel thus reaches a major climax at the political rally where he stands as an SAP candidate. In an echo of earlier circumstances, Andreas has to abandon the meeting. In the ensuing pandemonium he is almost killed by aggressive Nationalist hecklers, described as 'mad for revenge' (313). This threat becomes, ironically, the signal for Alethea's final yielding to Andreas's wish for marriage – the circumstances somehow release her from the haunting presence of her dead fiancé. The widespread sympathy elicited for Andreas as a result of the assault also becomes a significant factor in his eventual victory, together with a newly discovered element of support from white mine-labourers who 'have no love of the nationalists' (292), and whom Andreas finds to be 'good sorts' (296). In fact, so keen is Cameron to promote the interests of the South African Party that he seems prepared to envisage sentimental voting for the seriously wounded Andreas as an acceptable substitute for principled support.

The romantic element of the plot thickens with the arrival of Maurice Fairleigh's friend, Malcolm Fraser, to inform Alethea of her fiancé's death (which she has already psychically anticipated). Andreas is led to believe, through the predikant's deliberate scheming for his daughter's sake, that Malcolm and Alethea have behaved scandalously. Thus Andreas, having just

begun to feel himself unable to live apart from Alethea, is plunged into the agonising conviction that he must sever all connection. Only the confession and repentance of the predikant in a contrived deathbed scene enables Alethea and himself to be reconciled. At this stage of renewed ardour Andreas grows even more repelled by his party's policy, a plausible emotional reaction in the context of the novel to the behaviour of the predikant and his own father, who aided and abetted Kok in his scheming.

N Giles: *Jim Crow's brethren*

(published 1932; set in the twenties)

Gey van Rynhardt, the protagonist, has gained an Oxford degree as a Rhodes scholar. He and a group of fellow Rhodes Scholars set up the New Citizen party to try to achieve citizenship for blacks in South Africa; to help create 'a self-respecting, law-abiding, tax-paying citizen, free to vote, free of all colour bar' (13). One needs to emphasise at the outset what Giles states in his introduction: there was nothing like a New Citizen party in operation at the time about which he wrote. He thus appears to have broken free from a dutiful representation of the political situation at the time. Gey's father could hardly be more different from Andreas van Reenen's; an enlightened man, he is clearly intended by Giles to represent the best of the Afrikaans cultural ethos. Gey's affectionate cousin, Barbara de Reaucourt, the widow of a Frenchman, is similarly cultivated.

The Van Rynhardts' present neighbours are Colonel Tim Wardlaw and his wife, Elsie, who are caretaking a farm for a friend during his temporary return to England. Colonel Tim is a more real Englishman than Alethea Dale's fiancé, and moreover a character who features prominently in the entire plot. His rapport with diehard Afrikaners of the area (erstwhile foes in the Anglo-Boer War) offers a clear hint of the potential for Afrikaans-English unity, an initiative that – in terms of prominence in the plot – actually turns out to be a more significant preoccupation for Giles than the New Citizen Party. Humorous sentimentalisation enters into Giles's portrayal of these relations; for example Tim Wardlaw declares that he is more afraid of the Boers as polo players than war opponents. The main Afrikaner-English unity theme is developed via Gey's love of Elsie, whose marriage, as Colonel Tim himself is only too ready to acknowledge, is hardly more than a friendship: assuming that Giles is working in symbolic terms, it is as if this fairly superficial unity needs to give way to what Gey and Elsie can achieve.

When Gey explains the need for his party to Elsie, he reveals that his motive for promoting it is something short of an enlightened concern for equal human rights: 'If the natives were not encouraged to become good citizens, the country must always be in jeopardy from them' (33). Later, explaining to his father that he is no negrophile, Gey discloses what urges him into political involvement: 'our self-respect as a nation ... and the degeneracy of our own poor, caused by keeping the kaffir where he is' (69). Nothing that follows in the novel suggests that Giles himself would lean towards a more wholeheartedly progressive view. Like Ethelreda Lewis, whose novel *Wild deer* is discussed at the end of this chapter, Giles appears distressed by the blacks' 'economic bondage' (64), maintained so that 'people overseas can make fortunes' (64). The solution offered via Gey, however, is to make them happy in a rural area. But even Jan thinks this idea is 'colossally mad' (66). In any case it is incompatible with his party's stated policy, though Giles does not show awareness of this aspect.

Giles seems to have a particular fondness for Afrikaners (as is already evident in *Rebels in the sun*) and to wish to view them in the best possible light. Even amongst the diehard Afrikaners, a leading figure such as David Nesor is presented as more perceptive and enlightened than he cares to show publicly. Gottfried Freylinck, an Anglo-Boer War veteran, who is most trapped in the past, is presented by Giles not satirically, but with considerable compassion and, ultimately, pathos. Given the generally right-wing attitudes of the Boers in the area, however, it is hardly surprising that Gey's party does not do well in the election. Even though some opposition to Gey's plan emerges, if only very gradually and rather unobtrusively at first, its inherent provocation to his community is revealed by the episode where Gey is wounded by a gunshot deliberately fired at him by the half-demented Freylinck. What is surprising, though, is that his views and campaign do not arouse more antipathy and even violent rejection of the Freylinck variety.

Only one major episode is devoted to suggesting the potential of the New Citizen party for bringing about significant change. When trouble brews amongst the farm labourers, the Boers suppose that Gey and his policies are responsible. They imagine that Gey and Tim Wardlaw had been involved in trying to 'stir up a Kaffir Rising' (82-83). Although David Nesor rejects this conjecture, Gey and Colonel Tim take it upon themselves to deal publicly with the discontent. First Tim, then Gey, addresses a crowd of between 400 and 500 blacks (gathered on the local polo grounds - as for other conflicts considered less than serious by whites). There is further implicit symbolism in the scene: two ostensibly enlightened whites, one English, one Afrikaans,

deal sympathetically with 'natives'. The wisdom and efficiency of a policy of trusteeship would seem to be suggested here even though, strictly speaking, the New Citizen Party should have relied only minimally and temporarily on trusteeship if it wished to be true to its stated aims.

Gey, informed that the real trouble-maker is a Fingo called Molitze, calls him out before the assembly, denounces him in no uncertain terms as a thorough scoundrel, and tells the people that they must choose between Molitze and himself. Much authorial fantasy is apparent in the easy way Gey manages not only to spurn the agitator, but to remain in entire control throughout the encounter, and to succeed with aplomb in calming the resentful workers. A more paternalistic representation of such proceedings could hardly be imagined. At one stage Gey even tells the blacks explicitly that they are still children, and that they should not 'frighten the white man' (102). His use of tribal conflict tactics (clearly with the full support of the writer), like the idea of sending blacks back to the rural areas, in fact betrays the principles for which his party is meant to stand.

Fairly important local figures in relation to the question of 'Boer' attitudes are 'Lop' and 'Kop', the Jewish shopkeepers. Less cunning than Stephen Black's Schlimowitz in *The dorp*, they are clearly motivated principally by the wish to retain customers from all sides. Although Gey initially thinks they might be influencing Boers against his party, David Nesor assures Gey that they would not have dared (63). It is Lop and Kop who inform Gey about the local political barometer – after the polo-ground meeting they report a friendlier feeling towards him on the part of the Boers (160). Paradoxically Gey's encounter with the blacks has 'cooled his ardour' (107), though we are not quite sure why. Possibly it is an indirect admission by Giles that the problems are actually a good deal more serious than the polo-ground confrontation could handle.

Most of the second half of the novel is preoccupied with the question of Gey's and Elsie's relationship. His tour of the country makes him aware of the consequences for an offender against the rigid social morality of the Boers (137), and thus he decides at first to quit politics for her sake (187). Elsie, however, wisely perceiving that under such conditions she will then get only half of Gey's attentions, refuses to leave with him. At this stage Barbara de Reaucourt, anxious to promote her cousin's best long-term interests, becomes the subtle agent seeking to shift Gey and Elsie's prospective relationship from that of an affair to marriage, which means also, of course, helping to dissolve the matrimonial bonds of Tim and Elsie. To achieve both ends Barbara has to persuade Tim to let Elsie divorce him. Barbara assists directly in

this process, giving Elsie the required grounds for suing by pretending to be Tim's mistress while on a holiday trip to East Africa.

In the election the Nationalists are defeated and the 'supposedly moribund' South African Party now represents the district. Although the New Citizen members do not gain even one hundred votes, they have a drastic conscientising effect on parliament, causing both government and opposition to adopt such extreme non-negotiable positions that a new election is called for. This time the local Boers, impressed by Gey's evident abilities, and under the spell of his revered family name, want him to stand for the National Party, arguing that he will never become an MP through the New Citizen Party.

David Nesor hopes that, if Gey accepts the nomination, he will advance the idea of an ultimate kind of apartheid: that is to invite whites from all over Africa to join together in South Africa, while the blacks could trek to all the surrounding countries to join their fellow blacks! In the ensuing debate with Jan and Gey, Giles is at his best: first, the characters are sufficiently well developed for their arguments to have a personally convincing ring; and second, Jan and Gey are not puppet-like authorial mouthpieces – their steady, logical questioning of David's defences and arguments shows anything but a narrow over-simplified wish to prove their point. Giles sustains the debate animatedly, allowing Gey to make the apparently clinching reply: 'It is not the way out ... the responsibility is on our shoulders. We cannot even ask England and the League [of Nations] to take it off. The kaffir belongs to us. We must turn him into a good citizen, or answer for it here and hereafter' (237). In fact David and his friend, Zacharias, have the last word, and Gey is forced to admit that David's proposed programme is 'good, strong, popular stuff. Much more palatable than anything we have to offer' (237). In this way Giles strikes a prophetic note: how right the 1948 election was to prove the outcome of this debate!

Magda Joubert: *Karooos*

(published 1939; set c.1929–1930)

As in *Reverse the shield*, the element of dissidence in this novel is within the Afrikaner ranks themselves. One keeps getting the impression that the characters are related to actual figures, but it has proved impossible, despite much searching, to pin down any particular individuals. Possibly Joubert has tried

to create a sense of authenticity through suggestive allusions but has also deliberately inserted counter-suggestions to prevent recognition.

To some extent Joubert has tried hard to prevent the protagonist, Paul du Plessis, from emerging in too heroic a light. His impulsive marriage to Hetty van der Merwe, which ends most unsurprisingly in divorce, is the first sign of a flaw in his character. His satirical tendency, aggravated by post-divorce misery, almost brings about his political downfall. He has to suffer greatly to mature: this seems to be the author's message. On the other hand, his maturity leaves her struggling to find adequate ways of eulogising him.

At a meeting of the Philosophical Society in Cape Town Paul offers a relentlessly satirical reply to Smuts's book *Holism and evolution* under the title 'Volism and evolution'. ('Volition', he explains, 'is the self-inherent and all-sustaining concept of the cosmos' (49)) So outrageous is the address, however, that he is virtually forced to resign from the society. Later, having accepted nomination as National Party candidate for the forthcoming (presumably 1929) general election, he accepts an invitation to debate policy with Fischer, his opponent. As a preface to his address Paul makes an astonishing attack on the 'funk' shown by members of his own party, suggesting that they are overawed by the personality of the opposition leader who is present to give support to Fischer. (This reckless public act of disloyalty is to have serious implications for him of course.) Joubert's tactics in relation to the opposition leader are curious: although earlier in the novel she refers directly to Smuts as author of *Holism and evolution*, at this point she names the opposition leader, General Smears (her own satirical jab). Further, the title she gives to Smears's party, the Pan African Party, is a mocking allusion to Smuts's dream of a united Africa and the development of a Pan African consciousness. Here Joubert fully exploits the *swart gevaar* preaching emanating from Hertzog's election campaign of 1929, although she does not linger explicitly on the race aspect. Trying to be fair to Smuts in the guise of Smears, however, she suggests his stature through his magnanimous letter of mingled criticism and encouragement to Paul. Smears acknowledges that Paul has made a very unfortunate *faux pas*, yet expresses sadness that his 'keen fine edge' (73) is not available to Smears's own party. This reconciliatory gesture, reports the narrator, is the beginning of a long friendship between the two men. As Smears predicted, there are severe repercussions for Paul in relation to his own party: the Conservatives insist on his expulsion, and he succeeds only partly in deflecting the force of this condemnation by resigning first.

Through the heated and ultimately bitter quarrels between Paul and his first wife, Hetty, Joubert introduces her endorsement of the idea of nation-

alism. Poor Hetty, in trying to counter Paul's vigorous affirmation of the need for the force of nationalism to rescue South Africa, is explicitly accused of bias by the narrating voice: Paul feels that he is 'up against Hetty's inborn prejudice' (17). There is no need for such interventions with Paul's second wife, Betty, since her political views are in total accord with her husband's, and she is thus able to identify herself completely with his purposes and with their community. In terms of symbolism Joubert seems to have adopted a bold manoeuvre: what is crucial for South Africa, if we take our cue from the contrast between Paul's two marriages, is English-Afrikaner, not Afrikaner-Afrikaner unity. Betty also seems intended to represent the ideal combination of the woman of the past and woman of the present (she has obtained a degree from Newnham College, Oxford). When the Women's Enfranchisement Bill is passed (historically in 1930), Betty is made to affirm passionately that, for her, motherhood and wifeness are more important than the vote. Paul's taking undue advantage of her at this point in excessive teasing accompanied by boisterous physical pressure only seems to affirm her viewpoint – a leading cue from the author, I assume – all the more strongly.

The episodic nature of the novel is clearly meant to convey the scope and success of Paul's varied activities once he has settled into his second marriage, and begun to adopt a more balanced political perspective. The incident in which he quells his neighbour's farm labourers' discontent is one such activity. This unique episode involving blacks in the novel (and the main reason for my including it in my discussion) centres on a smaller-scale version of the kind of unrest amongst farm workers that Giles presents in *Jim Crow's brethren*. Here Paul is revealed as a conventional, unquestioning *baas* figure, and in order to justify his behaviour Joubert employs all the usual stereotypes in relation to the discontented black characters, especially for the agitator M'babo, a half-breed like the stereotype in Thompson's *The lion and the adder*.

M'babo is described by Joubert, summoning a full battery of emotive insults, as an 'oily, unctuous orator in the pay of some pretentious but negligible society grandiloquently self-styled The Federation of Bantu Freedom' (112). His strike-stirring employment has led him to go 'stealthily from farm to farm, exciting the minds of a lot of ignorant Blacks with the inevitable clap-trap about slave-conditions and slave-payment imposed on the rightful heirs of Africa by white imposters and usurpers from oversea [sic]' (112). The period, and the nature of M'babo's activity (when one tries to detach it from Joubert's vehement bias), suggests that what she has in mind is one of the perfectly legitimate and necessary campaigns of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (to which particular attention will be devoted in chapter

5). Throughout the episode Paul is championed by the author, who believes she is offering yet further evidence of her protagonist's singular wisdom and courage. The emphasis, in Paul's and his neighbour's confrontation with M'babo, on a large pot of beer, is Joubert's final device to trivialise the labourers' protest. In any case the occurrence is extremely peripheral in relation to the novel as a whole, which is brimming over episodically.

Soon after Paul has succeeded in his re-assertion of white power, he is, appropriately enough, invited to stand as Nationalist candidate in an adjoining constituency. Although his agreement is based on an awareness that a 'myopic partisan outlook' is gathering momentum in his party, he avoids his past over-eagerness to be its scourge. Instead he devotes his energy to leading the 'new youth front' of the party and is rewarded by being returned with a clear majority. Foremost in his mission at this stage is the urgent appeal to the 'English-speaking section' to relinquish its concept of England as home. For this purpose he now makes more serious use of his concept of 'volism'.

The entire final quarter of the novel concerns Paul's dealings with the young farming couple, David and Kate de la Rey, giving this section, whether Joubert intended it or not, an overriding significance. The De la Reys' marriage and their farm are in serious jeopardy, and it is only through the perceptive efforts of Paul and Betty in providing intellectual, emotional, and financial upliftment that rescue is achieved. Here Joubert confronts the spectre of poor whiteism and suggests the positive force of a vigorously nationalistic spirit at work. However, the continual emphatic pronouncements on the bliss and harmony of Paul's second marriage prove rather insufferable, as too do the word-games indulged in by the main characters, and for which Joubert clearly has a positive and excessive relish. One cannot help feeling, as yet another pun-crammed conversation arises, that the novel reveals not only the author's own penchant, but that of a circle, probably of university friends, who engaged in such jesting.

The academic friendships in the novel are surprising. Paul has already been the favoured student of Professor R Desmond, retired (early) professor of ethnology and archaeology, and through Desmond he becomes in turn the friend of Professor John Ferris, who arrives to take up the Chair of English at the outset of the novel. The latter friendship enables Paul to meet Betty Ferris, who becomes his second wife. That Professors Desmond and Ferris should both be totally in favour of Hertzog's Nationalist party seems difficult to believe. As Desmond is from Ireland, perhaps the explanation lies in the tendency for many emigrant Irish to side with the Afrikaners as a way of expressing their deep-seated hatred of the British. But the Ferris case seems

inexplicable except as possible evidence of Joubert's wish, as a presumed devotee of Hertzog, to promote his non-exclusivist brand of nationalism.

Towards the end of the novel Paul is suddenly faced with having to complete three major tasks in a very short time: a report for the Drought Commission, a paper for the Scientific Association (a serious handling of his theory of 'volism'), and a final article in a series on education in South Africa. Fortunately Joubert does not feel it necessary to provide a further set of accompanying episodes to render these concerns of Paul more convincing. Left free from all other tasks by Betty's (naturally) assiduous farm management, Paul meets his deadlines effectively and we are left to reflect, if rather disbelievingly, on his extraordinary versatility. Little wonder that soon afterwards, at the very end of the novel, he is appointed as the new Minister for Education, and that he and Betty are met at the station in Cape Town by the prime minister accompanied by a large parliamentary entourage! As Dr D F Malan was the Minister of Education in Hertzog's Cabinet throughout the period of Nationalist party government until coalition in 1933, he would have been more than a little surprised by Joubert's fictional choice. However, given Malan's persistently anti-English attitude, she may well have taken the risk of using the situation as a satirical hint.

Ethelreda Lewis: *Wild deer* (published 1933; set c1930–1933)

Ethelreda Lewis's novel deals with a threatened, but stifled riot. It is included in this chapter because, although its focus is on a Negro American singer, the group that intend to riot are white. *Wild deer* portrays the meeting and friendship between Ruth Grainger, a white liberal who writes articles on the 'Native Question' (80), and the visiting black singer, De la Harpe. As Tim Couzens explains, De la Harpe is based on the singer Paul Robeson, who was invited to visit South Africa, while Ruth Grainger reflects some of the qualities and interests of the author herself. It is, I must confess, one of the least convincing and most tedious of all the works surveyed in the course of this project: there is little plot tension or compelling action, except for the potential riot, the Johannesburg Town Hall episode.

Mostly the work provides an opportunity for Lewis to advocate her policy of rural separate development for blacks via Grainger, De la Harpe, and several other characters who are given little individual scope, so firmly are they pressed into lengthy speeches lauding the virtues of rural life, as

against the insidious corrupting forces of the city for blacks. This gives the novel an excessively moralising, almost hectoring quality.⁵ Lewis seems indeed, one has to conclude eventually, to suffer from a pathological horror of the city. Her incessant, spurious theorising is frequently supported by ostentatiously mythopoeic devices. Here one finds the doctrine of trusteeship at its most oppressively patronising. 'We whites know what is good for you blacks' is the policy that underlies most of her major pronouncements.

Not only is the city held to be a dangerous evil in itself, but knowledge (never clearly defined, though it seems to refer to consciousness in general, rather than simply to Western ideas and information) should be kept away from blacks lest they be contaminated. For this reason it would be hard, ultimately, to distinguish Verwoerd's programmatic apartheid from Lewis's rural black enclaves. In fact, Fr Macmichael, an Anglican priest and one of those who help make De la Harpe aware of the reality for blacks in South Africa (that is, he helps to shape him into a Lewisian frame of mind – which he is only too willing to accept), recommends Maryvale (= Mariannahill) because it turns out 'good peasants' (126). If this sort of training is not possible, Africa should be kept heathen rather than allow the spread of Christianity that comes 'tainted from the mines' (114). Much stress is laid on the immaturity of South African urban blacks: they are held to be 'just kids from the country' (141). Colenbrander, De la Harpe's chief mentor, whose eager disciple he eventually becomes, believes that 'Education of anything but the hands ... is the cruellest gift you can make to a savage' (263). Indeed, in most of Colenbrander's pronouncements on blacks (and he is invariably pronouncing on them), one is faced with an attitude that is not merely patronising but insulting.

Several longish sections are devoted to quasi-historical accounts of South Africa, and of Africa more generally: a location superintendent, Fr Macmichael and Colenbrander each make contributions towards this essentially uniform reinforcement of the idea that blacks are dehumanised by urban life. From these accounts Afrikaners emerge as a pastoral tribe, as much contaminated by the city as blacks. It is argued that life on a Boer farm, despite the sjambok, was much to be preferred to life for blacks under urban Afrikaner rule (as in the present of the novel). Following similarly twisted but consistent logic, where the sheer notion of pastorality evaporates all disagreeables, United States slaves were 'perhaps better off as slaves in the South than as free slaves to the white man's civilisation in the North' (61). Similarly, Afrikaners in exile are regarded as trapped 'in the hands of the spoilers as a wild deer [hence the title] struggles in the mysterious muscular contractions of the py-

thon' (103). Dickens's Mr Skimpole (*Bleak House*) could hardly have shown more persistently self-deluding conviction.

Couzens argues persuasively that Lewis's intention was to present in the novel an idealised portrayal of the relationship which the author (and other fellow liberals) had with Clements Kadalie, ICU leader, but which eventually failed. When De la Harpe and Grainger agree to work together for a new deal for blacks, that is their total segregation from Western civilisation, we may see this as Lewis's compensatory fiction for bitter disappointment. How this arrangement is to work in practice is, however, far from clear, since De la Harpe, as Colenbrander's disciple and co-worker in the salvation of Africa, and as role model for healed and regenerated blacks, is grafted onto Colenbrander's tame tribe, and given a submissive new tribal wife (his first wife having been simply abandoned in the States). Also left unclear is how this arrangement is to remedy Lewis's extremely pessimistic opinion that the blacks' 'few educated leaders had so far made no impact on the mass of primitive life from which they had emerged' (141). Possibly Lewis's actual long-term vision of segregation was as fraught with contradictions as that of the Nationalists who continually adapted the theory to suit their needs.

Like Van der Post, Lewis is greatly perturbed at the thought of Communist influence on blacks. Early in the novel when De la Harpe meets three educated blacks, he hears that the trade union publication editor (apparently modelled on H D Tyamzashe, editor of the *Workers' Herald*) has a particular mission to 'defeat communist propaganda and capitalistic greed' (72). Colenbrander insists that 'What Africa cries for is evolution, not revolution' (62) – and what he envisages is clearly an extremely slow evolution! An educated Zulu called Isaac Lemi, 'of communist tendencies', is led to wonder why his 'Russian friends' never managed to communicate with such utter simplicity as Colenbrander. In this way some fairly unobtrusive opportunities are used to suggest disturbing flaws in Communist thinking. However, unlike *In a province*, this novel allows no opportunity for any one exponent of Marxism to have some say in the matter. The exponents of Lewis's updated 'natural savage' philosophy have it all their own way.

Before De la Harpe actually immerses himself in tribal life, however, Lewis is at pains to insist on his and Grainger's mutual physical repugnance – marriage is certainly not what either of them has in mind. We have already been informed how De la Harpe despised the German operatic singer who had fallen in love with him; he does so because she did not observe the 'barriers of race laid down by Nature' (179). Near the beginning of the novel we have also had Fr Macmichael expounding his views on racial purity: he claims

that the Malays do not have an inferiority complex, unlike the coloureds, because they have not inter-married. Another of the many supposedly telling insights he offers the newcomer, De la Harpe, is that coloureds are despised by 'full-blooded natives' (68). In her handling of this subject Lewis's latent racism is curiously ironic, for the spectre of cross-racial sex and miscegenation is also the crux of the plan by a group of young Afrikaners to denounce De la Harpe publicly. By chance one of this group observes De la Harpe walking in the country with Ruth Grainger, and all of them then attend his recital in the Johannesburg Town Hall with sinister intent. Just how far they would, in Lewis's view, have been prepared to go in terms of malicious action remains unclear but, at the very least, it seems that they would have wanted to drive him ignominiously away from the Town Hall and from any further public appearances. When Grainger realises that they have been observed, she berates herself for 'the madness of her indiscretion' (184). This would have created a potentially serious tangle for Lewis had she been aware of the implications, since the reader now knows that Grainger actually shares the fundamentally racist attitudes of the young Afrikaners. At any rate the possibility of such troubling thoughts is brushed aside as Grainger heroically saves the day through a timely and extended public utterance while De la Harpe is escorted away from possible danger. Her melodramatic intervention (authorial wish-fulfilment at its most blatant) includes a severe rebuke to her English fellowcitizens who had *failed* to intervene in the Nationalist government's treatment of blacks (203–204). Grainger's scathing contrast between this neglect and British readiness to fight the Boers when gold was at stake has a certain rhetorical power. However, her address to the group of young Afrikaners who had intended to create maximum disruption is another unfortunate sign of Lewis's proneness to patronisation. (One must ask also why, in 1933, she still clings to the term 'Dutch'? Did she possibly intend by doing so to emphasise how much longer they have been in the country than the English?)

Apart from this implicit self-undermining of Lewis's entire enterprise, the novel is self-contradictory in several other ways. Lewis's central emphasis is on the power of the natural, yet Colenbrander's pet tribe has had some of its 'natural' habits deliberately altered: '[A]fter forty years of Colenbrander headmanship, father and son, the tribe was less under the witch-doctor's influence than any other that he knew' (321). As Colenbrander's disciple, De la Harpe has to sacrifice civilisation for the sake of an African heritage – in making this extraordinary demand Colenbrander consoles himself by thinking of De la Harpe as a martyr for a noble cause. Yet the scene in the Town Hall when

De la Harpe's rendering of Negro spirituals profoundly affects the audience, even the group that is bent on mischief, surely suggests a very different possibility for an effective reformer. Ways of sustaining such positive contact and influence would have been far more beneficial for the society as a whole, but Lewis is too intent, it seems, on her theme of renewed primitivism⁶ to register the full implications of what her own imagination has conceived.

The natural tribal world into which De la Harpe gains entry is extremely idealised, even sentimentalised (see in particular his glimpse of a communal scene (256); and later of two young men bathing (280)). Nowhere, however, is there any hint of the extreme and increasing rural poverty which was a source of major concern at the time. Did Lewis know these stark facts, one asks; or would she have been prepared to use her United States slaves argument in the face of them? Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of Lewis's belief in the value of tribal/primitive life for blacks is her treatment of De la Harpe's second wife, Narida. Lewis's shift into an almost completely mythopoeic mode at the end of the novel cannot disguise her repeated stress on the woman's 'meekness', her readiness to be used simply as a vessel to produce a new, great male leader.

Despite my many misgivings about the novel, I have to admit that some of the responses to the city presented by Lewis reveal a passionate concern for justice and for more humane treatment of workers. Also she seems to have legitimate objections to the way blacks were (at least at the time) regarded as 'interesting specimens for the anthropologist and the ethnologist' (150); and her support for Chief Moredi, anxious to prevent the granting of mining concessions in his territory, seems unexceptionable. Furthermore, she seems rightfully indignant against lawyers such as Westcott who are prepared to invest money in 'native causes' which would be likely to enhance the reputation of the mines, but, on the other, refuse to act on behalf of a 'native suffering from deep injustice' (222).

Conclusions

Cameron, Giles and Joubert all fervently believe in the need for Afrikaans-English unity, but differ in their conception of the political philosophy to be expressed through that union. Lewis's sense that the Afrikaners are basically a pastoral people who cannot adjust to city life does not inspire in her any such wish for unity. The first three writers are also concerned with dissident Afrikaner Nationalists and their journeys towards greater enlightenment. All receive maximum authorial support though the extent of their changes in

perspective differs. Giles's protagonist, Gey van Rynhardt, ostensibly has the greatest shift to make in becoming an advocate of a new (hypothetical) party seeking to create citizenship for blacks. As very little in the way of concrete thinking about the implications of such an aim occurs in the novel, in practice his conversion is not so different from that of Cameron's protagonist who, craving enlightenment and freedom from the bigotry of people like his own father, moves from a very narrow Nationalist context to the SAP. As Alethea, the Englishwoman under whose influence, or perhaps spell, he falls and whom he later marries, is imbued with imperial idealism, he too becomes an adherent of that cause. Gey in *Jim Crow's brethren* continues to have more to do with the Nationalists of his own community than with English people. In his case English-Afrikaner unity is presented in the novel only through his friendship with the English Wardlaws, a friendship which leads to their divorce and his marriage to Elsie. Joubert's protagonist, Paul du Plessis, has the least distance (in political terms) to travel. He has long yearned to reform his own party, the Nationalists, but has to learn, through much suffering, acceptable ways of being an influence for change. English-Afrikaans unity is given more substantial treatment in this novel since Joubert relies not only on Paul's marriage for this purpose, but portrays his relationship with several other English speakers. This aspect of the novel seems to involve a somewhat softened version of Hertzogism. Reform in Paul's case, however, does not entail rapprochement with the SAP. Not only Smuts's book, but his dream of a united Africa are subjected to satirical treatment. What Lewis favours instead of English-Afrikaner unity is the dissident liberalism of Ruth Grainger. She shares with the country attorney, Colenbrander, who has a compelling interest in black tribal life, the belief that blacks are inevitably corrupted by urban life, and therefore need to be protected in a rural setting. In fact their conception of black rehabilitation involves a more extreme form of trusteeship than it does any type of liberalism. What Lewis regards as desirable reform turns out to be uncomfortably close to Hertzog's desire for more effective racial segregation, and is thus an uncanny forerunner of Malan's apartheid policy.

Although Joubert's Paul is concerned with the reform of his 'myopic' and 'partisan' party, she does not represent these attitudes through particular personalities. Cameron, on the contrary, spares no effort in making Andreas van Reenen's followers seem like thugs or rabble through their violent disruption of an SAP meeting before his political change of heart. His mature leadership qualities are then given a useful opportunity for display in the courteous way he deals with his opponents. When he stands for the SAP he is included in the Nationalist hecklers' destructively aggressive behaviour and is lucky to sur-

vive their vengeful assaults. Through Andreas's culturally inferior would-be fiancée and her treacherous father, as well as his own rabidly anti-English father, we are left in no further possible doubt as to where lies the enlightenment Andreas seeks.

Consonant with Lewis's belief that Afrikaners are an intrinsically pastoral people, she shows their city behaviour in an unfavourable light. The young Afrikaner men who come to disrupt the concert given by De la Harpe, the negro singer, and to threaten him, are shown to be immature and driven by belligerent racism. However, they are easily brought under control by Ruth's brave and timely intervention. She has both agency and legitimacy in her author's eyes, to the extent of taking this opportunity to rebuke her fellow English-speakers publicly for failing to intervene in the government's treatment of blacks. In *Jim Crow's brethren* Gey and the Englishman, Tim Wardlaw, (well before tension over Elsie occurs) deal easily and effectively with an episode of black discontent – indeed they are, despite Gey's supposed New Citizen policy, revealed as expert practitioners of a sort of childish version of trusteeship. The blacks' discontent seems to appear in the novel more for the sake of displaying white men's control and wisdom than to elicit sympathy for the complainants. In any case, as the discontent is made to seem the consequence of an agitator, these blacks are stripped of both legitimacy and agency. While Paul du Plessis's cause is, for Joubert, always legitimate, he develops in agency through his wife's support and his friendship with supportive English academics. When Paul helps his neighbour to deal with an incipient black farm workers' strike, we find that they, just as in Giles's novel, are granted no real agency, having been spurred on by a despicable, half-breed agitator. At this point we find Paul for once using violence. As the writer portrays him consistently as versatile, resourceful and efficient, we can only conjecture that his use of violence towards the black protestors again exemplifies these virtues in her eyes.

Cameron, through the marriage of Alethea and Andreas, contemplates the reconciliation of English and Afrikaners under the beneficent protection of the British Empire. A marriage such as that of Paul and Betty in *Karooos*, and his appointment as new Minister of Education in the Nationalist Party government suggest that Joubert has similar optimism, although there is no mention of English members of the Cabinet. Despite Giles's fairly easygoing tone and pace, the final, effectively managed debate in the novel leaves one feeling extremely doubtful about English-Afrikaner rapprochement: policies that will feed racial prejudice are what Gey's unreformed Nationalist compatriots resolutely seek to attain. Lewis's future vision is enacted in the final section of

the novel where a utopia in miniature (on her terms) is created by having De la Harpe as proto-martyr sacrifice his career to fulfil Grainger's and Colenbrander's plan for rural resettlement. This purportedly liberal project scarcely differs, one cannot help noting, from the segregational basis of Gey van Wyngardt's political opponents' schemes.