



Photo with acknowledgements to the British museum

ENGLISH IN AFRICA

a journal of critical enquiry
into all aspects of African
writing in English and the
use of the English language
in Africa, as well as other
languages and literatures of
Africa.

published in March and Sept-
ember each year by Institute
for the Study of English in
Africa.

Send contributions to:

Andre de Villiers
Editor, English in Africa
Rhodes University
Grahamstown
6140 South Africa

Subscription rates: R4.50 per year
R2.25 single issue
postage free

back numbers except for I, 1 (March
1974) still available

containing articles by

Andre Brink
Tim Couzens
Nadine Gordimer
Stephen Gray
Wopko Jensma
Bernth Lindfors
Ezekiel Mphahlele
John Povey
Richard Rive
Martin Tucker

and many others

"The guerrilla war was fast brutalising both adversaries. The worst scandals on the British side concerned colonial irregulars - Australians, Canadians and South Africans - whose official contingents, ironically, had won a reputation for gallantry in so many set-piece battles. The most notorious case involved a special anti-commando unit, raised by Australians to fight in the wild northern Transvaal, and called the Bush Veldt Carbineers. Six of its officers (five Australians, one Englishman) were court-martialled for multiple murder. The facts were admitted: in August 1901, 12 Boers, earlier taken prisoner, had been shot by the Carbineers on the orders of their officers. The Australians' defence: as a reprisal, shooting prisoners was now accepted practice. Two of the Australian officers, Lieutenants 'Breaker' Morant and Handcock, were executed in February 1902, on the orders of Kitchener. The affair caused an outcry in Australia. There arose a misconception (still current) that foreign political pressures had induced Kitchener to make scapegoats of Morant and Handcock. In fact Kitchener's motives were cruder: evidence of his own army's indiscipline drove him wild with frustration." (Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War. Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, in association with Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1979, pp. 538-9)

* * *

"When they speak of heroes, of villains ... of men who look for action, who choose between honour and revenge they tell the story of ... Breaker Morant. The official Australian entry at the 1980 Cannes Film Festival ... winner of 10 Australian film awards ... and acclaimed as Australia's Most Important, Powerful and Forceful Motion Picture Ever ..." (The Courier Mail, Brisbane, 12 September 1980)

* * *

"BREAKER MORANT. ROYAL GALA CHARITY PREMIER in the presence of HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES ... To Aid the SOS-Stars Organisation for Spastics and the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council." (Advertisement supplied by the Australia House Film Society at the Australian High Commission, London, September 1980.)

* * *

"... a muscular picture that I think will prove much to the liking of South African audiences, and in Zimbabwe ... Nearly 20 countries have snapped up the chance to screen the picture ... including ... Mozambique and Angola." (Dirk de Villiers, The Star, 12 July 1980)

* * *

"A spy-story that has become legendary ... needs revision. Early in February a mean creature named Colyn offered himself as a recruit to Commandant Bouwer's commando, betrayed his comrades for English gold and brought some of them to their deaths. The Boers caught Colyn and brought him before Smuts. The wretched creature wept and howled and begged for his life but he deserved death and he suffered it ... So far this often-told story is true. But Deney's Reitz and other writers have over-dramatised the part that Smuts played in it. They have put into his mouth some implacable words, "Vat hom weg en skiet hom dood" ... If Smuts did say something like this, he said it not as a man presuming to inflict death upon a fellow man by his own arbitrary will, but as the president of a duly constituted military court. The records of the court were written out at length in a school exercise book which is preserved among Smuts's papers. They include depositions under oath of the witnesses and of the prisoner, all duly signed and countersigned, and sentence of the court delivered in due form by its president. The procedure was scrupulously correct and the verdict was just." (W K Hancock. 1962: Smuts: The Sanguine Years 1870-1919. Cambridge University Press, pp. 141-142)