

glo-Saxons" (the usual Spanish way of describing what ails us Americans). The outsiders are seen from the outside, and no matter how shrewd and pointed are the portrayals they are always external, only the Hispanos are probed beneath the surface. Somehow the non-Hispanized Americans remain caricatures, the sympathetic Americans are those who have settled psychologically into the life of the Southwest and accept its strangeness and violence.

The most perfectly realized figures in the collection are Father Zozobra and don Godofredo, the best told tale is that of Delgadina. But these are all Spanish characters and are moved by Spanish emotions. Delgadina's story is told against the background of folk ballad, in the ancient tradition of the Spanish *Romance*, lending a semi-legendary aura to the narrative. Sender has woven fragments of the ballad into the structure of the present as he did earlier in the *Requiem for a Spanish Peasant* and *A Man's Place*. Father Zozobra (the translation does not explain the significance of this nickname, which refers to his drunken staggering) failed as a martyr in the Orient and has now wound up as an alcoholic in a home for wayward priests. Purging his soul means immolating the flesh—alcoholic mortification does not suffice. It is his own soul that is his concern.

Godofredo, who entered the United States illegally as a wetback, cannot die until he recovers his identity. Death would not find him under his false name. The search for the real self also preoccupies John St. John, professor of Greek at a New England college, but what he finds is a grotesque parody of the Spanish male and this leads to his tragedy, he kills, senselessly, absurdly, in a blind fit of rage, jealousy, pride and pique, the Spanish emotions he has just discovered within himself. But it is difficult to believe fully in this person, Sender has not quite succeeded in convincing us. Father Zozobra and Godofredo are no less strange in their answers to life, but we believe in them because Sender knows them completely and has made us know them. One's soul is the only real thing in life, faith is the only road to salvation. The aim of life is learning how to die, that is to learn to live so that one may die as a man. This is Sender.

Ramón Sender is probably the most translated novelist of Spain today, one who has an immediate appeal to American readers, one whose style overcomes problems of translation. The

present translations are adequate but not satisfactory. There are too many jarring notes, faults in style and errors that are not the author's. The reader will be slowed down at crucial points and will puzzle over minor obscurities that were crystal gems in the original Spanish syntax comes through at times pointlessly, and some pages read like a literal first draft. What can we make of "more than one woman shrank to her navel," "Don't you mistreat them for me, because they have more lights than you have," "If you take them apart, neither marijuana nor wine do too much harm," "One of them had denounced a mine" (meaning *staked a claim*, a use documented in Webster's Third), "the guide lit a powerful reflector" (that is, spotlight)? A nonexistent Latin form Procustus, appears for Procrustes,

Sender wrote Procasto, correct in Spanish usage. *The Perfect Spouse* is attributed to the wrong Fray Luis, the Spanish reader would know that it was not Granada but León. Interjections and slang are handled poorly, I've heard *mequetrefe* a lot more in Spanish than *juckanapes* in English. When someone exclaims, "The pest!", who would guess that what is meant is "damn" and not "he's a pill"? Sender wrote *vientre* (belly) and *nalga* (buttock), not the Victorian "abdominal region" and "most prominent part (of the pants)." Some critical omissions from the opening story, "Professor St. John Comes of Age," make less inevitable the gratuitous outburst of violence that marks the professor's "growing up." Sender is simply a better writer than may appear from these versions, he deserves more.

The Prisons of Apartheid

117 DAYS By Ruth First. Stein and Day. 142 pp. \$3.95.

NO EASY WALK TO FREEDOM By Nelson Mandela. Edited by Ruth First. Basic Books. 189 pp. \$4.95.

Hilda Kuper

It is easy to revile a country one does not love and in which one has not lived. Distance and strangeness contribute to freedom from responsibility. For many non-South Africans, South Africa provides a scapegoat on which to project righteous hatred of injustice without risk of involvement in action, or of rejection of childhood friends or members of the family, but for those who, over many long and troubled years, have had no other home, there is the anguish of ambivalent identification. Righteous hatred may be intensified, but no outside scapegoat is provided. The self alone can serve as sacrifice, and for that self-conscious self, the choice is hard—to suffer as immigrant or exile in a foreign land or to remain in danger of imprisonment, torture or death.

Ruth First, a South African-born white, and Nelson Mandela, son of a Tembu chief, committed themselves courageously and consistently to fight

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against apartheid, each became involved, through separate but interacting paths, in the liberation movement.

In South Africa, where a white minority monopolizes political power, dominates enterprises, controls education and backs its rules by physical force, color is the crucial identification. But it is always easy to oversimplify complexity into duality—to marshal black against white, and to interpret oppressed against oppressor in terms of racial opposition. The South African situation is not that simple, and from these two books the dialectic of the struggle emerges not as the fight between white and black but as the battle between those who affirm and those who deny racism, black or white, a struggle between the affirmation of human rights against the denial of a common humanity. In Africa the ultimate outcome of the struggle between black and white is numerically certain and predictable, the outcome of the deeper and more vital struggle, a struggle symbolized by the Firsts and the Mandelas, may continue even when the last white man has left the African continent. For this struggle has no fixed color line and no final index of victory. When one issue is won, others associated directly or indirectly with the principles it represents come to the fore and evoke action and counteraction. There is no utopia, only the striving toward it.

117 Days is the period Ruth First was kept in prison under the Ninety Days Act—an act passed by the

(white) nationalist government under which virtually any person in the country may be imprisoned (euphemistically described as "detained") under no specific charge, no legal trial, no definite sentence. It does not even mean "ninety days," at the moment of release the victim may be rearrested. It is a most powerful weapon of destruction, aimed at the spirit and heart of resistance. Locked alone in a cell, deprived of news or contact with the outside world, haunted by memories and imagination, the detainee is periodically subjected to the ordeal of interrogation. This may be supported by additional instruments of torture, and the actual tragic cases cited by Ruth First give proof that electric shock, beating and other acts of brutal violence take place in spite of public denial by apartheid officials.

The price of freedom is the betrayal of others. Some who knew little were detained as hostages, others, like Ruth First, were suspected of knowing "everything." After all, her husband, Joe Slovo, a prominent left-wing lawyer, had been equally if not more involved in public protest and public trials. And Joe could not be found. The police were armed with a full dossier of the Slovos' anti-apartheid activities. Ruth's greatest fear was that she should reveal more than the police already knew. Shortly before her arrest, an informer had led detectives to a house in Rivonia, a respectable white suburb of Johannesburg. A small meeting was in progress, and political figures long sought by the government were trapped with no escape. Numerous documents were also seized. The house was headquarters of the underground resistance. Shortly thereafter, Ruth First was arrested in her home.

With stark, almost documentary detail (a journalist by profession) she relates her own experiences and reaction. "For the first fifty-six days of my detention in solitary, I changed from a mainly vertical to a mainly horizontal creature. A black iron bedstead became my world." She marked days by sewing stitches on the lapel of her gown. She noted the pointless minutiae of prison routine, the characteristics of the warders, the sounds of people in cells. Her imprisonment became "an abandonment in protracted time."

She experienced a terrible need to speak to other human beings, and at the same time knew the danger if she responded to those who tried to make her speak. It is difficult to know one's "cracking point." The detectives promised that if she made her "statement,"

she would be "free." She agreed to speak, and tried to tell nothing. She evoked the exasperated comment "It's a funny thing, isn't it . . . but every name you've given us is the name of someone who has left the country." She does not know why they released her at last. Perhaps by that time they had learned from others what they wanted to hear. "When they left me in my own house at last, I was convinced that it was not the end, and that they would come again," the author reports.

The book moves beyond the autobiographical to a hauntingly terrifying and yet sometimes tantalizingly incomplete account of many people, some referred to by name, others by initial, linked together in a tangled web of political events. The reader who is not familiar with the complexities may sometimes be bewildered and lost, even those who know it feel it as a Kafkaesque nightmare.

In England now with her husband and children, Ruth First has edited the articles and speeches of Nelson Mandela, who is still in prison.

The Mandela volume spans ten crucial years, 1953-63. In this period of steadily mounting oppression and persecution, Mandela led the nonviolent Defiance Campaign against unjust laws and founded the underground resistance movement, Umkonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). The opening article, "No Easy Walk to Freedom," was Mandela's presidential speech to the African National Congress. Banned from attending public gatherings, he could not deliver the speech in person. The last article is his powerful and moving statement as "First Accused" in the Rivonia trial. Throughout, he appears as a man of courage and deep integrity, a tragic and noble figure.

He was trained as a lawyer and his profession provided daily evidence of the effects of apartheid on his people. In several moving passages he voices the African need, and demand, for land, education, security and equality. With penetrating insight he exposes the hypocrisy of government promises, rejects the tribalism of the Verwoerd regime, and analyzes the policy behind Bantustans as a "grim programme of mass evictions, political persecution, and police terror."

In 1956, the government initiated its notorious treason trial against Nelson Mandela and 156 others, among whom were the two Slovos. The trial ended after four and a half years, during which time there was the shooting at Sharpeville. Much of the record

of the trial is the cross-examination of Mandela who, when the team of lawyers withdrew, was elected spokesman for his fellow prisoners. All were found "Not guilty and discharged," but acquittal did not mean freedom. Raids and humiliation persisted. Opposition groups, including the African National Congress, were branded illegal, but an illegal leadership continued. Despite government mobilization of the army and police, a general strike was executed with some success. Mandela, in a detailed analysis reprinted here in full, shows how the strike marked a turning point in African political tactics. "Even up to the present day the question that is being asked with monotonous regularity up and down the country is this: Is it politically correct to continue preaching peace and nonviolence when dealing with a government whose barbaric practices have brought so much suffering and misery to Africans? With equal monotony the question is posed: Have we not closed a chapter on this question?" Shortly after, on South African Freedom Day, June 26, he concluded "A Letter from Underground." "I will not leave South Africa, nor will I surrender. Only through hardship, sacrifice, and militant action can freedom be won. The struggle is my life."

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I will continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days”

During a surprise appearance at the Addis Ababa conference in 1962, he delivered to the members of the Pan African Freedom Movement the speech, “A Land Ruled by the Gun.” On his return he intensified his underground activities. But after seventeen months of hiding, the “Black Pimpernel” was caught, thrown into prison, and charged with inciting African workers to strike, and with leaving South Africa without a valid travel document. His speech at the trial, published under the heading “Black Man in a White Court,” is both a scathing indictment of white domination and a clear restatement of his own non-racial values “ . . . in the course of this application I am frequently going to refer to the white man and the white people. I want at once to make it clear that I am no racist, and I detest racialism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black man or from a white man.”

Mandela was found guilty. After he began serving his five-year prison sentence, police raided the house in Rivonia. Mandela was taken from his cell, and with the men arrested at the meeting, charged with sabotage and a conspiracy to overthrow the government by revolution. When Mandela opened the defense case he admitted that he was one of the persons who helped form Umkonto we Sizwe, but his impressive and sincere speech is not that of a man who enjoyed violence, but of one driven to violence as the last resort. “During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.” Of the nine accused, eight (six Africans, an Indian and a white) were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. Ruth First records, “They stood erect to hear the sentence and when it was passed they turned in a body to the packed court, smiled and waved their arms. As he was driven away under heavy guard, Mandela gave the thumbs-up ‘Afrika’ salute of the African National Congress.”

Within the border of the Republic of South Africa, resistance has been driven ever deeper underground. A few leaders wanted by the police are still alive and active, but overt opposition

has been destroyed. Lawyers, teachers, ministers, factory workers, trade unionists, liberals and radicals have been exiled, banished, banned, imprisoned. Their voices cannot be heard, and they are prevented from hearing the voices of others. Books in which great men expressed noble ideals throughout the ages are prohibited, to publish the words of any person who is or has been

banned is a criminal offense. Criticism is communism, thought is sabotage. South Africa has become a vast and terrifying prison.

117 Days and No Easy Walk to Freedom are powerful and dramatic books, voicing an eloquent and disturbing appeal to those who are outside South Africa to understand the nature and the tragedy of apartheid.

Stitches in a Wound

AFRICAN STORIES. By Doris Lessing. Simon & Schuster. 636 pp. \$7.95.

Mary Ellmann

As political and social evidence, Doris Lessing's *African Stories* confirm in precise and painful detail, like stitches in a wound, the abuse of the native population of Southern Rhodesia by the white settlers of British descent. To bring these stories together for the first time, when they have been dispersed over many years of writing, has a retrospective effect, summing up Mrs. Lessing's permanent image of the colonials: as fat, white, motionless grubs absorbing nourishment from an immense and ceaseless black exertion beneath them. Helpless without African labor in every corner of their lives, the colonials, in managing to extort that labor, experience sensations of independence and power. They grow as reluctant to leave as to stay in Rhodesia. Their vanity and complacency are marred only by their terror of rebellion.

Yet to the American reader, even this explicit statement of racial injustice in the stories seems a fantastic version of the familiar. The defensive sophistries (“Their stomachs aren't like ours”), the repressive pseudo-legalities, the passive contempt (“What can you expect?”) of the Rhodesian settler are those of the American segregationist. We recognize, as in the semantic shifts of a nightmare, that the *cheeky native* is the *uppity nigger*, the *white kaffir* is the *nigger lover*, the Afrikaaners are, for the British, the *poor whites*. And there are further reaches of similarity in the stories: it is as though our own national guilts had swirled, in erosive release, half around the world, to settle again in new but still too recognizable patterns. As the *natives*, those

from whom the country has been taken, the Rhodesians (in “The Old Chief Mshlanga”) are like the American Indians, while as the blacks, from whom labor has been taken, they reflect the American Negroes.

In describing the first, the taking of the country, the stories are disturbing for an American too in their evocation of a second pioneer period. Doris Lessing's work is an uninterrupted study of loneliness, but here it is particularly the isolation of a few white exiles, claiming vast strange land. By daylight the men hope to exploit its fertility, the women to remake tiny plots into nostalgic postcard pictures of Home. But at night both are intimidated by the same country they may eventually subdue. So, almost comically, in all the stories, the whites, who think of themselves as warders, live like prisoners. Huddled, nervous, wary of an alien vegetation and an alien skin, they are deprived, as they would be in jail, of the privacies and subtleties they enjoyed in tiny, crowded England. Even their adulteries, as in “Old John's Place,” must be cramped and audible, the invariable third stage of the colonial get-together. The more widely their control spreads, the more tightly the masters restrict their own freedom. Mrs. Lessing dwells — as she says in her preface, with “bile” — upon their self-encasements: their two-roomed, tin-roofed brick houses (fending off all seasons), their barred windows (fending off robbery and murder by those whom they have robbed and beaten), their screens (fending off exotic diseases) and, always, outdoors, their hats (fending off that most un-English sun). Even the eyes of the men, the last aperture through which the black might approach the white, are squinted almost shut. The women nurse headaches in darkened rooms or take solitary, errandless walks. Relieved by Africans of all the household chores except introspection, they circumnavigate

Mary Ellmann is currently preparing a book about women novelists for Harcourt, Brace & World. Her articles on fiction have appeared in *Commentary*.

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