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Close to you

"BETWEEN THE COVERS" : BOOK REVIEW

TITLE: DEATH IS PART OF THE PROCESS

AUTHOR: HILDA BERNSTEIN

PUBLISHER: SINCLAIR BROWNE

PRICE: £7.95

TRANSMISSION DATE: 20.10.83

"Death is Part of the Process" is a book about South Africa and its racial agony. It tells the story of a group of people, black and white, working together for a change, and finding themselves torn to pieces in the process. Ralph and Dick are white University teachers. Indres is Indian. Thebo is African. Their first aim is to move peacefully and democratically. But an exhibition they set up in the University is ripped to pieces. Special Branch men come and take their names. A protest march brings tanks out into the streets, people are injured, made homeless and imprisoned. Fear produces over-reaction and white South Africans are afraid. And so the group gives up on the law. "Tell them," says Ralph, the white lecturer, "Tell them we've picked it clean, the democratic machinery. Tell them it's a dead-end - like people walking unarmed into gun-fire." And so, in despair, they turn to violence. They train amateurishly in sabotage. And, one by one, they're picked up by the police.

Dick, the other lecturer/

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-2-

Dick, the other lecturer of the group, collaborates with his gaolers. Pila, the white girl from an expensive suburb, is pulled out by her father's string-pulling and packed off to Europe. Indres is beaten up, sentenced and then escapes. And Thebo is tortured to death.

This is a book of complex threads. Each member of the group is followed by the story line and the plot is woven round the great question mark - How do you humanise a system that won't be humanised? How much do you risk? How much do you back away from confrontation to save your family and loved ones?

This is not a comfortable story. I found it painful to read, but it made me face the question of what it means to be human.

I found myself wondering how many of us in this country would find the courage to try and carry through change in a society so brutal to those who protest.

Hilda Bernstein writes with great force and vividness, and her book won the Sinclair prize for fiction in 1982. I recommend it as an eye-opener to what life is like in a country where justice is exclusively for the pale-skinned.

That's "Death is Part of the Process" by Hilda Bernstein, published by Sinclair Browne at seven pounds ninety five.

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Sinclair Brown

DURRANT'S

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BOOKS & BOOKMEN

ARTILLERY MANSIONS,
75 VICTORIA STREET,
LONDON, SW1

ISSUE
DATED

SEP 1983

DEATH IS PART OF THE PROCESS

Hilda Bernstein
Sinclair Brown, £7.95

AS SOUTH Africa moves towards armed conflict — so clearly seen except by a large proportion of the whites who actually live there — the repressive apparatus of *apartheid* becomes ever more evident, making it difficult for liberals to pretend they can change the system from within and inevitably propelling greater numbers of blacks to slip over the border in search of military

trapping

Hilda Bernstein's novel, winner of the 1983 Sinclair Prize for fiction, is set in a previous phase of this struggle. In the 1960s, faced with the absurdity of 'legal' protest in a country which does not hesitate to torture, some opponents of *apartheid* began to sabotage power-lines, railways and government offices. Hilda Bernstein powerfully describes such a group.

She has written a classy thriller, with the authority of someone who really knows what they are talking about. *Death is Part of the Process*, like most of the characters in it who rebel, squarely faces the brutality of the regime: there are chilling descriptions of dawn arrests, police interrogations and quite harrowing accounts of solitary confinement and torture. While keeping up a fast pace, Hilda Bernstein skillfully develops her characters, whether they are Afrikaaner policemen, white Johannesburg liberals or Indian and African activists.

Her evocations of South African life — a white family spending a Sunday by the swimming-pool, or an African on the run in a shanty-town like Soweto — are marvellously convincing.

In the early chapters some of the political conversations are a little ingenuous, painting out the political colours by numbers and sending up smoke signals to the uninitiated reader. But Hilda Bernstein's grip on her theme, with courage stalked by betrayal, ensures that *Death is Part of the Process* is absorbing, moving and a testament to those still struggling against that tyranny.

BRYAN ROSTRON

THE TIMES

NEW PRINTING HOUSE SQ.,
LONDON, WC1X 8EZISSUE OCT 1983
DATED

THE ARTS

PUBLISHING

Style of writing

W. H. Smith & Son are a problem. Some years ago they were, if not philistine, doing the minimum they could for literature as opposed to fancy goods, stationery and profits. In the last few years they have spruced up their shops and the sale of books shows a gradual improvement. As the last annual report commented, "This was due to the effort put behind increasing the range of books which we stock".

They have taken to advertising in colour magazines, aiming at weaning children away from battery toys and on to books: "Books run on brainpower, not batteries". Their book buyers, John Hyams and Michael Pountney, are sophisticated people, the latter being one of the organizers of the recent 24-hour reading by Authors against the Bomb.

The chairman, Simon Hornby, is therefore not amused that some wit in the *Bookseller* reveals that disguised members of the Society of Authors are about to conduct a survey of how individual Smith's shops perform. It is explained, for the benefit of managers in the sticks, that authors look scruffy and are eccentric and excitable.

★ ★ ★

What have Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet*, C. P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers*, Molly Kaye's *The Far Pavilions* (does calling her "Molly" rather than "M. M." make you feel in the know?) and Angus Wilson's *The Old Men at the Zoo* in common? They are all novels, or sequences of novels, with large lists of characters and exotic locations (the London Zoo has to be exotic, and Cambridge) and thus they are all currently appearing, or shortly to appear, on television in dramatized form.

Therefore their paperback publishers are printing lots of copies decked out with television tie-in covers. Does this represent more the power and influence of the novel, the printed word - where would television be without such elaborate series? Or of the image, film - where would the book trade be these days without endless television tie-ins?

★ ★ ★

You would imagine that an author, even in the States, would be quietly delighted that his publisher had done a first printing in hardback of 80,000 copies of his latest novel, and gone back to press with a further 25,000 within a week of publication. Peter Blatty, author of *The Exorcist*, wanted further to be loved, and is suing the *New York Times* for \$5m. in punitive damages plus \$1m. in compensatory damages for

omitting his latest novel, *Legion*, from their best-seller lists.

★ ★ ★

No publisher is supposed, or permitted, to submit more than four novels for the Booker Prize, although the judges are allowed to call in as many titles as they like which have not been entered by their publishers. The rules state this clearly.

Why then was the haughty house of Jonathan Cape allowed this year to enter seven books - other than because they naturally assume they have, this year as every year, the finest fiction list in the kingdom? Of the other imprints in the Cape-Chatto-Bodley Head group, Chatto & Windus entered five, which is one over the permitted number. The Bodley Head obeyed the rules and submitted four. The fourth house in the group, Virago, submitted none, whether by accident or modesty or design. No other British publishing house entered more than four.

Thus 16 novels were entered by the four imprints in the group, an average of four per house. A total of 100 books were submitted this year, and clearly the likelihood of the Cape group landing more than one title on the short list was enhanced by someone's interpretation of the rules. No doubt next year other houses will contrive to evolve equally disingenuous ways of entering as many books as they think should be entered.

This year 41 publishers submitted novels, some less household names than Cape. They included Brilliance Books, Daedalus, Prosperity Publications, St Pancras Press, Sheba, Sinclair Browne, Springwood Books and Virtuoso Books. Clearly, whatever the state of the novel, fiction publishers are alive and eager.

★ ★ ★

This month *Private Eye's Oxford Book of Pseuds* is being published, with the familiar, classical Oxford University Press typography and a dark blue cover. "Tastefully printed and bound", as advertisements in the trade press say.

The only snag is that the publisher is not OUP but Andre Deutsch with *Private Eye*. Robin Deniston, Oxford's general and academic publisher, has written to Lord Gnome begging him to change the book's title in case it is mistaken for a proper OUP anthology.

This will be one of the last *Private Eye* books to be co-published with Deutsch as Chatto & Windus are to take over their distribution in the latter part of next year.

E. J. Craddock

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

ARTILLERY MANSIONS,
75 VICTORIA STREET,
LONDON, SW1ISSUE
DATED

-- OCT 1983

BESTSELLERS 5*General*

- 1 **Lords' Taverners — 50 Greatest**
Trevor Bailey (Heinemann £12.95)
- 2 **Vanessa Bell**
Frances Spalding (Weidenfeld £12.95)
- 3 **The Finest Hour: Winston Spencer Churchill 1939-1941**
Michael Gilbert (Heinemann £15.95)
- 4 **Jane Fonda's Workout Book**
(Allen Lane £10.95)
- 6 **Ordnance Survey Motoring Atlas of Great Britain**
(Temple Press £3.25)
- 6 **Illustrated Lark Rise to Candleford**
Flora Tompson (Century £12.95)
- 7 **King George V**
Kenneth Rose (Weidenfeld £12.50)
- 8 **Indian Cookery**
Madhur Jaffrey (BBC £4.25)
- 9 **The Naughty Nineties**
(Collins £5.95)
- 10 **Chambers 20th Century Dictionary (New Edition)**
Ed. E. M. Kirkpatrick (Chambers £9.95)

Fiction

- 1 **Hollywood Wives**
Jackie Collins (Collins £9.50)
- 2 **The World is Made of Glass**
Morris West (Hodder £8.95)
- 3 **The Little Drummer Girl**
John le Carré (Hodder £8.95)
- 4 **Ancient Evenings**
Norman Mailer
(Macmillan £9.95)
- 5 **The Philosopher's Pupil**
Iris Murdoch
(Chatto & Windus £7.95)
- 6 **Death is Part of the Process**
Hilda Bernstein
(Sinclair Brown £7.95)
- 7 **Exocet**
Jack Higgins (Collins £7.95)
- 8 **Brilliant Creatures**
Clive James (Cape £7.95)
- 9 **Farewell to France**
Noel Barber (Hodder £8.95)
- 10 **Belgravia**
Charlotte Bingham
(Michael Joseph £7.95)

Paperbacks

- 1 **Lace**
Shirley Conran
(Penguin £2.50)
- 2 **The Prodigal Daughter**
Jeffrey Archer (Coronet £2.50)
- 3 **The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail**
Michael Baigent, Henry Lincoln and
Richard Leigh
(Corgi £2.50)
- 4 **The Angels Weep**
Wilbur Smith (Pan £1.95)
- 5 **The Long Voyage Back**
Luke Rhinehart (Granada £1.95)
- 6 **Schindler's Ark**
Thomas Keneally (Coronet £2.50)
- 7 **The Miller's Dance**
Winston Graham
(Fontana £1.95)
- 8 **Spellbinder**
Harold Robbins (NEL £2.50)
- 9 **Windfall**
Desmond Bagley
(Fontana £1.75)
- 10 **A Boy's Own Story**
Edmund White (Picador £2.50)

Taut nerves, hope and despair

Death is Part of the Process, by Hilda Bernstein, Sinclair Browne, 1983, hbk £7.95

ONE IS immediately caught up in this story of a handful of protagonists, black, Indian and white, who, over 20 years ago, switched from years of non-violent struggle in South Africa to the sabotage of targets which would not cause loss of life. The selection of electricity pylons and goods trains shows how deeply non-violence was part of the make-up of those who believed in and fought for a free and independent country for all South Africans.

The blowing up of a pylon, plunging a city into darkness, would, it was believed, shock the regime and its white supporters into a realisation of the absolute inhumanity of apartheid and would bring about fundamental change. It is for acts such as these that Nelson Mandela and his

colleagues of the African National Congress have received life sentences, though there was not one death as a result of their actions. At that time the regime ignored, as it always ignores, the opportunity for peaceful change and now faces armed confrontations, bloodshed and death.

Hilda Bernstein writes in a controlled taut style. There is meticulous attention to detail in the description of the planning, the making of the explosive devices, the tension and the pumping of adrenalin when the bombs are set in place. One is always aware of the armed menace of the police and the army, lying in wait; one experiences the despair latent in a forgotten fingerprinted torch, the lighting of a cigarette which leads to capture, unspeakable torture at the hands of the security police and years of imprisonment.

With the arrest of the first group of saboteurs, nationwide arrests follow. The names of those detained

are not revealed so that those still free and in hiding are thrown into disarray, not knowing who has been taken and, more importantly, who has talked. Some talk immediately during police interrogation, some are tricked and ruined, and death by torture comes obscenely to one who won't talk. But I do not want to give too many details of the story.

The writing is as evocative of Africa as Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa*. Hilda Bernstein writes:

Air and water alike lay against them heavy and soft as silk against their skins. Sea and sky and rain and river merged into one, merged into the night, became the darkness itself, holding the whole world.

My only negative criticism is that the townships and the white suburbs do not come to life. The struggle takes place against a reported backdrop and not in the seething, living city. But to criticise is to cavil. This is a moving and exciting novel. In Cassim, the teenaged Indian, who is helping his uncle to escape after breaking out of prison, lies the continuation of the struggle – a bloody struggle with death as part of the process, leading ultimately to liberation and life.

Phyllis Altman

**DEATH IS PART OF
THE PROCESS**

by Hilda Bernstein
(Sinclair Browne £7.95)
ISBN 0 86300 028 2

The late 1950s and 1960s marked a transition in the attitude of the African National Congress in South Africa. It had been borne in upon members of the Congress that non-violent opposition had not and as far as could be seen, would not make any impact on the entrenched minority white government. Hilda Bernstein in her novel speaks of the end of this transition period when Congress members began to use sabotage while being careful, as the present President Oliver Thambo testified in a recent interview for the *Guardian* (6/8/83), to avoid the taking of life.

She looks at this radical action through men and women participants from the different racial groups. In chapters devoted to individuals she follows the planning and the carrying out of acts of sabotage; the ferreting out of the conspirators by the police; the imprisonment and their brutal torture.

I feel, however, that perhaps Hilda Bernstein fails to underline fully the horror of the apartheid system. We are shown the problems and trials of those who attempt to take radical action, but the 'ordinary' life of Africans — the motivating cause for such radical action — we glimpse only briefly. The attitude of whites is typified in the attitude of Pila's parents when faced with the evidence of their daughter's involvement in radical action. But we see little of the daily near-enslavement of the African, Asian and mixed race groups. Perhaps, understandably, Hilda Bernstein is more at ease when writing about the feelings and anxieties of white conspirators and their families and is less sure when it comes to writing about other groups.

It may be nit-picking, but I am left with a feeling, as an African, that Hilda Bernstein for all her sympathy and work for a non-racial South African society still retains — and again understandably — vestiges of the stereotyping which labels the African man as irresponsible and promiscuous. So that if a whipping boy is needed to

carry the blame for the break-up of the 'cell' the natural candidate is the somewhat self-willed, womanising Siphos. Against that, however, Thambo, the other African, is reliable, dependable, conscientious — reminiscent perhaps of the 'faithful servant'?

In spite of any criticism that one might have Hilda Bernstein has done tremendous service in reminding us that whatever of the gestures of the present South African Government in its attempt to win international approval, the regime is as oppressive, brutal and harsh as ever.

Sithembile Zulu

THE HERPES MANUAL

by Sue Blanks and
Carole Woddiss
(Wigmore £2.99)

Reading through the Herpes Manual again reminded me of my feelings about herpes pre-catching it — mainly fear, ignorance and not wanting to know. Coming to terms with herpes means facing up to attitudes like that, in ourselves and others.

Unlike most conventional medical approaches to illness, the Herpes Manual begins at this point — the different feelings and concerns of sufferers from their first attack onwards, closely following the herpes sufferer's own experience. Drawing upon their work in the Herpes Association, Sue and Carole carefully describe the different ways herpes can affect people depending on our general health, circumstances, feelings and knowledge of ourselves. The book describes in detail the virus, how it is passed on and treatments available. There is also a very good section on alternative remedies and preventive measures which sufferers have used, and many of us rely upon.

Throughout the book there is a very positive feeling which comes from the stress on our need to take control of our own health and learn from our bodies. Although not specifically written for women, the book reflects Sue and Carole's concern with their own health as women, and confronts some of the particular fears relating to pregnancy and cervical cancer for women sufferers. There is not a separate section for lesbian and gay sufferers but

Bernstein, Hilda Death is part of the process London, Browne, 1983. 294 blz Oorspronkelijke Engelse druk 1983. ISBN 0-86300-028-2
 enge R-po.vz /De diverse personen, blank en zwart, die aan het verzet in Zuid-Afrika deelnemen, zijn de brute onderdrukking van de zwarte meerderheid door de staatspolitie en de wetgeving beu. Ondanks de bedreiging met gevangenisstraf, martelingen en het gebrek aan adequate middelen, voeren zij hun hopeloze strijd. Aan spanning ontbreekt het niet in deze verzetroman, ook al voert het element van een aanklacht de boventoon, hetgeen op de grond van de gepresenteerde feiten geen verbazing wekt. Of dat alle feiten zijn is voor de outsider moeilijk te overzien, maar in elk geval schendt het regime de mensenrechten op zodanige wijze dat het zelfs voor het communisme niet onderdoet. Afgezien van dit beoordelingsprobleem is sprake van een aangrijpende en spannende roman die de aandacht vestigt op een groot actueel probleem.
 A.C. Bolman-Bloem.
 (Imp. Nilsson & Lamm, Weesp).

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Datum Oct.18, 1983

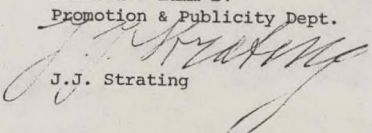
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You will find our translation below.
The review is too long/too technical to translate.
It is favourable/moderate/unfavourable.

Yours sincerely,
 Nilsson & Lamm bv
 Promotion & Publicity Dept.


 J.J. Strating

Encl(s).

H. Bernstein DEATH IS PART OF THE PROCESS

The various characters, black and white, participating in South African resistance have had their fill of the brutal repression of the black majority by the State Police and the Laws. Notwithstanding the risk of imprisonment, torture and a lack of adequate means they wage their rather hopeless struggle. There is no lack of suspense in this resistance novel, even though the element of an exposure predominates, which is hardly to be wondered considering the facts presented. Whether these are all the facts is difficult to judge for an outsider but there is no doubt that the regime offends against human rights in at least the same degree as communism. Apart from the difficulty in judging we have here a moving and suspenseful novel concerning an urgent contemporary problem.

We got quite a good order from the libraries and ordered in our turn from Dent.

Sinclair Browne

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BRITISH BOOK NEWS

65 DAVIES STREET
LONDON W1V 2AA

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Hilda Bernstein

Death Is Part of the Process

Sinclair Browne 1983 £7.95 (0 86300 028 2) 296p

This excellent novel is the first recipient of the Sinclair Prize for Fiction given to a previously unpublished novel of 'high literary quality' and 'contemporary social and political relevance'. It makes a distinguished beginning for the award. The passion of commitment behind this story set in South Africa and chronicling the progressive growth of violence in the campaign against apartheid is matched only by the tightness of artistic control over the dramatization of the clash of oppressor and oppressed. Hilda Bernstein works with a kind of frenzy of artistic restraint building a novel that compels attention. Though the author has written about South Africa previously in *The Terrorism of Torture* (1977), *For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears* (1978) and *Steve Biko* (1978), this is her first work of fiction. It is one that can be favourably measured against the standards set by Doris Lessing and Nadine Gordimer in their fine African novels.

The novel is concerned with the beginnings of the internal South African terrorist movement against apartheid in the early 1960s. Frustrated by the authorities in their attempts at peaceful protest a small group in Johannesburg rejects the heritage of Gandhi and moves from passive resistance to active sabotage. The novel closely follows a small number of the initial group as their activity goes underground and their capacity for political violence develops. All races and classes are represented: the guilty rebellious daughter of a complacent white family, whose rich father is an associate of government ministers; the Indian law student whose innate gentleness wars with his need for justice; the black African of grave dignity who masterminds the successful disruption of the country's energy supplies. Bernstein traces the complexities behind the motivations of the conspirators and, with the inevitability of tragedy, shows the diversity of their punishments as one by one they are caught and tortured by the police. 'There are no innocent people,' says one of the characters, who is instrumental in setting the events in motion. Hilda Bernstein makes her point with eloquence in this eminently successful novel about heroism in the face of enormous adversity. *Kate Fullbrook*

15, White Book News
October 1983

Antony Beevor
The Faustian Pact
Cape 1983 £7.50 (0 224 02083 8) 208p

It's easy to know what Antony Beevor doesn't like; Guards officers, practically every member of the British security services, politicians, civil servants, senior police officers and terrorists. This presumably leaves only the long-suffering rest of us, so let us hope that the author likes his readers enough to leave them out of it. Beevor does write well. He has a sense of timing and a grasp of the official world which lends his novels authenticity. His *For Reasons of State* (1981, Cape) has surface realism and pace. His present novel has the same ingredients but a more exacting schedule. The reader must be persuaded of the following facts: the Prime Minister, bearing an uncanny resemblance to James Callaghan, is kidnapped by terrorists; the security forces lurch from stasis to total apathy; the right-wing terrorists masquerade as left wing terrorists and only one man notices; the French liaison security service contains clichéd Frenchmen, the German liaison clichéd Germans and so on; the chief British investigator achieves a massive reputation by saying little and doing nothing; the British liaison officer is more concerned with the collapse of his marriage; while the Prime Minister's personal secretary goes home to dinner on the day of the kidnap... Within the fiendish plot to expose the fiendish plot is another fiendish... suffice it to say that the Prime Minister dreamt it all up to stay in office, the establishment closed ranks because it agreed with him, no one noticed, not a journalist stirred, and the Brit. who suspected the plot selflessly shot himself and the whole thing. That was after the SAS went in, of course.

These things are possible, one supposes, but even my elastic imagination boggles when asked to believe it all and simultaneously.
Bryn Calless

Hilda Bernstein
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David Cauter
The K-Factor
Michael Joseph 1983 £8.95 (0 7181 2260 7) 224p

David Cauter is here presenting his fifth novel, though the theme

Literature, Fiction

has already been proffered in *Under the Skin* (1983, Allen Lane), the end of white domination in Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia. What is curious about the new novel is that so grand a scheme, so inherently interesting a canvas, should be presented in so banal a fashion. Cauter seems to think, in common with many contemporary writers, that no theme can for long hold a reader's interest without some leavening of blood'n' guts, sex and sweat, cruelty and carnage. No one denies that these things existed in the last days of white rule in Ian Smith's illegal regime. They have dominated and do dominate lives everywhere to an unseasonable degree. What I question is Cauter's purpose in using them here. Are we supposed to see some sort of metaphor in a black man, Willy, raping a white lesbian mother-of-three, Sonia? If so, what is it, apart from clichés of returning the past with interest, symbolizing the black return to power and the ruthlessness of man versus woman? We could have guessed that, I think, and it cheapens attempts to understand Zimbabwe's genuine dilemma in the years 1979-80. To do Cauter justice, he does offer balances and credit to both sides, but his presentation of the issues is too extreme. Extremes there were, but not invariably. With his fictional polarities of randy, arrogant Charles Laslet, his lesbian wife Sonia, her weak liberal brother Howard, the hellcat actress Tricks and the nazified thug Bekker representing the whites; and Willy the psychopath, Hector the black pragmatist, Wonderful the guerrilla leader and an assortment of anonymous natives representing the blacks, Cauter cannot avoid oversimplification. What we have is bad fiction masquerading as incisive analysis, and it won't wash. Cauter is capable of better.
Bryn Calless

Meira Chand
The Bonsai Tree
Murray 1983 £8.50 (0 7195 4007 0) 240p

The Bonsai Tree is the work of a sensitive and meticulous writer - author of *The Gossamer Fly* and *Last Quadrant* - and one used to understanding the cultural conflicts that face an intelligent foreigner trying to absorb herself into Japanese society with its complex values. Meira Chand is herself of mixed extraction, Swiss and Indian; married to an Indian businessman, she has lived in Japan for twenty years. *The Bonsai Tree* (the tree is a dwarf that has to be clipped and wired to conform to a Japanese horticultural aesthetic) is the story of Kate, a well educated and independent English girl who marries a young businessman, Jun, of the Japanese upper class during his research visit to Britain. She returns with him to Japan only to find their Western-style love-match deeply resented by Jun's sternly matriarchal mother, Itsuko, who lives only in terms of long-entrenched social tradition. When Kate discovers that Jun, like many men of his position and wealth, has a mistress and child, her shocked attempt to break away from him and assert a form of independence, still little known for married women in Japan, leads to a highly dramatic outcome. Apart from its considerable psychological interest, the novel at times assumes an almost documentary quality in its detailed description of Japanese ceremonial and, more important, its revelation of the condition of women in Japan, and the exploitation of only too many in accepted forms of prostitution, as well as the appalling conditions of poverty and degradation that faces both men and women in the 'drop-out' ghettos of the big industrial cities. *The Bonsai Tree* is a considerable achievement both as novel and as social document; it is written in a style of rare elegance that matches the unusual demands of its subject. *Roger Manwell*

Samuel Charters
Mr Jabi and Mr Smythe
Marion Boyars-1983 £7.95 (0 7145 2779 3) 192p

This moving and excellently written first novel by an established author of poetry and books largely on jazz and the blues stems from observations made during research visits to former British colonies in West Africa. Mr Jabi is a retired, British-trained schoolmaster in an impoverished, under-developed village in a country which has had ten years of independence. Mr Smythe is a retired colonial district commissioner, a dedicated worker on behalf of African local welfare and economic development, and once based for twenty years in Jabbi's village. Forcibly retired at the age of fifty, after independence, Smythe has suffered severe deprivation with the loss of his life's work and, after ten years in England, the death of his beloved wife, Beverly. He finds that he can no longer keep away

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Death Is Part of the Process

Sinclair Browne 1983 £7.95 (0 86300 028 2) 296p

This excellent novel is the first recipient of the Sinclair Prize for Fiction given to a previously unpublished novel of 'high literary quality' and 'contemporary social and political relevance'. It makes a distinguished beginning for the award. The passion of commitment behind this story set in South Africa and chronicling the progressive growth of violence in the campaign against apartheid is matched only by the tightness of artistic control over the dramatization of the clash of oppressor and oppressed. Hilda Bernstein works with a kind of frenzy of artistic restraint building a novel that compels attention. Though the author has written about South Africa previously in *The Terrorism of Torture* (1977), *For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears* (1978) and *Steve Biko* (1978), this is her first work of fiction. It is one that can be favourably measured against the standards set by Doris Lessing and Nadine Gordimer in their fine African novels.

The novel is concerned with the beginnings of the internal South African terrorist movement against apartheid in the early 1960s. Frustrated by the authorities in their attempts at peaceful protest a small group in Johannesburg rejects the heritage of Gandhi and moves from passive resistance to active sabotage. The novel closely follows a small number of the initial group as their activity goes underground and their capacity for political violence develops. All races and classes are represented: the guilty rebellious daughter of a complacent white family, whose rich father is an associate of government ministers; the Indian law student whose innate gentleness wars with his need for justice; the black African of grave dignity who masterminds the successful disruption of the country's energy supplies. Bernstein traces the complexities behind the motivations of the conspirators and, with the inevitability of tragedy, shows the diversity of their punishments as one by one they are caught and tortured by the police. 'There are no innocent people,' says one of the characters, who is instrumental in setting the events in motion. Hilda Bernstein makes her point with eloquence in this eminently successful novel about heroism in the face of enormous adversity. *Kate Fullbrook*

Apartheid tale best of year

"IT WAS the same delectable world in which she had grown up, full of visual delights and tangible comforts; it was like living in a great glass ball, polished by others, from which all that was sordid or distasteful had been excluded."

This is a reflection by a young white South African wife on making a return to the home in which she was born. She is Pila, a character in Hilda Bernstein's **Death is Part of the Process** (Sinclair Browne, £7.95), the best novel published this year and about to appear in paperback in April 1984.

The time is the '60s with the focus on a mixed group attempting sabotage of railways and government buildings in a bid to break the grip of apartheid.

Each one is incisively drawn: Indres, escaped from prison, on the run, seeking to warn others of betrayal; Thabo, after years of precarious legality, having to disguise himself as the Rev. Tomas Khumalo; Ralph and Dick abandoning The Council, a university liberal protest forum which they recognise is giving the world a false impression of democracy.

Their respective wives, Margie and Pila, initially shielded from a full knowledge of what is going on, are eventually caught up in the action. There is April who has opted for life in a cave rather than conform to the impossible restrictions; and the hot-headed Sipho who turns Judas.

Around these characters the savagery of the system, its active executives in the police and security services mouthing their inhuman morality while inflicting the most hideous torture on their victims.

The author's stance is rock

hard — apartheid is an abomination that must be consigned to the dustbin of history. Social and political relevance combine here with high literary ability and for these very qualities it won a literary prize.

This is a searing indictment of a system of society, also a gripping story in its own right, holding one breathless as to the outcome.

Another winner published earlier in the year was **Sassafras, Cypress & Indigo**, a first novel by Ntozake Shange, a celebration of togetherness, blackness, in which a mother and her three daughters hymn the glory of woman hood.

The title gives the names of Hilda Effania's offspring, born in Charleston, South Carolina, all four affirming, though they go through the joys and sorrows of this world, that life is for claiming, reaching out for.

All three girls receive endless warmth and support from Mama, ever concerned, knowing the traps, pointing the pitfalls. The telling is lit with the lilt of poetry, abrim with vitality and the joy of life. Her publisher tells me there will be more from Ms. Shange in the early part of the New Year.

The best collection of contemporary short stories came from Alice Munro in **The Moons of Jupiter** (Allen Lane, £7.95). A lesser talent would expand each of these into a novel. For after each of them you are left thinking of the alternatives, conjuring with how different it might have been.

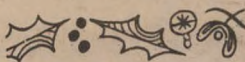
The place names—Dageish in Western Ontario, Edmonton, Toronto, Winnipeg—give a geographical dimension. But the emotions, hopes and yearnings expressed know no boundaries.

Eddie Woods

(Alison and Busby £2.95) by Anthony Barnett on the Falklands, and Grenada: **The Struggle Against Destabilisation** (Writers and Readers £3.95) by Chris Searle.

The first trade union annual of stories, poems, photos, came out, edited by Rick Gwilt and called 1983 (Lancashire Trades Council £1), **The Tidy House: Little Girls Writing** by Carolyn Steadman (Virago £4.95), **The NHS: A Picture of Health** (Lawrence and Wishart £3.95) by Steve Illife, **The Rattle Rag** (Faber £4.95) edited by Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes and **The City of Capital** (Blackwell £6.50) by Jerry Coakley and Laurence Harris.

In line with the Star's pensioners' campaign: **Capitalism and the Construction of Old Age** (Macmillan £4.95) by Chris



Phillipson and at the other end of the age scale, a children's parable **Prudie Finds Out** (Pandora £3.50) by Natania and Litza Jancz.

Pluto Press' expanding series **Arguments for Socialism** (generally £2.50) offers a wide range of possibilities; Peter Kingsford's **The Hunger Marchers in Britain 1920-40** (Lawrence and Wishart £12.50) could go with Jeremy Seabrook's **Unemployment** (Paladin £2.50), and finally, an unusual but welcome volume, **The Left and the Erotic** edited by Eileen Phillips (Lawrence and Wishart £3.95).

MORNING STAR

WILLIAM RUST HOUSE

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Death is Part of the Process. By Hilda Bernstein, Sinclair Browne, 1983.
293pp

This political novel, set in South Africa in the early 1960's, describes the activities of a racially-mixed group of South Africans who, frustrated by the failure of non-violent protests against apartheid, determine upon a course of sabotage.

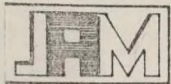
The central character is a young Indian, recently escaped from jail, but there are also several Africans, a young white woman and a white couple who all eventually become involved either in sabotage attempts or in helping each other to hide or escape. Several members of the group are arrested and tortured and under extreme pressure, some betray their fellows. However, the final message is one of hope as the Indian

escapes across the border and we know that much more dramatic acts of sabotage are to follow in later years.

It appears that the author's aim is to make the reader aware of the incredible pressures under which all non-whites, but especially the Africans live in South Africa, and the sophisticated and cruel methods by which the authorities prevent any form of protest or change. This message is conveyed very vividly through the medium of an exciting story. However, at times the author is unnecessarily didactic; comments and

lectures about the South African system, even when put in the mouths of other characters, add nothing to the story, but rather reduce its dramatic content. The psychological aspect is also somewhat lacking, for example in the relationships between the different members of the group. One is tempted, perhaps unfairly, since this is a different type of novel, to compare this novel with some of those of Nadine Gordimer, who conveys a similar message with greater subtlety.

Elaine Hansen



Journal of American Marxists

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GRAFTON BOOKS

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Ob 24/8/86

Hilda Bernstein, whose highly realistic book has been filmed for television, tells Rosalie Horner of her conviction that South Africa must change, and that the time for reform has run out

20/8/86

'Trying to reform apartheid is the limit of absurdity'

THE political turbulence of events in Southern Africa nightly dominates our television screens, a testament to the fact that what is happening there is one of the most significant social upheavals taking place within a community anywhere in the world.

News and current affairs people instinctively recognised this and have treated South Africa as a major story. Not so television drama which so far has been tardy in reflecting this undoubtedly dramatic situation.

All that will change on Sunday, September 28 when BBC 1 begins a highly realistic two-part film, shot in Kenya, of the political thriller, *Death Is Part Of The Process*, by Hilda Bernstein. The book, set in the early sixties, tells of the decision of the African National Congress — banned by the government in 1960 — to form a unit known as the Spear of the Nation made up of dedicated opponents to the apartheid regime. Its object was to sabotage key government installations.

Now, two decades on, the book is particularly relevant to what is taking place in South Africa today. Although the ANC's first endeavours against the government ended in disaster, they established the basis of the current opposition to apartheid in South Africa.

"The ANC's chosen course of action became absolutely inevitable when all legal paths were closed to those of us working against apartheid," says Hilda Bernstein, a small, intense 71-year-old who these days lives in a recently converted farmhouse in Wales where her main occupation is painting.

"The ANC always set its face against individual terrorism," she continues. "The only person to be killed in those early years was one of our own people who blew himself up with his own bomb. I know that we laid the

foundations for what is happening now."

Although written as fiction, Bernstein's book is factually based and reflects her involvement and knowledge of the anti-apartheid movement. Keen to write about what was happening underground at that time in South Africa, she wrote it as fiction to protect those involved.

Both Hilda and her husband Lionel "Rusty" Bernstein, an architect, were jailed in South Africa in the early sixties for their beliefs. Hilda was detained in prison for five months, seeing her four children only once in that time. Her youngest was then only three. Rusty was on trial with Nelson Mandela but was acquitted through lack of evidence. Later he was picked up again and imprisoned under the 90-day law.

They fled South Africa on foot one night in 1964. Hilda says this would have been impossible without the help of the ANC. Their four children, then aged from 21 down to eight, joined them in London shortly afterwards.

"At that stage our lives in South Africa had reached a dead end," she says. "We had no work, no communication with people we had known all our lives, and no money. My husband had just had a very harrowing experience of 90 days in gaol — he was then out on bail — and I think he felt he could not face up to another period in prison. I knew I was going to be arrested. We decided it was impossible to continue leading this half life. You are not part of politics, your family or your work. You are doing nothing, just concealing yourself from the police."

Alan Plater, one of television's finest writers, has adapted Hilda Bernstein's book. The project was initiated by the producer, Terry Coles, who first learned about the book in 1983 when *Death Is Part Of The Process* won the Sinclair Prize, set up by the computer magnate, Sir



Hilda Bernstein — picture by Kenneth Saunders

Clive Sinclair. The £5,000 award was to go to an unpublished novel "of great literary merit of social or political significance."

"Once I read the book," says Terry Coles, "I was struck by what a good, powerful, and exciting story it was. It is set in an area which is very important at the moment so it is very relevant to what's happening in South Africa today. When the Government banned the ANC, any form of political expression became illegal. That sowed the seeds of today's unrest. This is the first film about South Africa made specially for television in recent years."

Apart from Art Malik, star of *The Jewel In The Crown* and *The Far Pavilions*, most of the leading parts are played by South African actors.

Hilda Bernstein is delighted at the way Terry Coles, Alan Plater, and the director Bill Hays, have

brought her book to the small screen.

Her delight, however, is not just an author's understandable pleasure in the popularising of her book. She sees it as an acknowledgment of the desperate, and so far unsuccessful, fight which the majority of South Africans — the blacks — have had for nearly 30 years to establish basic human rights.

"Everything in South Africa is political," she says. "For example, the question of street lighting in Soweto. The city council has to give permission for that, but whites are not going to vote extra money for something like that which will not affect them. The blacks are voiceless without representation. So they start organising, especially the women, in extra-Parliamentary ways."

When she lived in South Africa, Hilda Bernstein says she put politics first, before everything else, even her

children. During her detention she and a few other women were known as "double detainees," meaning that their husbands were also in gaol at the same time.

"We were all women with children and we discussed our obligation to them over and over again," she says. "But we all agreed that, in the circumstances, we couldn't have acted in any other way. You don't teach morality to children by preaching to them but by what you show them of your own deeds. I am very happy with the way my children have turned out. They all share our views. They are all very beautiful and adorable."

During her years in Britain, Hilda Bernstein has become one of the most vocal and eloquent opponents of the apartheid regime outside South Africa, campaigning vigorously in this country and travelling abroad lecturing on be-

half of the ANC of which she is a member.

No one in Britain watches the current events in South Africa more keenly than Hilda Bernstein and no one has more contempt for what she sees as Mrs Thatcher's self-interested posturings over economic sanctions.

"People who have asked for sanctions have never claimed they will bring down apartheid," she says. "Imposing sanctions is one more way of isolating South Africa. The only way that change will come is when the big companies like Plessey and ICI are more frightened by what will happen to them financially through this isolation than by negotiating with the blacks."

"Realism demands that these big companies must stop investing in Botha and start investing in the people who are going to be in charge of South Africa in the future," she continues.

"Britain can't stand to one side as, say, Sweden could because of its historical involvement with South Africa and its current investments. People in Britain are deeply involved. After all, Britain was responsible in the first place for setting up the South African constitution in 1913 with a colour bar included in it. Britain is not a disinterested spectator."

"Mrs Thatcher keeps on about the reforms that have taken place in South Africa in recent years. Trying to reform apartheid is the limit of absurdity. You can't reform what is fundamentally evil. You couldn't reform Nazism."

"The time for reform has run out. There is only one question now and that is the question of power. There is no way on earth that Thatcher, Reagan or Botha can put an end to the revolution of the people, the young people in South Africa. There is no way it is going to be stopped."

"I was arrested in the first state of emergency in 1960 and this ties up with what is happening now. The conditions under which we were held for five months seemed to us to be horrendous but there is no way you can compare them with what is happening today in a similar state of emergency. They were amateurs at it, the state, the police, the authorities."

"We were the first large group of politically conscious people to be picked up and arrested en masse and they learned a lot about how to handle political people from those days. Today detainees are tortured and physically abused in the most terrible ways. There are no innocent victims as far as the whites are concerned — the children maybe — but the adult whites are not innocent, they are part of the system."

Death Is Part Of The Process is published in paperback tomorrow by Grafton Books.

VISION

Out of South Africa by the back door

NEW blackouts from South Africa prevent us from glimpsing much beyond first-hand government lies and surreptitious second-hand accounts of its brutal regime.

Tomorrow night's powerful and chilling *Death is Part of the Process* (BBC1, 9.0pm), a thriller in two parts, (part two is screened next Sunday) should right the balance.

Based on Hilda Bernstein's prize-winning novel, the film charts the beginnings of the African National Congress's armed wing, Umkono we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

Filmed in Kenya and starring Art Malik and a clutch of unknown South African actors, the story is based on the personal experiences of Bernstein, aged 71 and born in London, after she went there to live with her South African husband, Rusty.

A double-detainee — so-called when husband and wife are jailed simultaneously — Hilda was jailed in 1961, one of 20,000 detained without charge after a mass burning of the passes which control movement around the country, in protest over the Sharpsville massacre.

Rusty Bernstein, an architect, was arrested with Nel-

son Mandela, Walter Sisulu and seven others during an illegal meeting in their underground headquarters.

"People often ask me why I went to live in South Africa and took a stand against apartheid," says Bernstein, now a compact and spritely white-haired woman.

"My question is why aren't there more whites like us. To live in and enjoy that beautiful country without opposing its institutionalised racialism is shocking."

During her five-month imprisonment, she was allowed to see her four children — the youngest was then seven — only once.

Upon her release, with the leaders of the opposition still in jail, Hilda helped fill the "vacancies left by those who had involuntarily abdicated".

"All of us in the second ranks knew that we were in the next line for arrest. Then my husband was released from prison. And one day my daughter told me that a friend of ours had been arrested.

"I went into hiding where I stayed for about 10 days until I couldn't tolerate it anymore and returned. The following day I was doing some cooking and washing and the phone rang. I knew it was the security police calling to check if I was there.



FLED: Hilda Bernstein

"About 10 minutes later my husband yelled out to find out where I was and told me they had come for me. I dropped everything, ran out the back door and never came back."

A prolific writer and talented artist, Hilda Bernstein now lives with Rusty in a converted farmhouse in Wales. She no longer has to place her typewriter beside the window — to keep a sharp eye out for the police — and a fire burning — to burn her work should they visit.

She has been out of South Africa now for 20 years.

"Leaving is a betrayal. It always is. You've left everything you believe in, everything you fought for."

ANGELA BROOKS

The washing machine was just going into its rinse cycle when Hilda Bernstein and her husband Rusty left their house in Johannesburg in 1964 at the start of an exhausting and hair-raising midnight escape from South Africa across the border into Botswana.

Both had earlier been jailed for their activities and beliefs, Rusty having been one of the co-defendants with Nelson Mandela in the famous Rivonia Trial. He was released for lack of evidence, then rearrested and held without charge for 90 days before being let out on bail.

Then word came that they were both to be arrested again and they fled, leaving behind not only the gurgling washing machine but also four children aged eight to 21 who joined them later in London.

Now Hilda Bernstein is 71, a small and amiable woman whose cheerfulness bordering on impishness belies her formidable abilities and the depth of her commitment to the cause of the African National Congress.

The couple lived for many years in Rothwell Street, Primrose Hill, where Hilda — without any formal training at all — developed into one of North-West London's best-known artists, her etchings of African subjects and wildlife proving particularly popular.

But, perhaps more important, she also became a self-taught writer, publishing books on the struggle of black women in South Africa and on the circumstances surrounding the death of black activist Steve Biko.

Then, in 1983, there was a new departure — she published a novel called *Death Is Part of the Process*, which immediately won the first £5,000 Sinclair Prize for fiction.

The book deals with the beginnings of organised armed resistance and sabotage in South Africa in the early '60s. It is not a romantic account full of heroism and excitement, but a painfully honest account of the impulsiveness of idealism and the pitfalls of amateur enthusiasm.

It caught the eye of BBC producer Terry Coles who commissioned top TV writer Alan Plater (who lives in Eton College Road, Hampstead) to adapt it for the box. The result will be screened in two 75-minute episodes on BBC 1 on September 28 and October 5.

The book has also now been published in paperback by Grafton Books.

"I had to write the book as fiction because all the main incidents in it actually happened, and some of the people involved are still around," she recalled when I spoke to her last week.

"It was the beginning of a whole new era of resistance on the part of

Hilda, 71, battles on against apartheid

people who had reached the end of the democratic procedural road.

"But the fact is that the results of the first acts of resistance and sabotage were disastrous — within two or three years most of the leaders of organisations like Umkonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) were in jail or in exile.

"And people ask me why all this failure, set in the early '60s, is relevant now that things have changed so much. My answer is that it could be even more relevant now. What happened then laid the basis for today's resistance. Everyone realised that a new method had to be found and people had to learn themselves the hard way.

"Without those early attempts there wouldn't be such organised resistance today, and such prestige for the ANC."

Once the BBC had bought the film rights ("I make more money from my etchings"), Hilda was pleasantly surprised to find that everyone involved was anxious to keep to her original plot as closely as possible. She was consulted often and in the end she's "very satisfied" with the films.

All the important exterior and location filming was done at the beginning of this year in Kenya, where the countryside, vegetation and some of Nairobi's suburbs strongly resemble the landscape in South Africa.

And, with the exception of Art Malik and Hampstead-based actor Louis Mahoney (who lives in Willow Road) all the main actors — both black and white — are former South Africans.

Her attitudes about South Africa today are as tough and uncompromising as ever.

"The thing that worries me is that the sheer number of deaths in the townships is dulling people's perception of what is really happening there.

"At the same time I'm amazed at the behaviour of the young people who are so prepared to die for the struggle,

and this is what I was writing about in the book — death really is part of the process.

"I feel very depressed about Nelson Mandela — I don't believe they had any intention of releasing him into any real kind of freedom at all. They know that he is the person with whom they would have to negotiate, and that would mean talking to the ANC and, consequently, the end of apartheid."

But she reserves a lot of her anger for the British government's stand on South Africa.

"I'm furious and livid with the Government here! Effective sanctions are vital, and should be aimed against those investors who profit from and uphold the apartheid system.

"The trouble is that there's not enough anger in Britain. It's not as if Britain is a disinterested spectator on the scene. All this torture and repression and imprisonment arise out of a totally unique system of institutional racism — the groundwork for which was laid down by the British, and then later underpinned by British investment, expertise and political support."

She also has an interesting and original view of the South African regime being a sort of "spiritual homeland" for racists the world over who somehow take support and succour from its existence. Remove the apartheid cancer and it would mark a change in the world's attitude towards Africa and black people generally, she believes.

She also dismisses out of hand the so-called "reforms" of the Botha Government. "This is not a question of good-natured people wanting to make amends, for heaven's sake.

"You can't 'reform' or 'moderate' apartheid, in the same way that it was impossible to reform or moderate Nazism!

"But in any case, what are these so-called reforms? There's no point in recognising trade unions if you then put all the leaders in jail. They've pretended to abolish the pass laws, but black people still can't live where they want to.

"Mixed marriages are now legal, but there is nowhere in the country where a mixed couple could legally live together! And the removal of petty apartheid regulations like having separate entrances for blacks in post offices are so trivial as to be absurd.

"What has to be done in South Africa can't be done by whites. The only people who can make meaningful reforms are the black people themselves. The people must speak, and their voice must be heard."

Matthew Lewin



● Hilda Bernstein: "There's not enough anger in Britain."

What's the word?

KATHY MYERS comes in from a new TV film drama on apartheid

If the publishers had had their way, Hilda Bernstein's 'Death Is Part Of The Process' would have died a lingering death in a filing cabinet.

This controversial tale of the ANC and white anti-apartheid struggle in the South Africa of the '60s was deemed interesting, but 'non commercial'. Bernstein, who left South Africa under duress in 1964, tried eight publishers to no avail. Finally in desperation she submitted it to the Sinclair Brown competition for unpublished work of social or political merit. She won. Polly Toyne, one of the judges, wrote about it in the *Guardian* and BBC producer Terry Coles spotted it. The result is a two-part screenplay, dramatised for TV by the excellent radical playwright Alan Plater.

The book and the subsequent screenplay explore the black South African struggle for identity and independence. The characters are fictional, but all the events described are, she says, real. 'They either happened to me, my family or somebody I know.'

Bernstein is not an Afrikaner. Born of Jewish immigrants she left London at 16 to go to South Africa to live with a relative. Despite the experience of living in a poor immigrant community, she was shocked and appalled by what she saw.

'It's very hard to describe within the context of the west. But we are talking about a country where the occurrence of death is normal, where people are banned

from talking to each other, where everything you do is illegal, where political organisations cannot exist, where the conflicts and contradictions of apartheid come right into the home.'

Though reticent on the subject, Hilda Bernstein was herself involved in anti-government activities. Her husband was put under house arrest, and they finally left the country illegally. Many of these biographic threads, along with the broader landscape of apartheid and the rise of the ANC, are painted in 'Death Is Part Of The Process'. For a white Western audience its strength is that it puts into crisis the morality of non-violence; of standing on the sidelines.

It's a chastening film, rubbing home that to condemn apartheid from the security of Britain is in some sense easy. To live it, to be white and benefit from it while subverting the system, is much more complex and dangerous. Many of these ambiguities are highlighted in the film. The politically conscientious university professor who speaks out against apartheid while keeping a black 'houseboy'; the students who flirt with politics from the security of their parents' Cape estates; a series of personal, political and dramatic tensions which focus on the figure of Indres (Art Malik), an Indian who's caught between black struggle and the few fruits which his status in Johannesburg can offer.

If this film was about Ireland and the IRA, it would not have been made. Powerful in the extreme, it hijacks the seductive production values of 'Jewel In



● Indres (Art Malik) caught between black struggle and status

The Crown' and marries them with a raw profile of violence and terrorism as honourable pursuits. A clever combination which must force any audience to conclude that when human dignity is at stake, 'Death Is Part Of The Process'.

See Network: Selections for details.

■ Sunday Premier: *Death Is Part Of The Process* 9.05-10.20
BBC1
Alan Plater's dramatisation of Hilda Bernstein's powerful South African novel spans the early '60s, exploring the rise of the ANC, white militancy and the bite of Afrikanerdom. Art Malik stars as the Indian caught between European rights and black outlaw status, acting as a vehicle for the plot, and for Bernstein to explore the complexities and ambiguities of apartheid. Mixing pathos, pain and pleasure with unexpected powerful stabs of comedy, its message is clear. People with no rights have nothing to lose and inevitably *Death Is Part Of The Process*. Skilful acting enabled by Bill Hays' direction, with John Matshikiza, Jack Klaff, Estelle Kohler and Moya Downie. See Circuit for more details. Part two next week. Totally recommended. (Kathy Myers)

Death Is Part Of The Process (part one). Extremist-eye-view of black militancy in South Africa.

Since the acting, writing and production are far too good to ignore, the basic premise of this Alan Plater epic—that violence is the natural outcome of political frustration—comes across with alarming reasonableness. Art Malik, as the fugitive hero and Jack Klaff as his white adviser, steal your sympathy and almost blind you to the realities of an-eye-for-an-eye philosophy.

STANDARD 26.9.86
(PREVIEW)

□ THERE has already been some criticism that *Death Is Part Of The Process* (BBC 1) is subversive, since the tale seems at first to be an apologia for violence in S. Africa.

It certainly starts out by showing how reasonable and decent reformists felt, driven to support violent action through the intransigence of the beastly Afrikaners.

Its strength, however, is as a story rather than as a political statement. And as a narrative it certainly involves the viewer with the characters. I look forward to seeing the rest of it next Sunday.

MAIL 29.9.86

A cry for the beloved country

BBC1's political thriller set in South Africa is adapted from a novel by Hilda Bernstein. Now 71, she still harbours a 'fury against injustice', as Veronica Grocock discovers

IN THE COOL, spacious farmhouse kitchen of her 16th-century stone cottage in Herefordshire, writer and political activist Hilda Bernstein remembers South Africa, where she lived and campaigned against apartheid for years before fleeing to Britain in 1964. She is constantly struck by the contrast between the breathtaking beauty of South Africa and the ugly violence that has become part of its fabric. She likens it to a juicy peach which, when bitten into, is found to be infested with maggots.

Her novel, *Death Is Part of the Process*, draws on her own experiences in telling the story of a multiracial group of dissidents who resort to acts of sabotage after all other forms of opposition are banned. It won her the 1982 Sinclair Prize for 'an unpublished novel of high literary merit, with social or political content'.

After the book's initial rejection by half a dozen or so publishers, Bernstein fished it out of a drawer and rewrote it, fleshing out the characters but leaving the storyline and structure intact. Then came the Sinclair and now there's Alan Plater's two-part BBC1 adaptation (the second is to be shown next Sunday).

'Alan Plater's script is terrific,' says Bernstein, now 71. 'It was a difficult book to make into a play because it jumps around in time. It starts with the escape of a prisoner and then goes back to the things he did, and Alan has transformed it into a sequence of events.' Most of the filming was done in Nairobi, 'which is like South Africa: it has a high altitude, the same sort of vegetation and so on'.

Most of the cast are South African, including John Matshikiza, who plays the African 'hero' Thabo. Bernstein knows him personally; they are both members of the African National Congress (ANC). 'His acting impressed me. He has a difficult part in the sense that it's always harder to play a hero than a villain, and he does it with great restraint, yet there's something quite powerful that comes over.'

Art Malik plays Indres, the young Indian student in the mixed group of saboteurs. 'What excites me most about Indres,' Malik says, 'is that he makes this huge commitment: the idea that "If anything has to be done, I don't care how far I go or how little I achieve; I am prepared..." This is the difference between Indres and the armchair politicians that I grew up with at college. He looks at his life and sees exactly where he is going.'

'You get offered lots of parts which are entertaining and a great joy to do, but once in a while something comes along which you

Sunday Première: Death Is Part of the Process, 9.5 BBC1

know, as an actor, is going to take you into another area completely. When you read the script, you say: "Yes, this I must do!" He felt the same towards the part of Hari Kumar in ITV's *The Jewel in the Crown*.

South African-born Jack Klaff plays Dick, a white comrade in the group who's married to Margie (Estelle Kohler). Klaff began his career in Cape Town, where as a child he had been protected by his parents from many of the events going on around him. 'By the time I read the script, I was very aware of the history and pieced it all together. I was crying every day. It was incredibly powerful. One or two scenes I almost dedicated to people I knew.'

'Dick is not particularly heroic, not the big, tough, brave guy. He is strong but vulnerable. The challenge as an actor was in trying to understand him, to get under his skin and see why he behaved as he did.'

The central group is a fictional version of the Spear of the Nation group, with which Bernstein

was connected in the early 60s. It was formed in response to the Sharpeville shootings of 1960, a year before the ANC was banned.

Bernstein was born in London and went to live in South Africa in her late teens. She escaped back to Britain with her husband Rusty after he had stood trial, alongside Nelson Mandela, charged with anti-government activities (the famous 'Rivonia' trial). Although Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment, Rusty was temporarily released on a technicality. (Their dramatic escape across the frontier is described in Bernstein's previous book, *The World that Was Ours*.)

Despite its 60s setting, she believes that the film's theme and concerns are still as valid. 'I saw that period as a necessary part of the building up of the resistance movement, a forerunner of what is happening today. It comes out in the title, from Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* - that everything that dies becomes a compost which contributes to a new growth.'

'I found the white characters easier to write about than the black ones,' says Hilda Bernstein. 'People might say: "Well, that's natural, you are white yourself," but it wasn't that at all. It was because white people who associate themselves with the liberation struggle are in a state of continuous conflict. They are going against everything around them.'

'For instance, with my own children there was one set of moral attitudes and beliefs in the home, and the moment they went outside the garden gate or next door to play with their friends, there was a totally different set of ethics and attitudes.'

This short, wiry woman radiates enthusiasm, humour and a feeling of pent-up energy. She misses South Africa passionately: 'The people, their comradeship and vitality, their warmth, openness, the beauty of the women's singing... and, of course, the sunshine.'

When she is not painting, etching or writing, she is busy travelling the world to speak on behalf of the ANC. 'I think it's terribly important not to feel a lessening of your fury against injustice,' she says. 'You should feel angry about what is wrong in the society around you - any child that is abused, any river that is polluted, any trial that is not fair, any violence that is used gratuitously against people, and any racialism.' ●

Resistance writer Hilda Bernstein: still fighting against apartheid



Hilda Bernstein's novel *Death Is Part of the Process* is published in paperback by Grafton Books at £2.50

TELEVISION

Sally Payne talks to Hilda Bernstein, author of the novel which has now become TV's first full-length film drama about South Africa.



WINDS OF CHANGE

This Sunday the first ever cinema-length drama about South Africa to be televised begins on BBC1.

It is 'Death Is Part Of The Process', a thriller set in 1960s South Africa, when the armed struggle was in its infancy, before Nelson Mandela was tried, before detention inevitably meant torture. But not before the Special Branch had every politically active person under heavy surveillance, including Hilda Bernstein, author of the novel on which the TV drama is based. Her husband Rusty was the only man to be let out after the Rivonia Trials of 1964. The rest, including Mandela, are still inside. Facing inevitable re-arrest, Hilda and Rusty crawled under a barbed wire border fence one night, their legs cut and swollen after two days' trudging, their hearts virtually giving out each time a light appeared in the distance. Accused of subversion (they'd always worked against apartheid), they'd both spent time in jail in the past, kept in solitary for months on a measly diet of mealie-meal; no books, no exercise and

hardly any visitors. Hilda Bernstein reckons, however, that compared to today they had it easy.

'Death Is Part Of The Process' has been adapted by Alan Plater from the novel. The story concerns a group of anti-apartheid activists (some black, a few white, one Indian) who, after the non-violent ANC is banned, embark on a policy of sabotage. Their efforts are naive, blundering and amateurish. They are lackadaisical about the vast informer network that operates within every group in South Africa. Most of them end up in jail. 'Jewel In The Crown' star Art Malik plays the Indian student who, after being tortured by the SB (with beatings and semi-drownings) escapes from prison; the rest of the cast are almost wholly South African. A special mention must go to Jim Parker for his terrific music — exhilarating freedom songs — and to John Matshikiza who plays Thabo, the sad-eyed, honourable, forceful black leader whose fate had more than one previewer swallowing hard.

Hilda Bernstein is now 71, sharp, articulate and still politically active. We discuss the programme in her London flat. Outside, a group of kids are leaning on her gate, chatting: three blacks, three whites. In South Africa they would probably be arrested. In South Africa we would have to conduct the interview in her bathroom with all taps running and a radio blaring. Or perhaps in a park somewhere, talking in whispers. Here at least we can tape our conversation. We can talk in loud voices. We can name names.

The two women characters in 'Death Is Part Of The Process' are fairly peripheral. One, middle-class, naive, white, is released from jail and flown sharply to London after her establishment father speaks to the 'right people'. The other, also white, knows no politics until her scientist husband is arrested for making bombs. Is either character autobiographical? Not at all. All the incidents in the film took place but the characters are fictional. I was much more politically involved and knowledgeable than

either woman. I was right in it.'

And still is. And, what's more, is optimistic about the future of South Africa. 'We always gave the freedom salute "Amandla"', she says. 'And then we'd say "in our lifetime"'. In the last couple of years we've become convinced it's come very, very much closer. Because there is now a realisation among young blacks that they cannot tolerate it any longer. They're telling their parents that they won't take what they took. Unemployment for young blacks is now 50 per cent. Soldiers with guns force them into the classrooms where they're given their "Bantu" education. Yet in spite of it all they go out demonstrating and now they've reached this point there's no going back.'

So if things are precariously perched in South Africa, wouldn't outside pressure tip them neatly over the edge? 'We are so anxious to press the cause of sanctions and boycotts,' says Bernstein. 'My belief is that they wouldn't apply pressure so much to the Botha regime — that's a lost cause anyway — but to the foreign interests who've got a lot to lose. It's important that they see their future is bound up with the black people of South Africa, not with a white minority. And it's a false assumption that the blacks would suffer under sanctions. That is raised by people who've never cared a damn about the suffering of the blacks.'

Maybe, then, this is the perfect time for a drama like this to be shown on television. Maybe it'll raise British consciousness a touch. Bernstein thinks so. 'It's absolutely the right time for this story to be told on TV. The early 1960s were the beginning of the change from non-violence. It was then that the basis for today's struggle was laid. This was how they started. It was the beginning of training people, of the armed struggle. The rest of the '60s was a period of quiescence until the movement rose again with the new generation who, despite being cut off all those years from political books and meetings and free associations, were still highly politicised. An amazing thing.'

If it does touch a British nerve, then Hilda Bernstein will have played as worthwhile a part in the fight against apartheid as she ever did in Johannesburg. For her it will be some atonement for having upped and left her country and, in a sense, her cause. 'I have been conscious of my betrayal ever since we left, particularly when very close friends have suffered deeply over there. Our association with the Rivonia men — Nelson Mandela and so on — was a very real and a very close one. And that sense of betrayal never leaves you.'

And, if she could, would she go back? 'My husband says, "only if we can be of some use." I have the feeling I'd like to go back for the people, for the sunshine, for the vitality of it. The black South Africans are just the most marvellous people I have ever known.'

This Sunday the British public will learn about South Africa. It could push Hilda Bernstein one small step closer to seeing freedom in her lifetime. 'For the time must come when law answers the needs of human relationship, instead of being an instrument of oppression.'

'Death Is Part Of The Process' begins on BBC1, Sunday at 9.00pm. The paperback is republished this week by Grafton, £2.50.

TVS's biopic about Nelson Mandela; Harry Belafonte has apparently already acquired the rights to Winnie Mandela's life story. For its part, the BBC has recently brought us the excellent *Asinamali* and *Drums Along Balmoral Drive*: hard on their heels comes *Death Is Part of the Process* (Sunday BBC1 9.5-10.20pm), a two-part political thriller set in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre as anti-apartheid activists begin to recognise that peaceful protest may not be enough.

The presence of Art Malik as Indian-law-student-turned-freedom-fighter Indres is a reminder of the Raj cycle (he played Hari Kumar in *Jewel* and Dr Aziz in *Passage*). But it also reveals just how different this new wave is from those end-of-Empire fictions. What we are seeing is more than a thirst for a new brand of 'out of Africa' exotica. Indeed, it's significant that while the Raj revival relied heavily on literary adaptations, this South African cycle is much more actuality-based. Since the imposition of strict media controls by the regime last November the news has been gagged, leaving the field wide open for fiction—*Asinamali*, for instance, was shot in Johannesburg during the state of emergency. Similarly, *Death Is Part of the Process*, for all its novelistic origins, draws deeply on author Hilda Bernstein's experiences in the early 1960s when the ANC was forced underground and anti-apartheid activists took up armed struggle—her husband was sentenced alongside Mandela in 1964 at the Rivonia trial.

Process, in fact, is an implicit rejoinder to *Gandhi*, focusing as it does on the failure of passive resistance as a strategy and the rise of armed struggle in the war against apartheid. In the very first scene, for instance, Indres, having organised a human rights exhibition, is cynical about its effectiveness; as the visitors begin to arrive he turns to a colleague: 'Now we wait for the government to fall.' At a subsequent meeting it is proposed that the Human Rights Council is simply dissolved: 'Because it's become an obstacle to progress—it contributes to the illusion that South Africa is a democratic country.' In its place *Umkhonto we Sizwe* ('spear of the nation'), an underground guerrilla organisation, emerges ready to do rather more to the symbols of apartheid than simply litter them with leaflets.

Process follows Indres and three white friends—Dick and Ralph, both university lecturers, and Pila who works in a bookshop—as they get increasingly involved in this new struggle, counterpointing their activities with the even riskier role played by black activists like Kabelo, Siphon and Thabo. Over two episodes we see what happens to these—and other—members of the movement, as one by one they are either caught, forced out of the country or underground, or tortured into betraying their colleagues. Those whom both



Art Malik

their comrades and we viewers trust most may turn state's evidence; those who seem least likely to join the struggle sometimes surprise us. Shot in Kenya, *Process* is a brave and well-crafted film and demands to be seen. Like the guerrilla group it follows, however, it may have been betrayed from within.

One of Salman Rushdie's criticisms of the Raj cycle was the way in which 'Indians get walk-ons, but remain, for the most part, bit players in their own history... It is no defence to say that a work adopts, in its structure, the very ethic which, in its content and tone it pretends to dislike. It is, in fact, the case for the prosecution.' Alan Plater's adaptation and Bill Hays's direction are careful to avoid accusations of exploiting 'local colour' (as one character puts it sourly: 'It is a very pretty police state'), but the perspective remains primarily a white one. Thus, of the seven people at the Human Rights Council meeting it is the three black characters present who don't have speaking parts. Nor is it always better when they do—the writing is at its weakest when characters like Thabo discuss their hopes for the future: 'Freedom in our lifetime—that is what I want to see.' Similarly, we learn much more about the home and work lives of Dick and Margie Slater or Pila Norval than we do about Thabo, Siphon, Kabelo or even Indres.

The obvious explanation for this, of course, is simply that for Indres and Thabo (brilliantly portrayed by John Matshikiza) 'politics' is a career in itself, a cause to which everything else is visibly sacrificed. For them it is not simply a matter of 'living a bit dangerously' like Pila; for Thabo and his comrades it is never safe. Much of the narrative, indeed, is focused on the group's gradual professionalisation in everything from bomb-making skills to organisational structure. The survivors learn that the war against apartheid cannot be fought like a game, nor can they continue to operate as amateurs. Amateurishness, it turns out, was perhaps the last

legacy of the British, alongside the tennis and polo that provide such perfect cover for clandestine meetings—at least for the whites. 'Everybody trusts tennis players,' as one of Margie's women contacts puts it. Even if they are suspected, though, people like Pila and Ralph can sometimes leave the country, while for Thabo and his comrades 'Death is simply part of the process'.

SPORT

Richard Clark on the media and dollar hype surrounding the running of yachting's America's Cup in Australia this winter.

High rollers

Drenched in champagne, Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke told TV viewers: 'Any boss who sacks anyone for not turning up today is a bum'. Hawke, who had given up drinking some months before, was leader of a country feeling the squeeze of recession. He no doubt recognised the kudos to be gained from what he described as 'one of the greatest moments in Australia's sporting history'. In Sydney, people awoke on the 27 September 1983 to a headline in the *Morning Herald* declaring victory in the America's Cup 'The Biggest Thing Since Peace in 1945—Triumph Unites a Nation'.

The previous day off Newport, Rhode Island, the yacht *Australia II* had wrested the trophy from the USA for the first time in 132 years. Millions of dollars had been spent to unscrew the 40-inch bolt which held the 'Auld Mug' trophy for the event to its plinth in the New York Yacht Club. The boat with the revolutionary winged keel had shown the Americans were vulnerable. The Cup, which had been a Stateside benefit, was now seen as attainable.

The interest in that deciding race in 1983 highlighted the event as a money-spinner. Worldwide media coverage had shown the financial possibilities that association with the Cup could bring.

The 1987 defence is in Perth, Western Australia, where a film crew from TVS will be based for the five-month duration of the event. TVS have negotiated the exclusive British use of Australian coverage. They are producing 18 half-hour programmes for Channel 4 and an hour long documentary, *Down For The Cup* (Sunday ITV 10.30-11.30pm).

Adrian Metcalfe, Commissioning Editor for Sport on C4 describes the coverage as 'an exhilarating mixture of the Olympic Games and *Dynasty*—great sport with the extraordinary goings-on of the rich and famous'.

Western Australia is a state with a population of fewer than two million. The Cup is expected to attract half a

million tourists and the Australian Tourist Commission estimates each visitor will spend more than 1,000 Australian dollars. When added to sponsorship and television revenue, it makes hosting the racing very big business.

The America's Cup is a match race between two 12-metre class yachts. Between 31 January and 15 February 1987 an Australian yacht will race a challenger for the Cup. The first to win four races will hold the bottomless silver trophy. Round-robin and knockout races from October until January 1987 will decide who defends and challenges for the Cup.

Four Australian syndicates are competing for the right to represent their country against one of 13 challengers. The cost of the visiting campaigns is estimated at 120 million US dollars, the most extravagant being those from America.

Losing the Cup has enlivened American yachting. When they lost, the supremacy of the New York Yacht Club was overturned. This year six US syndicates are competing to bring the title home. The strongest challenges come from New York and San Diego. New York's past dominance put them ahead in the race for corporate finance, including a one million dollar donation from General Motors. But much of their support comes from individual patrons from the oil state of Texas and the money-men's southern chauvinism may cost their syndicate the Cup. When the money talked it wanted a Texan at the helm of New York's effort and the Club selected John Kolius. That left the world's most experienced matchracer, Dennis Conner, free to lead the San Diego bid.

Conner was the man who lost the America's Cup in 1983. Folklore had it that the head of the skipper who surrendered the pot would replace it on display at the New York Yacht Club. Spared decapitation, Conner probably feels happier steering the San Diego challenge and has a for-



Crew of British 'White Challenger II'

Circle of saboteurs:
lecturer Dick Slater (Jack Klaff),
his wife Margie (Estelle Kohler)
and Indian student Indres (Art Malik)
are drawn into opposition to
a repressive regime



Times LEISURE

ART

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Kington artists show

AN exhibition of the work of two young Kington artists has opened at the town's Jacisa Gallery, and will remain on view for most of October.

The artists are the gallery's proprietors, Jacob Rock and Louisa Davidson, and the exhibits are some of their work since they opened it six months ago.

Two things are demonstrated by the exhibition — the couple's versatility and the inspiration they are finding from scenes and locations along the central Welsh border.

Admission to the exhibition, which has a catalogue of 51 items, is free.

Special for

Author signs book



PEOPLE who watched the BBC1 series "Death is Part of the Process" flocked to the Hereford Bookseller in High Town, where they could not only buy the book, but have it autographed by the author.

Hilda Bernstein, who wrote the book which was adapted by Alan Plater for television, lives at Old House Farm, Common Bach, Dorstone.

The book deals with the subject of apartheid in South Africa in the early 1960's.

Mrs Bernstein told customers, who asked about the television production, that she was generally pleased with the adaptation, but parts, she felt, were not quite as clear as they were presented in her book.

Author Hilda Bernstein signing copies of her book "Death is Part of the Process" at the Hereford Bookseller in High Town.

"Death is Part of The Process"

The Mail on Sunday

28/9/86

PICK OF THE DAY

EARLY rounds of the battle against apartheid are graphically dramatised in *Death is Part of The Process* (BBC1, 9.5). Set in 1960s' South Africa, it follows a multi-racial dissident group who move from peaceful protest to a campaign of sabotage. This taut, exciting two-parter is adapted by Alan Plater from the novel by Hilda Bernstein — herself one such campaigner until she and her husband had to flee the country. With Art Malik, John Matshikiza, Moira Downie (right) and Jack Klaff. Part 2 next Sunday.



The Daily Mirror 6.10.86

IN MY VIEW by Hilary Kingsley

★ YOU'D go a long way to find a play title less enticing than *Death is Part of The Process*.

But you'd go a longer way to find a deadly serious subject made more grippingly exciting than this two-part BBC-1 drama about South Africa in the sixties.

Like *The Monocled Mutineer* this was fiction based on fact. Also like it, it looked and felt right in every detail thanks to Alan Plater's spare

script and the committed, low-key acting.

There was no shilly-shallying in the message, either.

We'd met the mixed group of people who'd decided sabotage was their only weapon against the Apartheid regime.

Last night the pace quickened after the white university lecturer was caught. Increasingly daring explosions were set against more

arrests and increasingly brutal torture in jail.

Art Malik as emotional lawyer Indres was jailed, beaten but escaped. Solemn Thabo, played with immense force by John Matshikiza was betrayed; horribly tortured and died, much to the annoyance of the sneering policemen.

Things ended on a defiant note. I wanted to know more, what happened to the rest? But I think I know.

Standard 3.10.86

● 9.5-10.25

Death is Part of the Process. Second half of Alan Plater's atmospheric drama, adapted from a novel by Hilda Bernstein, of anti-apartheid protest in 1961 South Africa.

Having turned from non-violent campaigning to dynamite and detonator, the dissidents soon have the Special Branch reaching for their collars: the horrific brutality of the interrogation scenes vividly illustrate the reason for the axiom shared by police and protestors alike: "They all talk."

The film's style is often reminiscent of a Fifties movie about the wartime Resistance and, although the final scene drags the mood back to political theatre, the 1961 setting somehow lends it an universal relevance, testifying to the awfulness of police states anywhere in the world.

Sunday Times 5.10.86

9.05 *Death is Part of the Process*.* Second part of excellent Alan Plater adaptation of Hilda Bernstein's novel of South Africa in the 60s

The Guardian 4.10.86

9 5 DEATH IS PART OF THE PROCESS: 2. Second half of the well-crafted political thriller set in the South Africa of the sixties and adapted by Alan Plater from Hilda Bernstein's novel, with Art Malik as anti-apartheid activist Indres, desperately trying to warn the members of the group still free that they have a traitor in their minds. Ceefax sub-titles.



Rita Tushingham in *Judgement in Stone*: a psychological thriller based on a Ruth Rendell novel

THE EYES STILL HAVE IT

REMEMBER the face above? Twenty years ago that crooked nose and those wide, haunting eyes made hers one of the most distinctive countenances of the 60s. Well, two decades on, Rita Tushingham may have grown up, but the eyes are still the same. Best known for films like *A Taste of Honey* and *The Knack*, Rita now lives on Canada with her film director husband and two children, but she is back in London this month for a tribute to her at the National Film Theatre, and to launch her latest movie, *Judgement in Stone*. Based on a Ruth Rendell novel, it's a psychological thriller in which Tushingham plays an illiterate (and by the sound of it psychotic) older woman who becomes involved with a religious maniac and... well, I don't want to give too much away.

"It was a difficult part for me to play. There is almost no dialogue and yet you have to suggest the turmoil going on inside. It meant that I had to make it a very physical performance. Very intense." Intensity, of course, used to be one of the trademarks of Rita Tushingham's screen personality. Yet in real life she comes over as disarmingly relaxed and normal. "I suppose that was just what the camera saw in me. Maybe it was my youth. Certainly as I've got older the plum parts have got fewer. But then I think that's been a problem for a lot of actresses of my age. The parts simply aren't there." But with one film out and another on the way it seems likely we'll be seeing a lot more of those eyes.

Judgement in Stone opens in London at the end of October.

PASSAGE FROM INDIA

THE thinking woman's matinee idol, Art Malik, who shot to stardom in *Jewel in the Crown*, returns to the small screen this month in a two-part serial which

may rival Granada's Indian saga for both impact and popularity.

The BBC's production of Hilda Bernstein's *Death is Part of the Process*, the story of the emergent revolutionaries in South Africa, could not be more timely.

It is appropriate that Malik should find such a role in Alan Plater's superb adaptation of this prize-winning political thriller, based largely on the author's own experiences in South Africa of the early 60s when her husband was imprisoned with Nelson Mandela. Malik plays Indres, a young Indian student, training to be a lawyer who is so affected by the iniquities of that brutal regime that he drops out to join a mixed group of dissident activists.

"Like Harry Kumar [in *Jewel*] Indres is a loner," explains Malik, (who like his *Jewel* persona, came to this country from Pakistan to be educated when he was very young). "But unlike Harry, Indres becomes politically involved. He reaches the point in his life when he cannot give in to the sentimentality of merely being involved in university politics — and I sympathise with that. It's so easy to be a political radical at university; I remember how as a student in the early 70s we used to march against Margaret Thatcher milk-snatcher. All quite easy but to actually do anything..."

For each of Bernstein's protagonists, whether it is the intellectual Indres, or the streetwise black activist Thabo, the consequences of such active involvement may well be capture and torture.



Art Malik as Indres in *Death is Part of the Process*: "It's so easy to be a radical at university"

"We tried not to dwell on such scenes," says adaptor Alan Plater, "but everyone got very low and depressed during the interrogation scenes."

Death is Part of the Process will be broadcast on BBC 1 on September 28 and October 5.

NUCLEAR FRICTION

"I FEEL as if I've been married to Sir John [Mills] for 50 years," says Rosemary Harris. She hasn't, of course, ever been married to the famous actor/knight but such is the power and intensity of Brian Clark's two-hander, *The Petition*, that both actors feel intimately involved. Directed by that other famous — and of late, infamous — knight, Sir Peter Hall, *The Petition* was the sell-out success of Broadway last winter, and has just transferred from its run at the National Theatre to the West End. The petition has been signed by Elizabeth (Rosemary Harris) who, to the horror of her more reactionary husband (Sir John Mills), reveals herself to be a closet anti-nuclear campaigner. But in their ensuing row, the real issue at stake is not the state of the world but of their marriage, and the crux of the drama concerns the painful revelations and intimate self-scrutiny of these two septuagenarians. "Elizabeth is a seemingly open person," says Rosemary Harris, "but actually she's very secretive, while he appears euphemistic, but actually he's quite straightforward." Happily married to novelist John Ehle for 20 years, Rosemary says that even if, like her, you hate marital confrontations, "every married couple will find lines that strike home, and anyone who has experienced guilt or nursed remorse will identify with Elizabeth."

The Petition opens at Wyndhams Theatre, London, on October 6th.

OUTBACK IN ANGER

FAMILY strife is also one of the themes of Bruce Beresford's latest movie, *The Fringe Dwellers*. Set in Australia, and covering similar territory to Keri Hulme's award-winning *The Bone People*, the Fringe Dwellers of the title are aborigines, Australia's second-class citizens, caught between the culture they have lost and the WASP society that doesn't want them. Charting the story of one family's attempt to integrate and in particular the struggle of the teenage daughter to get out of the settlement and forge a life of her own, the film manages to be both affectionate and critical. And it's not afraid to expose the vicious spiral of alcohol and violence which so often plagues the dispossessed. Shot in south Queensland just a couple of miles from the Cherbourg Aboriginal reserve (from where the film drew much of its cast), and sporting two

Hilda —



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