

Be that as it may, it is not a plea for the avoidance of controversy, on either conceptual or empirical matters. This must go on (and in the circumstances there is little danger that it will not). Rather it is to claim that all historians can learn much about South Africa by arguing with all their predecessors, from Theal (at the latest) on to the latest issue of the *Journal of Southern African Studies*. If we accept that knowledge breeds understanding, then the increase of the latter will follow, and has followed, from the cumulative increase of the former.

Van Jaarsveld's work does not concern itself with the ways in which understanding of South African history, and of the modern society has been increased by the knowledge acquired by the successive and competing schools of historiography. Rather, he is too concerned with those passages, all too common in books on South Africa, where the author attempts to prove his or her credentials. The result is a vision of that historiography as exclusively one of ideological posturing. This may be true in part, but even in the divided world of South Africa, it is far from the whole truth, or even the most important truth.

From Control to Confusion: The Changing Role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971-1983 by Simon Bekker and Richard Humphries. Rhodes University: Shuter and Shooter/Inst. of Social & Economic Research, 1985.

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It has been argued that South African society is today marked by a deepening social crisis, with the government keenly searching for a new political formula for insuring social stability. In the context of urban unrest, the government has adopted a controversial system of administration of urban blacks. The book under review, *From Control to Confusion*, is therefore a timely addition to the study of Black administration in South Africa. It is a detailed and carefully researched examination of the hitherto mysterious workings of Administration Boards and their changing role during the 1971-83 period.

The book identifies and explores two important tendencies. First, township policy and its implementation are marked by changes as well as continuities. While this phenomenon has been noted by others, Bekker and Humphries provide a particularly coherent and systematic picture of it. For example, they show that, in terms of labour regulation, there is on the one hand a relaxation of labour control over Section 10 qualifiers ('insiders') in the 'White' urban areas with regard to both geographical mobility and registration at Board labour bureaux. Simultaneously, however, there has to be a tightening of control over 'outsiders' in their movement to (and residence within) urban areas, and in their access to the urban labour market.

The second, and perhaps more important tendency, is the degeneration of township policy and administration 'from control to confusion'. The book argues that a previously coherent policy framework (notably during the Verwoerdian era) has increasingly been marked by 'confusion, ambiguities' and 'strain' and this has created immense problems for Boards in defining their township role. Much of the confusion arises from a hitherto tentative and incomplete ideological shift, from a Verwoerdian apartheid ideology to a more 'free enterprise' approach. For example, the authors note, with specific regard to labour control: 'The difficulty, it would seem, lies at the level of ideology, at the level of making choices between conflicting principles, and until this ideological ambiguity is resolved, the proposed revision of the model of control will continue to create difficulties' (Bekker and Humphries, 1985: 57). This ideological ambiguity has, to some extent, been responsible for the continuities and changes in township policy and administration mentioned earlier.

Bekker and Humphries examine all the policy issues in terms of this growing confusion. In the sphere of finance, for instance, they show that townships face a financial crisis. Traditional financial sources, such as the sorghum beer and liquor monopolies and employer labour levies, are seen by state officials as inconsistent with the 'spirit of free enterprise' or as 'discriminatory in an urban labour market where permanently resident blacks were to be treated no differently from other race groups' (Bekker and Humphries, 1985: 162). Yet the government