



ALONE WE MAN THE DEFENCES

DR A. E. RUPERT

**Opening address: Annual Congress Afrikaanse
Handelsinstituut, Bloemfontein.**

More than 40 years ago, long before World War II, yes even before the time of Hitler, the Spanish philosopher, Ortega Y. Gasset postulated the advent of a new phenomenon, the "mass-man", in his work, "The Revolt of the Masses".

It was roughly at the same time — in 1928 — that England, for the first time since Magna Charta in 1215, i.e. after 713 years, finally decided to give one man one vote. Ortega Y. Gasset said that: "The characteristic of the hour is that the commonplace mind, knowing itself to be commonplace, has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace, and to impose them wherever it will. Such then, is the formidable fact of our times, described without any concealment of the brutality of its features".

He added that this was a phenomenon, new to modern history, to be compared only with the rise of the masses during the fall of the Roman Empire, when these masses took over from the directing minorities who had founded the Empire.

As in the times of the Fall of the Roman Empire there was a convergence to the cities, thus resulting in the depopulation of the rural areas.

We were living in a levelling period, said Gasset — "there is a levelling of fortunes, of culture among the various social classes, of the sexes".

Scientific progress brought in its wake the

'self-satisfied' individual who can do what he likes; when this individual assumed a position of predominance, it could be taken as a clear warning that degeneration and decay had set in. He said that the West's viewpoint was inflexibly that of the 'Liberal'; that the reappearance of the 'cynic' was indeed further proof of decay, because the cynic, as in A.D. 3, had as objective the sabotaging of civilisation. The 'cynic' was like the 'nihilist' of the preceding Hellenic civilisation. He failed to create anything, make anything. His role in history was that of society's parasite, bent on wrecking everything.

Ortega referred to the barbarism of "over specialisation", with each and everyone viewing any matter only from his own subjective point of view.

But he saw intervention by the State, the usurping by the State of all spontaneous social action, as the greatest threat to civilisation.

Thus Rome fell into decadence when its society became drugged through state control. Once life had been completely taken over by bureaucracy, the rot set in.

It was paradoxical society created the state as an instrument for better living, only to find that when the State gains control, society itself becomes 'statisfied'.

One may well look upon the granting of universal franchise in England in 1928 as the

final onslaught of the mass man.

In 1970 Sir Alec Douglas Home confessed to me his alarm over the fact that far more than 50% of his people were State-employed. The result is that the economic growth rate of the mighty, dynamic British people, possessing even today more technical know-how than all of the Southern Hemisphere, has levelled out to the lowest in the West.

But how are we situated in this country? State expenditure is mounting steadily as a result of our constant insistence on more services. Only recently we had to learn through the friendly voice of the Chairman of the SABC that television could ideally be provided by a non-profit making utility company. I ask you: — who will pay the taxes to meet our mounting state expenditure if all were to operate on a non-profit basis?

Commenting on an attack by the Socialists, Churchill replied: — It is no disgrace to make a profit; it is a disgrace to show a loss!

The non-profit seeking company has such a noble image. It is not interested in filthy lucre and would, therefore, blithely scorn those lovely profits. Indeed: From which source would we draw all the donations for such deserving causes as our universities, were there no profits?

I have no personal interest in the matter, but I was hoping that the existing press establishments would be called upon to assist with the financing of television.

More than thirty years ago Ortega asserted that each culture or each important phase of culture ended in socialisation, because socialisation uprooted man from his autonomous seclusion in which his real and authentic existence is to be found. Those who believe that socialisation or collectivism of the human race are but recent discoveries, err badly. History has shown that it always happens as soon as mankind faces a crisis. Socialisation and collectivism represents man's self-estrangement to the ultimate degree.

In the Roman Empire, man changed morally and materially under the policy of the Severi to a statistised index. It destroyed the spirit and economic life of the minorities, who had created the glory of Rome.

This gives sufficient ground why we should not allow either ourselves or the Bantustans to become socialist-minded.

With the advent of the revolt of the masses Europe began to doubt its role as ruler. The rest of the world began to nurse similar doubts — doubts as to whether they could, in fact, be governed by anyone.

There is nothing strange in the fact that the least bit of doubt over who really rules, is sufficient to demoralise Man, both in public and private life.

It is in Man's very nature to be dedicated to something, to an organisation big or humble, to a destiny, glorious or insignificant.

Thus, already forty years ago, Ortega maintained that Europe faced extinction unless it could undertake a great, unifying task. In 1928 he stated that before the separate European countries cease to function, they would have to come up in arms against each other yet once again, on the eve of their decline.

When matters have to be consolidated, he said, nationalism has great value — but once consolidated, nationalism tends to have the diametrically opposite effect to that of the principle of consolidation.

He added that Europe had already been consolidated, and that nationalism had therefore become an obsession in Europe, a pretext not to have to create anything new.

Only the determination to weld a powerful nation from all the divergent groups on the European continent can give it new life. She will then again begin to believe in herself and to discipline herself. By doing so she will be able to resist Communism.

According to Ortega the only resistance against Communism up to that time (1928) lay in the European citizen's outlook that a communistic organisation held no promise of increased happiness.

He saw the real problem as one of Europe being left with a lack of a moral (ethical) code of conduct. The mass-man had not discarded the proven code for a new one, but would rather

exist without any code at all. Immorality becomes universal. Everybody believes in rights without the concomitant responsibilities.

As far back as 1930 Ortega foresaw the Kennedy youth cult. "This fighting-shy of every obligation, partly explains the phenomenon, half-ridiculous, half-disgraceful, of the setting up of the platform of 'youth' as youth. Perhaps there is no more grotesque spectacle offered by our times. In comic fashion people call themselves 'young', because they have heard that youth has more rights than obligations, since they can put off the fulfilment of the latter, to the Greek kalends of maturity. Though it may appear incredible 'youth' has become a **chantage**; we are in truth living in a time when this adopts two complementary attitudes — violence and caricature. One way or the other, the purpose is always the same; that the inferior, the man of the crowd, may feel himself exempt from all submission to superiors.

It is not a conflict between two moralities, two civilisations, one in decay, the other at its dawn. The mass man is simply without morality — not immoral but amoral.

The dictatorships have their heel on something which rises above the masses, thus flattering the mass-man.

Ever since the twenties of this century it has thus become abundantly clear that Europe has begun to abdicate from its seat as a world power. This creates doubt. Ortega put it quite plainly that World War II would represent the last convulsions of nationalism, in itself the fruits of consolidation, against the further consolidation of Europe as one complete entity.

Where do we stand today, almost half a century later?

1. We have experienced the abdication of Europe. We have witnessed the abandonment of India, Indonesia, Malaysia, French Indo-China and practically the whole of Africa. In 1950 only four African states were free. Today there are forty-two.
2. We witness the urge towards a European Common Market and a unified Europe — both objectives which would already have

been realised but for the French fear of Anglicisation.

3. We have experienced the rise of new world powers. We accept America's role as a world power. The Chinese have thrust a dagger in Africa's belly by way of a railway line. The Russians are patrolling our coasts.

There is only one European state left in Africa — the poorest and most courageous of them all — where a battle for survival is raging in Mozambique and Angola.

There is even the saying: "Colonies cost money".

Whereas we, 70 years ago, as the first independence fighters, had to engage in gruelling warfare to preserve our freedom, the rest of Africa, with the exception of Algeria, achieved this practically without striking a blow.

And although we are an outpost of the West, the Western powers, suffering from its colonial-rooted guilt complexes, dare not evaluate us on merit.

Those who feel guilty about their own colour prejudices use us to rid themselves of their pangs of conscience. We are the "whipping boys" of the world, a real scape-goat.

But we are not a colonial power. We are of Africa and we have to live with the problems of Africa. We cannot wish away our neighbour's problems. There is no wall to keep out hunger. Neither Hadrian's Wall, nor the Wall of China could in antiquity keep out the barbarians, nor keep them away.

Thus we will not be able to sleep if our neighbours do not eat.

Reason enough to help others to help themselves.

Years ago already I said that we were the laboratory of the world of tomorrow, without the sympathy of the world of today.

It is still the case today. No Western newspaper dares to do much positive reporting on South Africa, for fear of anti-South African groups.

The stranglehold of anti-South Africanism is today so powerful that not a single popular overseas magazine or newspaper has yet featured

any report on the most extensive voluntary medical aid service by specialists in history. Not a single word has been printed about the **hundreds** of week-end visits to Lesotho by **hundreds** of South Africa's top specialists. Not a single report on the more than 1,300 operations without a single loss of life on the operating table, or on the 3270 consultations. Not a mention of the 210 white theatre sisters who assisted the specialists.

News from South Africa has to be either bad, absurd, or sensational.

But whereas a news boycott from the Left is to be expected, one experiences it from the Right as well. Probably because they hate the "negro", no ultra-right wing publication overseas features any report on this type of service to one's neighbour.

Not even here, at home. There has been no word of recognition or praise from certain publications which constantly boast of their "right-wardness".

Perhaps their hate of "others" is greater than their love of the "own".

Indeed: — we are receiving no sympathy from those for whom we are manning the outer defences.

And yet we whites in Africa must devote our experience and our energy to the uplifting of our fellow countrymen and our neighbouring states.

Were we to give them all of Southern Africa, they would be unable to establish a full and equal existence without our help. We are the white catalysts — they are our shadows.

But they are none the less, potentially, our best friends. They are because they know that if we go, they will be ruled by people from other continents.

Our task is so vast, the forces pitted against us so formidable, that there is today no more time for pettiness. There is room no more for those who try to elevate their own personal prestige by harping on the negative.

We have not yet fully emancipated a single Bantustan, but already there are those who

advocate the luxury of a Colouredstan.

With all the earnestness I can command I wish to point out the dangers ahead of us, and make this plea for solidarity.

I wish to warn those who trifle with trivialities, that there may not be anything left to govern if they should ever come into power one day.

Others again, I wish to beseech to please stop washing dirty linen overseas.

We have a momentous task facing us. The immediate problem at this stage is provision of employment to the peoples within and outside our borders.

Whilst the population growth in primitive states remains relatively stable as a result of a balance between the birth and mortality rates, and whilst it increases but slowly in the highly-developed community as a result of a decrease in both birth and mortality rates, we in South Africa are experiencing exactly the intermediate phase, namely decreasing mortality rate with a rising birth rate. This leads to a population explosion.

The non-white population of South Africa is thus expected to increase at such a rate that we can, in terms of the Economic Development Programme, and allowing for a real growth rate of $5\frac{1}{2}\%$ expect to have a surplus of non-white labour against a shortage of white labour.

In respect of the Bantu the surplus will in all probability exceed our expectations. Whilst the E.D.P. has accepted a growth rate of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ p.a. for the potential Bantu labour force; the 1970 census figures indicate a Bantu labour growth rate of more than 3% .

Every year the Bantu population increases by more than 500,000 or an increase each year as big as the city of Pretoria.

Moreover: — the Coloured growth rate is indeed a real population explosion. It will be difficult to find jobs for all these young people in the Western Cape, situated so far from the main marketing areas of the Republic. We in the private sector will have to extend a helping hand if we are to ensure longterm stability here as well.

In this regard steps must be taken to ensure

that the vital process of decentralisation does not place a strangle-hold on existing industries — the geese that lay the golden eggs. In fact, decentralisation is one of the most problematical and costly tasks one can undertake.

Recently I asked a French banker what were the main reasons of late for bankruptcy among his clients. The reply came like a shot: firstly, decentralisation, secondly, the wrong application of the computer.

He informed me that a number of his clients had gone to rack and ruin as a result of decentralisation from Paris to the country. He ascribed this to the unwillingness of technicians to move to the countryside, and also to the lack of the necessary infrastructure. It was caused largely by poor delivery services, transport and telecommunications.

Hitherto our efforts to establish border areas have been confined to the metropolitan complexes — Rosslyn, just to the North of Pretoria, Hammersdale, near Durban, and to developments in the vicinity of East London.

The next step will demand great perseverance (fortitude) and funds. Of this every realist must become fully aware.

For a quarter of a century I have been pleading that we must help others to help them-

selves. I might as well put it that we must help others to help ourselves.

We must promote the welfare of all, at all cost, as rapidly as possible.

We must promote sound relations in the workshop, at office, in the shop, everywhere, yes, even at church level.

We are, all of us — and I include myself — afraid to practice the spontaneous civility which was so characteristic of our forebears. We are afraid only because we have a fear of what others may think of us.

Let us for the sake of good order and the continued existence of all who live in this country, remember that no man has turned black because he shook hands with a black leader, or because he gave medical attention to a black person.

And yet, remembering the tyranny of the masses, remembering the self-doubt, remembering the refusal to accept responsibility, remembering the irresponsible youth cult, mentioned by Ortega, I am humbly thankful for the opportunity to be able to dedicate myself to the task of uplifting my nearest neighbour.

This is no time for idle chatter, because this is the golden age of opportunity.

Will you join me in seizing it?