lections, including those of the Dulles family (to the extent that they are at present open to scholars). The result is a book that readers will find most useful and reliable, regardless of their predilections.

Reviewed by RICHARD N. CURRENT

The Aborted Revolution

African Opposition in South Africa:
The Failure of Passive Resistance,
by Edward Feit, Stanford, California:
The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. 223 pp. $7.50.

In this study, the elaboration of a doctoral thesis, Mr. Feit purports to tell the story of the African National Congress' revolutionary challenge to the South African Government and why it was so successfully resisted. The main reason, pretty much concealed by the author, is, of course, that the propaganda of the Congress was far more successful in influencing opinion in Europe and the United States than in influencing the behavior of those in whose name it affected to speak, that is to say the black population of the South African Union, later the South African Republic. One is rather surprised to find such a book as this under the respected imprint of the Hoover Institution, for it is in some respects a misleading, if not disingenuous, narration. For one thing, the events are not related in chronological sequence, which is important to an understanding of the Government's evolving attitude toward the Congress and its leaders; for another, the events are described in a manner that makes it difficult for a reader unacquainted, or only slightly acquainted, with South African problems and policies to distinguish between the facts of what happened and the author's ideological interpretation of the facts.

As an example of Mr. Feit's equivocal technique, we may take the question of communist direction in the plans and activities of the Congress. Not long after the general election of 1948 the Communist Party was outlawed in South Africa; but as the authorities were well aware, it was continuing its activity underground through various "front" organizations. Its penetration of the African National Congress is not to be doubted, but there were some within the Congress who resented the communist presence, not so much on ideological grounds as because it represented an alien —i.e., non-African—influence which drew its inspiration and probably its orders from Moscow or Peking. Mr. Feit, however, is curiously unwilling either to admit or to deny the communist domination of the Congress. Consider for example his discussion of the allegations brought by the Bantu journalist, Jordan Ngubane, "The bosses of the Communist Party," said Ngubane, "did the planning and made the policy decisions. They approached men like Luthuli [Albert Luthuli, nominal head of the Congress] and other non-communist leaders merely, in actual practice, to acquaint them with what had already been decided." The acceptance of such decisions by Luthuli and the others might seem to place them at best in the category of docile fellow-travelers; but according to Mr. Feit, the important point is not whether the higher echelons were or were not dominated in some guise by the Communist Party, but how far down such domination, if indeed it existed, could penetrate. Congress leaders might very well allow themselves to be controlled by the machinery of the coordinating committee, but how effective was such control if the lower decision levels did not obey the upper echelons? How authoritative were the messages of the National Executive, and consequently of the coordinating committee? The evidence would indicate that the national leadership had a low degree of effective-
This is evidently what Mr. Feit means by his repeated insistence that lack of real communication between leaders and followers was to prove fatal to the Congress and its aims.

But if the leadership of the A.N.C. had little control over the rank-and-file membership, the Congress itself had none whatever over the Bantu population as a whole. Not only were the tribal chiefs, whose authority it seemed to threaten, hostile to it, but its professed aim of equality on the formula of one-man-one-vote was distinctly alien to the Bantu psychology. The Bantu boy undergoes the rite of initiation into his tribe on attaining the age of puberty; thereafter he has status, he becomes a person. But his status is either higher or lower than—never exactly equal to—that of any fellow tribesman. Thus the notion of equality is entirely contrary to tribal tradition and custom, and any tribesman rash enough to demand equality would certainly invite the curses of the witch doctor.

In one place Mr. Feit estimates the membership of the Congress as between 60,000 and 100,000 (p. 44), in another place as 200,000 (p. 111). How he arrived at either estimate is not clear, since he is careful to point out that the Congress kept no records. The Tomlinson Report of 1955 set the Bantu population at 8.4 millions. Of these the Congress represented somewhere between one half of one percent and two percent, so it is difficult to understand how Mr. Feit can speak of it as representing a "defenseless majority." The membership of the Congress was entirely Bantu, but allied with it through an organization called the Congress Alliance were tiny splinter groups from other racial elements—Coloreds, Indians, whites—all believed to have been composed largely of crypto-communists or communist sympathizers. The membership of these groups—especially that of the Coloreds, distinct from the Bantu by both race and culture*—was negligible, but each had an equal voice in the coordinating committee which issued the directives. It was jealousy of the power exerted by these splinter groups that ultimately provoked the schism within the Congress which led to the formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress. The subsequent rivalry between the two organizations accelerated the tempo of rebellion, as each strove to outdo the other in militancy, with the result that both were outlawed in the crisis that followed the Sharpeville riot of 1960.

About half the book is devoted to the agitation against the Bantu Education Act of 1955 and to the Western Areas Removal program, though for reasons of his own Mr. Feit has chosen to discuss these episodes in reverse order. In these struggles the Congress found a formidable and articulate ally in the ascetic Anglican priest, Father Trevor Huddlestone, now Bishop of Masasi in Tanzania. For Huddlestone it was a matter of Christian social ethics, as he interpreted them; for the congress it was a matter of political tactics derived from materialist dialectic; but for both the aim was to integrate the white and black populations of the South African cities. So great was the resentment of white Anglicans over Father Huddlestone's agitations that he was eventually recalled to England by his ecclesiastical superiors. Mr. Feit implies that this was at the instigation of the South African Government, but this is incorrect, as the priest himself has acknowledged. Until he relinquished South African citizenship in 1961 he was free to return, should he wish to do so. In his book, Naught for Your Comfort, he complains bitterly of the lack of support from members of his own communion, including the English prelates, and he finds as much fault with the race policies of the British oriented government of General Smuts as with those of the Boer Nationalist government of Dr. Malan.

The purpose of the Education Act was to substitute a system of government in which the curriculum and instruction were for the most part organized along the
traditional English lines. Thus the opposition of Father Huddlestone as head of the Anglican mission at Sophiatown is readily understandable, though he also believed, no doubt sincerely, that the Bantu really wanted English education for their children. Dr. Verwoerd, afterwards Prime Minister, was then head of the Ministry for Native Affairs to which the general direction of the new school program had been assigned. He explained that the purpose of the change was to benefit the whole Bantu population and not just a section of it by giving the opportunity for a sound basic education and technical training to all who desired them without closing the door to higher studies to those qualified to take them. Considering that nine-tenths of the Bantu population was then illiterate, this was a considerable reform. Its success is attested by the United National yearbook for 1961 which showed that from 63 to 85 percent of all South African children between the ages of five and fifteen, irrespective of race, were enrolled in schools. Whites were excluded from the local Bantu school boards and committees provided for in the act: these were to have charge of the construction and maintenance of the schools and also of the appointment and supervision of teachers. The Congress affected to see in all this not only a scheme for perpetuating the “master-servant relationship” of white and black, but also as depriving the Congress of an opportunity to indoctrinate the young. It called first for a boycott of the school board elections and then of the schools, urging parents to send their children instead to the “culture clubs” organized by the Congress’ branches. The initial response was slight and soon dwindled to virtually nothing, and the campaign ended in total failure.

The Congress failed even more disastrously in its attempt to prevent the resettlement of the inhabitants of three Bantu townships in Johannesburg area. Sophiatown in particular was a festering slum—worse than any Negro “ghetto” in the United States—overcrowded, crime ridden, without sanitation, a health menace to its own people and to those of nearby white suburbs. The newly created and more spacious townships such as Meadowlands had been planned with great care. There would be electricity, underground sewerage, and running water indoors—all absent in Sophiatown. In place of the pestilential tenements there would be solidly constructed single-family houses. Even Father Huddlestone, who wanted Sophiatown rebuilt instead, admitted (the passage is carefully deleted from a quotation in Mr. Freit’s book) that Meadowlands was an example of paternal forethought and charity. The Congress’ plan was to prevent resettlement by mass defiance by the Sophiatown residents implemented by a paralyzing general strike. The organizers of the resistance appear to have been deceived into overconfidence by the ebullient crowds which gathered to hear the agitators and the emotional responses evoked by their tirades against the authorities. But when the test came all was peaceful and orderly. “Many people,” wrote Huddlestone afterward, “expected violent resistance to the Removal and were surprised when the lorries moved off to Meadowlands safely with such apparently happy travelers.”

Mr. Feit attributes the defeat of the Congress to the essentially “bourgeois” psychology of its older leaders, their reliance, whether out of principle or timidity, on the methods of “non-violence,” their unrealistic hope of finding encouragement and support among the other ethnic groups, and their over-estimation of the boycott as an instrument of coercion. They were presently supplanted by “activists” who prepared the program of sabotage and insurrection uncovered by the police which led to the declaration of state of emergency. We have seen in this country how easily the doctrines of “non-violence” and “civil disobedience” are converted into violence, anarchy, and wholesale destruction. It would almost certainly have been so in South Africa too had the Nationalist Government...
pursued the courses demanded of it by so many European and American liberals.

Reviewed by ALLEN T. BLOUNT

*The Coloreds represent an admixture of white and Hottentot or white and Asian.

The Poems of Two Lives


The past three years have witnessed the publication, in readily accessible editions, of the bulk of Louis Zukofsky’s poetic work. There are two volumes of shorter poems and a book of critical essays; there is also the long poem in progress under review here, the first section of which was written in 1928 and the twelfth in 1950-51; subsequent parts of the "A" continue to appear in anthologies and journals, and it will apparently be completed in twenty-four sections of varying length.

Though he has only recently begun to receive wider attention, Zukofsky is a veteran poet, leader of the Objectivist movement of the 1930’s and guest editor of the important Objectivist issue of Poetry magazine (February 1931). His poetry, to identify it briefly and summarily, belongs within the experimental tradition in American poetry instigated by Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. Along with those veteran modernists he has been an influential figure for such active younger poets as Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Aram Saroyan, and others who have learned from Imagism, Objectivism, the technique of the Cantos and Paterson, a freedom from conventional literary forms, and the use of American speech rhythms. In his "Program: Objectivists’ 1931" Zukofsky set forth his poetic intentions in characteristically terse and elliptical fashion:

An Objective (Optics) — The lens bringing the rays from an object to a focus.
(Military use) — That which is aimed at. (Use extended to poetry) — Desire for what is objectively perfect, inextricably the direction of historic and contemporary particulars.

It is understood that historic and contemporary particulars may mean a thing or things as well as an event or chain of events: i.e., an Egyptian pulled-glass bottle in the shape of a fish or oak leaves, as well as the performance of Bach's Matthew Passion in Leipzig, or the Russian revolution and the rise of metalurgical plants in Siberia.

I have quoted these paragraphs because, however abbreviated, they contain some of the most valuable comments available on "A" 1-12; indeed, the various "particulars" named by Zukofsky appear in the course of the poem, and after the technique of recurrent or musical motifs employed there, many of them reappear several times.

Zukofsky’s method or design for the "A" poem seems to derive both from Pound’s Cantos and from his own deep and passionate interest in music. He even asks himself at one point: Can/The design/Of the fugue/Be transferred/To poetry?" What he attempts to incorporate organically into his poem are the important elements of his life experience, both public (wars, politics, the Russian revolution, the rise of labor unions) and private (the recurrent figures of the poet’s wife, son, and father; his thoughts about art; his philosophic meditations; anecdotes or snatches of talk from his daily personal intercourse). While one cannot doubt either this poet’s essential gifts and powers (much better displayed, I think, in his shorter poetry) or his artistic sincerity and integrity, "A" 1-12 reads