

State and Nation



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*This edition of Focus, in part, commemorates the centenary of Helen Suzman's birth. And we publish two tributes to her. The first is the Annual Helen Suzman Memorial Lecture, delivered this year by former **President Kgalema Motlanthe**. President Motlanthe's lecture, titled "Generosity of Spirit: Power and Privilege in Politically Uncertain Times" was a beautifully crafted tribute to Helen. What was especially impressive was the way in which he sought to place Helen's commitment to public service within the context of her liberalism. Motlanthe's lecture draws clear links between the values which drove Helen's work and what is required of us today, it was a fitting tribute and an important clarion call to contemporary South African society.*

The second tribute comes from a sermon I delivered as part of a joint commemoration between the Foundation, Holy Family College and Beit Emmanuel Synagogue, Helen's school and synagogue respectively. My address frames Helen's life in terms of the Prophet Micah's question. "What is it that the lord requires of you?". The inspiration for this address coming from Bishop Colenso's great sermon following the defeat of the British at Isandlwana. This pays tribute to Helen's lifelong quest for justice and mercy.

Cecelia Kok analyses South Africa's failure to execute the international arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir. Kok attended the International Criminal Court's case against the South African government at the Hague and shares her disbelief at the legal arguments the South African Government offered. Placed in the context of the domestic legal battles around al Bashir's visit, this piece excoriates the lack of commitment to the rule of law and the pursuit of justice shown by a government which is, supposedly, committed to these principles.

Willem Meyer offers us a look at South African society through the analogy of an aircraft, whose success is based on the efficacy of number of, interconnected, systems. Revisiting Rostow's important observations about economic development in his account of the plurality of threats South Africa's future development prospects face. Additionally, South Africa's societal complexity is brought into focus with the foundations upon which it is built being questioned. Meyer places South Africa's current challenges in both an international and a historical context and offers suggestions for attaining a South African "aircraft" that is better coordinated.

With Parliament's Ad Hoc Committee on the Funding of Political Parties completing its work, **Mia Swart** looks at the history of the issue, the legal issues surrounding it and the effects that funding could have on enhancing political competition in South Africa. The issue of party funding has a history of legal battles in the years following South Africa's first democratic elections, but prior to this year there had been little progress on the issue. However the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee and the High Court's recent

ruling in a case brought by My Vote Counts have fundamentally overturned the prior lack of regulation. Swart explores the implications of political party finance reform for South Africa. This is also a topic that the HSF has been engaged in, and has produced a substantial body of research on over the past few months, it has also made written and oral submissions to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Graham Dominy's Alan Paton Memorial Lecture takes us on a journey of Liberal thought in South Africa through the lense of three generations of an illustrious South African family. The Schreiner's substantial contribution to liberal thought in South Africa is evident throughout Dominy's lecture in a piece that interweaves the progression of the liberal tradition with crucial moments in South African history. In doing this Dominy analyses the impact of South Africa's liberal tradition on the formation of the Union of South Africa, the anti-Apartheid struggle and the beginnings of democratic rule.

Anthony Egan reviews Charles van Onselen's book *The Cowboy Capitalist*. Van Onselen's book completely alters perceptions about one of the historical hallmarks of early Johannesburg, the Jameson Raid. The raid forms part of the ingrained image of early Johannesburg as an homage to the American Wild West and conventional history has always placed Cecil John Rhodes as the driving force behind it. However, this groundbreaking piece of research shatters that idea and rather paints American engineer John Hays Hammond as the mastermind. This both alters traditional conceptions of the facts, but also imparts a new, global angle on the story that reshapes conceptions of how early global interdependence began to influence South African politics.

Gary Ralfe reviews Kalim Rajab's book *The Political Thought of Harry Oppenheimer* which explores the driving, liberal, political thought behind Oppenheimer's conception of business' role in society. Ralfe's review draws on his decades long experience in Anglo American and De Beers, offering a view of how business should contribute to society that was behind Oppenheimer's vision. This adds a rich background to Rajab's nuanced analysis of the contribution made by Oppenheimer and the criticisms that he faced.

Brian Huntley's memoir of his time in the wilderness of Angola is reviewed by **Rosemary Smuts**. While a personal memoir in some ways, Huntley's vast experience in Angola parallels a number of major political changes. This work exposes the devastating ramifications of Angola's tortured history on its natural environment. The book acts as a brilliant record, but also as a call to arms to protect Angola's wilderness and the creatures in it.

Previously an area of history presumed the preserve of British historians, John Laband's book *The Assassination of King Shaka*, reviewed in this edition by Graham Dominy, forms part of a fine development of local historians exploring the topic. Laband's book explores the life of King Shaka and the circumstances surrounding his death, while also exploring the hypothetical fate of the Zulu Kingdom had Shaka survived.

Swart explores the implications of political party finance reform for South Africa. This is a topic that the HSF has developed a substantial body of research on over the past few months, having produced nine policy briefs on the topic and made written and oral submissions to the Committee.

Another wonderfully descriptive review comes from Professor Imraan Coovadia, who looks at David Lurie's *Undercity - the Other Cape Town*, a visual look at the – often unseen – side of the Mother City. Lurie explores the nature of use and usefulness in the context of urban settings with photos that cut to the heart of the unseen areas that help drive the city. Coovadia's review brings Lurie's pictures to life and paints an emotive image in the reader's mind of the Cape Town the country forgot. This work offers a profound visual record which is essential viewing for all who are concerned about not only Cape Town, but all our cities.