ETHICS: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICAN PLANNING

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The legitimacy of planning as a socially responsive and professionally responsible discipline will, in the future South Africa, be assessed with references to the ethical or moral principles to which it adheres. The moral attitude pertaining in the profession in the past, notably in respect of the support of discriminatory racial practices, will not be tenable. A new ethical culture must thus be established. To this end, the ethical premises of planning abroad and the precepts of moral philosophy are examined – and posited as points of reference for the profession in the process of ethical re-orientation that it must undertake.

INTRODUCTION

The scope and nature of the planners work has perhaps most frequently been perceived in terms of plans: master plans, development plans, structure plans, guide plans and the like. This perception is of course simplistic and incomplete, but is nevertheless useful as a lay guide to the planners' professional territory; as an indicator to the public of what the planner plans. An issue of greater significance to the planning discipline itself goes beyond the question of what the planners plans; it is the question posed forty years ago by Karl Mannheim, who asked "Who plans the planner?" (Western 1972:209). What Mannheim meant by this slightly cryptic question was, what are the influences and assumptions that guide the planner in his work? Or, more pertinently, what are the moral and ethical values that give legitimacy and defensibility to the planners work, and credibility to the planner himself.

While this subject has to date been accorded limited attention in South Africa, it has for some years enjoyed fairly extensive study in planning circles abroad. It is twelve years since Kaufman expressed the view that, in the United States, "ethics is in nowaday" (Hendler 1990:2) and since then, he and a number of other theorists have deliberated on the moral premises and problems of planning. In their familiar paper on the ethics of contemporary American planners, Howe and Kaufman (1979) pose questions relating to the morality of procedural intervention in pursuance of political interests and conclude – on the basis of a survey of members of the American Institute of Planners – that planners (operating in the late 1970's) prefer politically neutral, technically-oriented roles. Commenting a decade later, Baum (1988:294) says the "problem with which this position leaves planners is that, insofar as the poor and racial minorities believe that they have been poorly represented in planning decisions. Such efforts at neutrality may not satisfy them or persuade them that public planning "works" for them. By retreating from the ethnic, racial, and economic conflicts which explicit advocacy would evoke, planners do not avoid these conflicts or contain the conceptual crises but only intensify them".

Klosterman (1978, 1983) entered the ethical arena in his analysis of the normative foundations of planning and the fact/value dichotomy in planning, and Bolan (1983) addressed such moral issues as responsibility and obligation in his examination of the structure of ethical choice in planning practice. After developing a framework of social influences under which the planner functions in making ethical decisions, Bolan concluded that ethical choice in planning practice is derived less from the established norms of the past than from a continuous search for new values germane to new situations. In discussing future situations with reference to forecasting, Wachs (1985) presented the view that while planners may feel protected by using the argument of objectivity, the major determinants of forecasting are in fact the assumptions and demands of interest groups or public officials. Thus the problem of forecasting for planning purposes has distinct ethical, as well as technical, dimensions. Indeed, recognition of the pervasiveness of ethics in all aspects of the planning process was personified by Kaufman (1987 113): ". . . ethics is inextricably intertwined into the marrow of planning practice". Planner's moral values must accordingly apply to both the ends and means pertaining to any project. Faludi (1989:61/62) drew on Singer's conception of practical ethics in putting the opinion that ethics ". . . concerns the ends of our actions . . . it is still results, not motives, that really matter" and that for ". . . planning to be ethically motivated . . . it must analyse the effects of proposed action, not only on the planning subject, but also on others".

While it is this last point – the effect of planners' action on others – that is of central concern in this paper, the foregoing brief review of some of the well-known articles on planning ethics over the last decade may perhaps serve to illustrate the diversity and depth of the topic. The authors of the articles do not attempt to dictate the exact nature of ethical behaviour, but offer rather a range of moral responses to a diverse set of conditions. This brings the question of the South African planner's response to local socio-political conditions, viewed from an ethical perspective, to the fore as a topic now warranting the attention of

the discipline.

Inasmuch as the political/ethical edifice before which we now stand in the Republic has been built up over the years with purpose and deliberation, it is sensible to glance backward before looking – from our present position – into the future. It is also, I believe, proper to define one's terms; to disclose my interpretation and understanding of the field of ethics, before applying the fruits of that field to the South African situation.

THE CONCEPT OF ETHICS

Inasmuch as ethics is primarily concerned with human conduct, it – like human conduct – can be viewed or studied in various ways. It may be observed and described in a behavioral, psychological, biological, anthropological or sociological sense, but such studies, while contributing to an understanding of ethics, do not deal with the cardinal problem attaching to the field of ethics. This problem revolves not around facts which such studies yield, but about values. "This is usually expressed by saying that ethics is not a positive science but a normative science – it is not primarily occupied with the actual character of human conduct but with its ideal, not so much with what human conduct is as what it ought to be" (Encyclopedia Brittanica Vol 14:757). Ethical issues are thus moral issues, and moral philosophy (which is frequently taken as synonymous with ethics) is, as Raphael (1984:8) tells us, "philosophical enquiry about norms or values, about ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, what should and what should not be done". In similar vein, Hendler (1990:22) sees ethical matters as "issues which entail moral agents (e.g. persons) and questions of the goodness or rightness of their behaviour".

Popkin and Stroll (1989:1) move closer to the professional field by referring to ethics as "a code or set of principles by which people live"; the content of the Hippocratic oath of the medical profession being an example. That oath has utility here as an illustration of the dichotomy that is present in professional ethics, inasmuch as it (the oath) relates to a code of ethics – rather than a code of conduct. The latter is essentially concerned with conventions pertaining to practical everyday behaviour, with pragmatic guidelines for professionals (Hendler 1990). A code of ethics is broader: it gives intellectual and moral substance to the profession; it posits a set of values (predominantly social) which give legitimacy to the actions of the profession. While it is this wider ethical convention that is of interest to me, the importance of codes of conduct – more particularly where they are derivative of fundamental moral commitments – is of course acknowledged.

To the extent that the planning discipline is, above all, judgmental and advisory, it is awash with ethical issues in both the fields of planning practice and planning theory. It is confronted with conflict and choice, with intentions and consequences, with uncertainties and commitments. In writing about ethics in planning, Wachs (1985) suggests that planning may be subject to ethical analysis in four areas. The planner's day to day behaviour is the first; planning techniques is the second; the moral element attaching to plans and policies is the third, and the fourth is administrative discretion. This is a good list but could, in my view, be strengthened by explicit consideration of the planner's role, and – most significantly – the moral philosophy that moulds and gives form to the planner's role. Investigation of this would expose the normative beliefs, the values, the perceived obligations, that underpin the planner's conscience and his work. It would for example, show how "planning in the public interest" in South Africa has been congruent with social welfare, social freedom and social justice – or has not been. Before examining the ethical base of South African planning, it is necessary to review some aspects of moral philosophy in order to construct a frame of reference for that examination.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Moral philosophy cannot and does not attempt to set out what we ought to do in any given circumstance. That we must determine for ourselves. Philosophy does however provide a range of possible theories among which the individual must decide which, if any, to accept. This is perhaps indirectly reflected in Plato's attitude to justice – one of the few cardinal moral virtues (wisdom, courage, discipline and justice) – in which context he says that "the real concern of justice is not with external actions but with a man's inward self" (In Vesey 1986:27). Plato contends that it is an individual's knowledge of that which constitutes "the good", that causes the individual to act in a moral fashion. He argues that if one acquires knowledge through a lengthy period of intellectual schooling, one must develop virtuous habits of behaviour and be capable of understanding the nature of the good life. A person with that understanding would not act evilly.

Aristotle commences his treatise on Nicomachean Ethics with the statement that "all human activities aim at some good". While the character or nature of the good varies with the objective of a particular activity, Aristotle holds that there is a "chief good" which over-arches all others and is universal: happiness. We choose happiness, says Aristotle, "always for itself and never for the sake of something else, but honour, pleasure, reason and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves ... but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that by means of them we shall be happy". (Kaplan 1970:168). The question as to how we should behave in order to achieve happiness is thus raised and the Aristotlean response is found in the "doctrine of the mean"; the "golden mean". This, in a nutshell, holds that the proper way to behave in the moral sphere is in accordance with the mean – in accordance with the precept of moderation. "For example, in order to be happy, one must be courageous, liberal, proud, witty, modest and so on. But all of these "virtues", as Aristotle designates them, are virtues of moderation: courage is the mean between cowardice and rashness; liberality between prodigality and frugality; pride between vanity and humility, and so forth. Aristotle's philosophy of the "golden mean" can be condensed as follows: In order to achieve happiness, people must act moderately, they must act so as to be striving for the mean between two extremes" (Popkin and Stroll 1980:10).

Epicurus had, it appears, no misgivings about extremes since his moral philosophy of Hedonism held that

people pursue pleasure, and pleasure exclusively, in their lives. The acquisition of pleasure and avoidance of pain is thus the human raison d'etre. Ethical hedonism accordingly holds that people seek pleasure and should do so since pleasure constitutes the only good. The converse philosophy – cynicism – subscribes to the view that the salvation of society will be found only in ascetic living. Since the cynics perceived the world as fundamentally evil, it was – in order to live properly – necessary to withdraw from involvement in it. This is of course essentially an anti-social individualistic doctrine, and as such has little of import to planning.

The same comment is applicable to the philosophy of stoicism which dominated Roman thought in the post-Alexandran period until the advent of Christianity. The stoics strove to be indifferent to external influences – to be independent of the world – and so to be free of desires and passions. This can be construed as being in conflict with their metaphysical belief in predestination which deems all happenings to be arranged by God according to some preconceived plan. This stance is consistent with the philosophy of Spinoza, one of the heroic figures in the history of ethics, his renowned work, The Ethics, published in the mid-seventeenth century and, according to Bertrand Russel (1989:200) "a masterpiece of concise and lucid discourse", postulates through deductive logic that God and the universe, God and nature, are synonymous. Thus all events are predetermined and happiness resides in acceptance of this and the consequential fact that there are limits to human power. It is accordingly senseless to struggle against predestined events. Freedom of moral choice and action is therefore bounded.

The utilitarian philosophy of Bentham and John Stuart Mill attempted to set out a primary principle on which basis an action could be deemed right or wrong. This was, and is, the principle of utility which states that an action is right – is morally defensible – insofar as it promotes the greatest happiness for the greatest number. It is important to note that utilitarian philosophy places emphasis on the effect of action; on the consequences of a particular action. The rightness or otherwise of an action is determined through an analysis of consequences and not a consideration of the motive which occasioned the action. As Faludi (1986) has shown, consequentialism is germane to planning, as indeed is the issue of motive or intentionality (Haynes and Stubbings 1987).

It is interesting to note that Bentham's contention that the sum of human happiness created by an action was measurable without discrimination across all of society, was vehemently opposed by Nietzsche. He believed unequivocally that certain people were inherently more important than others and that their happiness or unhappiness was of greater import than that of the average person. He berated Mill for presuming to suggest that "what is right for one man is right for another".

Immanuel Kant's intellectual stance in relation to utilitarianism was less aggressive than Nietzsche's and, I think, rather more sensible. Kant is at variance with utilitarian philosophy in emphasizing that the essential feature of morality resides in the motive which gives rise to an action. The moral worth of an action must be assessed with reference to its motive. This is helpful in the assessment of past planning activities in this country which will follow shortly – as is Kant's categorical or ethical imperative which Raphael (1984:55/56) describes in his book on Moral Philosophy: "Kant gave three formulations of the categorical imperative i.e. of the fundamental principle of moral action ... The first concerns the form of the categorical imperative; the second concerns its content; and the third links these together.

(1) Act as if you were legislating for everyone.
(2) Act so as to treat human beings as ends and never merely as means.
(3) Act as if you were a member of a realm of ends."

The first of the imperatives lays stress on moral impartiality; the second requires that you act towards another and his purposes as you naturally do towards your own; the third says that you should act as a member of a community of persons, all of whom are entitled to make moral decisions. "It implies a form of equality for all men" (Raphael 1984:57) and in so doing shows that Kantian ethics is in fact an ethics of democracy. A person has a duty to uphold the tenets of democracy and, in Kant's perception, a person is moral when he acts from a sense of duty.

The foregoing "classical" ethical theories provide an array of referential constructs: the good, the good life, happiness, the golden mean of moderation, predetermination, motivism. Modern ethics is largely centred on the application of analysis to moral theory and consequently takes form in naturalist, anti-naturalist, motivist, deontological, consequential and a number of other approaches. While these do not add appreciably to the ethical measuring rods to be applied to South African planning, the work of two modern philosophers has more than passing significance.

The first is the philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre as reflected in his Existentialism and Humanism. "Very briefly, Sartre's aim ... is to exhibit existentialism as an optimistic account of the human condition in the sense that each of us has the possibility of living a life worth living". (Baldwin, 1986:287). This means that such a life incorporates values that make it worth-while, and indeed Sartre asserts unambiguously that a correct understanding human life does inflict certain values upon a person. These are "honesty to oneself in one's own life, and sufficient respect for the freedom of others that they are able to live their lives as they choose, subject to the constraint on their part of similar respect for others" (Baldwin 1986:290). This is in my judgement a simple yet strikingly incisive representation of moral behaviour and one which is apposite when addressing past societal-cum-political conventions in the Republic.

Equally apposite in this regard is the philosophy of John Rawls which is set out in his Theory of Justice (1971). His concept of justice is in conflict with the utilitarian postulate of happiness of the greatest number. Rawlsian justice "denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many" (In Mc-

Connell 1981:174). Indeed, Rawls proceeds further by giving priority to any equality concept of justice which holds, firstly, that each person is to have an equal right to equal basic liberties, and secondly (and saliently) that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged to the greater benefit of the least advantaged. No action that benefits only the privileged group and does nought to improve the situation of the deprived or disadvantaged is justified. This line of ethical thought is of course germane to an analysis of the long-standing system of distribution of benefits in South Africa – which cannot but lead this discussion into a consideration of the situation, past and present, of the black sector of society, and of the conduct of the planning profession in relation to that sector.

THE ETHICAL STANDARD

I have argued previously that the public interest principle – a cornerstone of planning morality and method – has been inverted in South Africa by the policy of apartheid which has spawned a process in which planning for the disadvantaged black majority has been pursued on the basis of the protection of the interest of the white community (Muller 1983). In his work on practical ethics, Singer indirectly addresses this point by stating that living or acting on the basis of some interpretation of ethical standards must be tied up with arguments justifying the way one is acting. But, says Singer, (1979:9/10) "... the justification must be of a certain kind. For instance, a justification in terms of self-interest alone would not do ... Self-interested acts must be shown to be compatible with more broadly based ethical principles ... for the notion of ethics carries within it the idea of something bigger than the individual ..." Ethical judgements of actions are thus made with reference to a point of view that is universally accepted. One might, on this basis, expect the "greatest happiness for the greatest number" utilitarian thesis to enjoy credence in the ethical domain.

However, the practical problems attaching to utilitarianism raises questions about its general efficacy. Frankena (1973), for example, suggests that an action may maximize the sum of good in a particular context, while being unjust or inequitable in the manner in which the sum is distributed. This attitude is echoed by Taylor (1980) who envisages situations in which a plan which offers overall maximum happiness to a population may yet impose unfair and hard costs on an underprivileged minority group. This leads to a stance that has been accorded increasing recognition as a tenable universal ethical principle: that justice is served by apportioning greater weight to the interests of disadvantaged groups. Miller (1985 in Faludi 1989:59) carries the dialectic to a logical conclusion in saying that "... to do this, one has to introduce some ethical principle of equality as a "higher" value which says that it is morally good to favour the weak ... some would say that the adoption of some higher principle of equality is tantamount to admitting this as the guiding ethical principle in place of the utilitarian principle of maximizing happiness for the community as a whole".

The approach adopted here accords with that of Miller – and indeed Rawls – from which it follows that questions of justice and equality in relation to the underprivileged black communities of South Africa are pivotal in any debate revolving around ethics. The moral record of the planning profession in this country will thus be assessed against an ethical standard founded on the promotion of the interests of the disadvantaged black majority. While it might be argued that other measures of ethical spirit could be applied to planning, I believe that the universality of the above principle on the one hand and the peculiarities of the discriminatory South African social system on the other, makes the investigatory approach adopted here both defensible and apt.

THE PLANNING HERITAGE

In attempting to inquire into the future of planning, it is worth remembering – and therefore worth repeating – that ours is a young profession still in a process of active evolution. It is accordingly sensible to return briefly to the past since a backward look is necessary for a sense of perspective and for an estimate of the grip, good or bad, that the past still has on the present and may have in the years ahead. What follows is an idiosyncratic version of the evolutionary stages of South African planning, derived from a selection of the profession's published works, with some interpretive comment on the ethical stance adopted at the various times.

AGE OF ANTICIPATION

Starting in 1919, the terms of the Public Health Act (Section 132 (1)(h)) enabled the Minister to make regulations, confer powers and impose duties on local authorities in respect of planning, land subdivision, zoning and densities. This was also the year of the establishment of the Transvaal Town Planning Association, a pioneering body that sought, inter alia, to advance the study and knowledge of town planning; to foster the improvement of towns; to promote the elimination of slums; to procure changes in the law affecting town planning, and to stimulate interest in planning through the medium of lectures and conference papers. Happily, this last objective and activity has left us with a glimpse of the attitudes and activities of this country's early planners.

A publication of the Association (1931) includes an address delivered by its president, Charles Porter, in December 1922. Beyond an articulate interest in West European planning history, Porter appears preoccupied with roads – preferring a "spider's web" or radial system to the rectangular. He is critical of Johannesburg's road layout and of high residential densities – referring to the "sweating of the land" by an overcrowding of dwelling units, "a sure embryo of future slums". He goes on to say that "... in future town planning in the Transvaal, the setting aside of areas suitable in nature and extent for the housing of natives and coloured persons, is a matter of very great importance, for the experience of Johannesburg has taught us that neglect to do so means, in our midst, those crowded native and coloured slums which are a menace and disgrace to South African communities". The solution to this stain on society is provided – as town planning principle – by Porter: "That effort be made to obtain legal powers ... to secure some measure of effective control of the ingress of natives other than

those coming to mining or other definite employments or to approved employment agencies" (Porter 1931:-15/17). If one is able to put the misguided foresight of this "planning principle" aside, the general tenor of Porter's address can be characterised as regulatory: the establishment of planning regulations to control urban development.

Talking at the University of the Witwatersrand in May 1930 on the need for town planning, Furner carried the plea for planning control forward: "I must again emphasize the fact that a city plan is not a grandiose scheme for immediate and costly civic improvements. On the contrary, as opposed to the present planless and haphazard growth, squalor and extravagance, a city plan would mean a well reasoned scheme, outlining an economic system of scientific, artistic and hygienic municipal reconstruction and development, providing specially for the conservation of citizen life and natural resources, and the total abolition of slum conditions." (Furner 1931:28). A year later, Pearse (1931:1) described town planning quite simply as "... the planning of towns in an orderly manner with due regard to the circulation of traffic, hygiene and amenities".

This period of incipient professionalism, could, I think, be called the age of anticipation. It is a time characterized by a critical attitude to prevailing urban conditions and a slightly ingenuous belief that the solution and salvation lay in planning. The ethical position is difficult to define; it could be argued that there is a modicum of the self-interested Platonic good life in the planning approach, but it is an approach lacking the essential morality that would make it ethically tenable. This lacuna was to be addressed in 1938 by Roy Kantorowich in a paper that appeared in one of the three seminal editions of the South African Architectural Record on town planning during that year.

In describing a "model native township for 20 000 inhabitants", Kantorowich reviews the position of the black citizen in the South African urban community. The black man, says Kantorowich (1938:346) "... takes a peculiarly unfortunate position in the economic status of our society traceable to the

existence of a colour bar ... When employed in the early stages of development of this country, he was put on to the most unskilled work. This immediately brought about the view that the Native was (QED) inferior to the white man, and the colour bar which was then set up has remained until the present day, and is likely to remain for a long period to come ... There is one more point ... the fact that we find, due to this colour bar, and due to general prejudice, that the Native is put in a separate location. He is "put away" from the white people. He is not allowed to share in their cultural amenities ... This sort of thing does not occur in other countries".

The concern underlying this statement was not however the emancipation of the black citizen – it was to provide a backdrop for the contention that town planning was, in technical, organizational and physical senses, a feasible means of addressing and perhaps solving racial societal problems. Commenting on Kantorowich's and other papers, Glyn Thomas (1938:380) took the Platonic path in saying that a great deal will have been done if the papers lent impetus amongst the mass to a desire for a better life.

PERIOD OF PRESCRIPTION

Six years later – on 19th January 1944, to be exact – a founding meeting of the South African Branch of the Town Planning Institute of Great Britain took place in the Johannesburg City Hall. Among those present were Messrs Floyd, Backhouse and McManus. Out of this Branch arose the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planners. On 15th February 1954 in Professor Fassler's office at the University of the Witwatersrand, the formative meeting of our present Institute was held – with T B Floyd in the chair and, inter alia, Messrs Scott, Anderson, Marsh and Professor Fassler present. With this, the stamp of professionalism and all the responsibilities that go with that accolade, was imprinted on the work of the planner.

The fledgling institute set about its task with an enthusiasm manifest in the organisation of a Summer School in 1959. Three main areas of concentration are evident in the programme of the School: the legislative machinery

for planning, analytical approaches to land uses and reviews of South Africa's new towns. Preoccupation with the technicalities of planning, with a clear concern with the sections and subsections of town planning schemes, of density calculations and systems of notation for town planning maps, is everywhere evident in the proceedings.

The trappings of technicalities appear to have reduced at least two fundamental issues to no more than passing reference. Monte Rosenberg touched on one of these in referring to town planning legislative control, and in saying "... I think perhaps control is the word at which we diverge. I think that we must accept that it is manifest that planning can only be effective and can only achieve anything just so long as the planners work with the consent of the planned. I know that this is perhaps a bit of a truism but you can achieve no more with your planning than the political or social climate of the community in which you plan, will permit" (Rosenberg 1959:38). This small first step in the direction of social/participatory planning was rejected as "poppycock" by one participant and was accorded little attention thereafter. The second issue overlooked at the Summer School was touched upon by Bouchier (1959:28) in his paper on the Town Planning Laws of the provinces: "attention might next be drawn to Acts such as the Slums Act, the Housing Act, the Group Areas Act, the Group Areas Development Act and the Natives Urban Areas Act. These Acts all affect planning to a greater or lesser extent". Indeed they do, but seemingly not sufficiently in the late 1950's to warrant head-scratching or heartsearching, for no debate on the impact of these enactments on planning for the Black sector of society was pursued.

This void was filled – partially at least – at the Institute's next conference held in Johannesburg in 1962. Discussing planning at central government level, the author of one paper explained how planning for the black population was undertaken by various government bodies. The first of these was the Bantu Areas Section, the importance of which, "... cannot be overstressed. The country has to endure a great deal of criticism of its policies, and the development of the Bantu Areas can-

not be allowed to fail through lack of proper planning. Only the very best of our planners should be employed in this work". Does this mark the commencement of co-option of the planning fraternity by the Nationalist Government? Does it denote the substitution of a planning ethos by the doctrine of apartheid? A partial answer is provided: "The Group Areas Board itself by its racial zoning performs a vital planning function in South Africa ... It is thus gratifying to note that an eminent town planner was recently appointed to the Board, and it is to be hoped that he will be able to influence the Board to demand competent town planning advice before far-reaching decisions are taken" (Reinecke 1962:15/16). The import of this statement on the purpose and motives of planning in South Africa is obviously profound.

Beyond discussion on the planning function at various levels of government, the 1962 conference focussed on the requirements of planning education (which was to lead to the introduction of the country's first full-time undergraduate course at the University of Witwatersrand in 1965).

The general tone of the planning profession at this time can be characterized as prescriptive: a prescribing of functions, forms and levels of planning within a prescribed – and unquestioned – political framework, with little reference to social purpose or human justice. The approach cannot in consequence be called normative, a term which generally carries with it moral connotations of equity and fairness. The prescriptive attitude is perhaps most evident in Floyd's book on Town Planning in South Africa, published in 1960. The work is described on the flyleaf as a clear exposition of the fundamentals of sound town planning and their adaptation to many features peculiar to South Africa. One such feature is Floyd's interpretation of the prevailing requirement that applicants for township approval provide land for "Bantu workers"; an erf in a residential township requiring provision for "one site in a location". Floyd goes on to say that "this means that only the Bantu worker is provided for by this requirement. It places the Bantu group in the position of a privileged group" (Floyd, 1960:75).

In his later published work, Floyd has difficulty in accepting international definitions of planning that embody notions of social harmony, and applauds the "newer conception of town planning as an administrative function and as a coordinating discipline embracing an organizing principle (which) is at last a full conception of town planning ... This is logically what an administrative function such as town planning, in which technical methods and design are employed for administrative ends, should be" (Floyd 1966:20).

ERA OF INDIFFERENCE

The Institute entered the decade of the 1970's with a conference in Johannesburg on education, the objective of which was to consider the current trends and directions in planning education and in the planning profession. On rereading the papers and discussion making up the proceedings, one cannot but be struck by the attention paid the increasing involvement of government planning.

"The continued growth of the four major urban communities and their attraction for the rural migrant led to the adoption by the Government of a Border Industry Policy, and found expression in the Physical Planning and Resources Development Act (No 88 of 1967) which allowed central Government to control the location of industrial development, the zoning and planning of industrial land and the employment of Africans in industry in proclaimed areas. From the Physical Planning point of view, this legislation established the principal that certain aspects of development control are a function of the Central Government" (Louw 1972:19). This growing governmental involvement was also prevalent at the local level: "It can be seen . . .. that the system which is the city is controlled not only by its own locally elected body but also by the Province and the Central Government ... the Province not only interferes in the planning and control functions of local authorities but very largely does away with the two-way communication between planners and the community" (Reinecke 1972:121).

The conference exposed the generally limited extent of concern of the profes-

sion about state policy at that time. The tacit acceptance of increasing government coercion and control, the turning of a blind eye to the social consequences attaching to apartheid legislation, the indifference to the plight of the black majority, is inexplicable today but was seemingly accepted as admissible then.

Two years later, the same socio-political indifference surfaced at a metropolitan planning conference in Durban. The papers were, by and large, analytical in approach and politically acquiescent in tone. This is exemplified by a presentation on racial statification in South African urban society, which includes the comment: "We are not concerned here with the relative merits or demerits of such a system (apartheid) but only with its functional impact upon society and social space" (Davies 1974:39). The planning fraternity seemingly slipped once again into the security of silence, the comfort of compliance. Two voices did however scratch at the complacency of the conference: those of Tony Barac and Sir Colin Buchanan. Barac (1974:114) suggested that planners "give our legislators good and reasoned advice on why our laws are bad ... We abrogate responsibility at our peril". Buchanan (1974:249) spoke of the system of allocation of land for specific racial groups, and said that "as I looked at some of the plans displayed round this hall and I saw the plaiting and weaving of the racial areas that seems to be involved I could not help thinking to myself what an appalling complication for metropolitan planning is involved ... the complexity you planners face here in South Africa from this rigid grouping of racial zones is something I had not reckoned with".

Nor had the planners and people of the Republic reckoned with June 16, 1976 and its aftermath. Reactions to the conflagration and to the rejection by black South Africans of the prevailing political order were of course highly varied, but the response of the profession, while not profound, was to be tinged with a new touch of openness, of critical enquiry, of conscience.

ERA OF AMBIGUITY

The breezes of liberalism that wafted through the planning fraternity at that time, were felt in the planning and

development conference of the Institute in Stellenbosch in 1977. Previously unheard voices such as those of Sam Matsuenyane, Justice Tshungu, David Thebahali, Dev Rajah, Bishop Alpheus Zulu and Minister Mbabama of Transkei introduced new perspectives, new interpretations of problems and perhaps a new feeling of discomfort to the profession. There was in this a climate of challenge, in many ways typified by the comments of Nico Stutterheim in his keynote address (1977:10/15) "For welfare to be achieved there must be peace and harmony within the country ... This is becoming difficult in the world of today if South Africa does not progressively abrogate statutory discrimination based on colour ... Sharing of power, now vested largely in White hands, with Coloureds, Indians and Blacks is necessary ... There is not much time left for the communities of Southern Africa to plan boldly to ensure survival in a way acceptable to them. Have we the will and the foresight to do it? Are we prepared to play on both the black and white squares of our chess game ...". Challenges for change that could have, should have, had a lasting impact on the conceptual and practical bases of the profession.

Some discerned a possible change in the role of the planner – which Lamont expressed in this way in a 1979 publication of the Transvaal Branch: "The basis of this (role) change is rooted in the shift in emphasis of the planning object. The accent is moving from richer to poorer; from White to Black and Brown; from capitalistically-oriented to socialistically oriented". In reviewing the background to this change, he went on to say that there was a "... gradual realisation that South Africa's pluralism had to be recognized in planning considerations ... planners' ethical consideration kept them in constant tension with the greed of the capitalistically-oriented customer and a form of resistance against neglected planning ethics developed gradually". This must constitute one of the early definitive references to planning ethics, and is indirectly touched upon in the statement that "... we have gaps in our planning system in South Africa, for instance the National Physical Development Plan does not even include the Black

States, which is unbelievable" (Lamont 1979:40/41/46). There is in this, a nuance of the Aristotlean ethic – of the golden mean – of a moderating of the long sustained attitude of unquestioning acceptance of the ideology of the State.

The humanisation of the discipline proceeded into the 1980's with a "Planning for People" conference in Pretoria. The issue of participation in planning was well ventilated and, although the impetus of the Stellenbosch conference had waned, a range of viewpoints was presented. The proposal that true participation be extended to the disadvantaged black majority; that planning be "Promotive in the sense of providing guiding frameworks within which the affected people can exercise their right to self-interest and self-expression; their right to exercise choice and express preference, to make decisions and make mistakes, to explore and experiment, to plan a productive part in the development of their living environment" (Muller 1980:10) met with a mixed reception – possibly indicative of the attitudinal ambiguity running through the profession at that time. The difference, perhaps even dichotomy, in planning approach in the country then is placed in focus in an article on guide plans by the Chief Planner of the Department of Planning and Environment. In contradiction to the participatory concerns of the Institute, this article says (of the British system) "... that public participation has reached a stage of such over-democratisation that planning has been bogged down by objections from the public, and only a few plans have reached finality" (van Tonder 1978:13). This standpoint was echoed by a planning practitioner in a publication of March 1979: the guide plan "... avoids unwieldy public participation – a problem that has been experienced in Britain and which has become a planner's headache. Excessive public participation can often mean unnecessary delays, legal problems and considerable expense" (Jaspan 1979:10).

These comments are illustrative of an attitude of rejection of participatory planning and coincidentally, of the acceptance of the discriminatory guide plan procedure and its underlying separatist ideology. The latter paper states that "... this article does not

question the philosophical or theoretical base of the guide plan concept ... It stems from the reality that guide plans are part of our statutes and are hence a fait accompli". (Jaspan 1979:9). The reversion to acquiescence of earlier years is evident as is the disparity in moral position between the liberal and reactionary camps of the profession. The guide plan procedure with its covert racial proclivities and purposes stands as a major moral and procedural blemish in the chronicle of South African planning.

THE PRESENT

The themes of the most recent gatherings of the Institute, in Durban and Bophuthatswana, reflect a tendency to return to the safe haven of technical, asocial and apolitical planning. The one, dealing with the non-contentious matter of retailing, and the other with the administrative structure of regional services councils, are illustrative of this.

The current question must therefore revolve about views as to where the profession stands at this crucial time and how it is preparing to move into the uncertain but exciting future in this land. That the years ahead will be different to anything here-before is surely common cause, and that the responsibilities and role of the planner must in consequence undergo change appears similarly evident. At the heart of this is the fact that change must invoke ethical considerations, so that the profession can advance into new areas supported by legitimate and defensible moral convictions.

THE FUTURE

It is difficult to discern any particular ethical stance adopted by the planning profession over the last seven decades, particularly in relation to the racial problem. At best, the profession can be said to have turned a blind eye to the plight of the majority of the population of this country, and to have remained silent when voices should and could have been raised. At worst, the planning fraternity can be accused of contributing to the maintenance of a repressive, unjust and indefensible system. The consequences of apartheid – which still permeate all corners of the land – on the black citizens of South

23

Africa must be acknowledged. It has deprived the majority of the population of the Republic of access to land and property; it has curtailed freedom of movement and settlement; it has compromised educational opportunities and standards; it has split families and forced those who are not white to live in degraded conditions. It has forced black citizens into situations of inferiority in all areas of activity. Planning has played a role in more of this than one would wish to acknowledge.

Like other professions in this country, planning will have to come to terms with its own past. There is no solace in saying that planning activities simply reflected the society in which it executed its work. There is no excuse for a purportedly socially sensitive discipline to offer support to a harsh inhuman order.

The demise of apartheid will however set planning free to meet its potential as an instrument of justice, choice and security for all. The profession should, like the Royal Town Planning Institute now place on record its eschewal of racial bigotry. Clause 5 of the RTPI code of conduct states that "in all their professional activities, members shall seek to eliminate discrimination on the grounds, of race, sex, creed and religion and in particular shall seek to promote equality of opportunity be-tween people of different racial groups and good race relations". The profession should also, like the American Institute of Certified Planners, commit itself to the promotion of the interests of the disadvantaged sector of society, because without such commitment the imbalance in emphasis in the planners work will not be redressed. The second canon of the AICP code of practice states that "a planner must strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons and must urge the alteration of policies, institutions and decisions which oppose such needs". The profession must place its preoccupation with social regulation behind it and think about ways that planning can promote freedom of opportunity and equity in choice. We should acknowledge that the only feasible strategy for the future is one that offers gains to society in general while providing for substantial improvement of the lot of the disadvantaged majority.

Inasmuch as these propositions are in the end directed at the concept of justice in a democratic society, it seems apparent that, ethically, the planning profession could well embrace the Rawlsian theory of justice which postulates equal right to equal liberties and greater benefits to the least advan-taged. The profession might find moral merit in the utilitarian ethic of happiness for the greatest number or the Kantian philosophy of ethical impartiality that calls for an attitude of moral reciprocity. Sartre's injunction that we have sufficient respect for the freedom of others that they are able to live their lives as they choose, provides the basis of another ethical model. It is now the responsibility of the professional institute and its members to develop an ethical approach congruent with the needs of a democratic society, and it is the task of the planning educationists to start the process of moral readjustment in their teaching programmes so that a new and legitimate ethical culture will progressively pervade the discipline.

In this article of many quotations, I conclude with another – drawn from that renowned Englishman, William Morris. He saw, as a moral obligation, the need to turn his land "from the grimy backyard of a workshop into a garden. If that seems difficult" he said "I cannot help it. I only know that it is necessary" (In Creese 1964:295). If the mission or prospect of taking on a new and socially tenable ethical position appears difficult or uninviting to the planning profession in this country at this time, I cannot help it. I only know that it is necessary.

NOTE

1 This article is based on the paper "The Future of Planning: the Ethical Dimension" presented at the Biennial National Conference of the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planners, held in Bloemfontein in October 1990.

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