

Labour law is probably one of the most dynamic areas of the law and keeping a work in this area up to date and relevant is no easy task. Grogan has been praised for his ability and commitment to keep his contributions to the area of labour law up to date. In this respect the question arises whether he and the publisher should not consider a loose leaf format of *Dismissal, Discrimination and Unfair Labour Practices* in future.

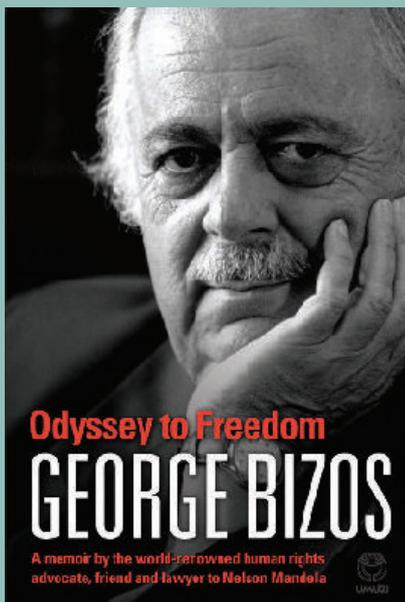
Labour law practitioners, human resources managers, judges, arbitrators, lecturers and post-graduate students are all likely to benefit from this work. The second edition of *Dismissal, Discrimination and Unfair Labour Practices* is highly recommended and would certainly add value to the library of every serious labour law practitioner.

Riaan Grundlingh, Pretoria Bar

Odyssey to Freedom

A memoir by the world-renowned human rights advocate, friend and lawyer to Nelson Mandela

By George Bizos
Random House (2007)
616 pages
Hard cover R274 (VAT incl)



Bizos' autobiography appears, at first blush, to be an intimidating read. It is a veritable tome of just over 600 pages. Furthermore, notwithstanding Mandela's imprimatur of approval (he authored the foreword), the title of *Odyssey to Freedom* does roll off the lips rather ostentatiously and the byline of *A memoir by the world-renowned human rights advocate, friend and lawyer to Nelson Mandela* appears to the cynic to be less than modest or, at worst, a tactless ploy to punt the book using the world-renowned Mandela trademark.

However, the age-old adage of 'don't judge a book by its cover,' or in this case its title, never rang truer. The aptness and relevance of the title only comes through once one has journeyed with Bizos from his birthplace in the modest and romantic Greek village of Vasilitsi in 1928 to his involvement, on behalf of South Africa, with the Athens Olympics in 2004.

That epic journey commences with a delightful window into Bizos' childhood and upbringing. It recalls when, as a mere boy, Bizos together with his father courageously rescued seven New Zealand soldiers hiding on the German-occupied Greek island and describes their dramatic flight to safety. It traverses Bizos and his father's sojourn through to South Africa as refugees and their subsequent struggle to make ends meet. It records Bizos' good fortune in acquiring an education and provides a wonderful if at times all too brief and limited insight into the trials and tribulations of his personal life, most notably: the stumbling blocks in his relationship with his father, the painful and tragic distance between him and his family occasioned by his flight from Greece during the Second World War and events thereafter, his marriage to Arethe and the raising of their own family, and the eventual bridging of the distance between himself and his mother and siblings. A number of photographs, many from the Bizos family archive, are reproduced in black and white and compliment the text.

However, the vast majority of the autobiography is dedicated to Bizos' exploits at the Bar. A sample of memorable cases documenting his lengthy and remarkable career, ranging from appearances in non-descript magistrates' courts in far-flung corners of the country to high profile political trials, appeals and commissions of inquiry, provides for fascinating reading.

Far from constituting dry and stolid reminiscences of case law, Bizos' description of these legal milestones is written in a simple and accessible style. Selected transcripts from cases have also been appropriately woven into the narrative in a number of instances. Furthermore, the courage, role and qualities of the many legal luminaries of yesteryear – including Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Duma Nokwe, Bram Fischer, Vernon Berrangé, Ismail Mahomed, Arthur Chaskalson, Joel Joffe and Sydney Kentridge, amongst others – come to the fore. The end product is a riveting highlights package of legal jousts that contributes to the historical record of South Africa (and, to a more limited extent, Namibia and Zimbabwe).

Bizos' legal recollections also serve as wonderful illustrations of the essential foci of every good advocate. The significance of legal strategy, the importance of thorough research, the need to be intimately familiar with one's brief, the art of cross-examination and court craft, the imperative to act with integrity and, equally crucial, the necessity to remain independent in the face of daunting odds, are all subtly demonstrated with reference to compelling examples.

As for the byline of the book, it is nothing less than true. To the extent that it betrays a pride in a lifelong alliance and friendship with Mandela, it is entirely justifiable and eminently understandable. Quoting from Mandela's foreword: 'George Bizos and I have known each other well for close on sixty years. Over these years we have shared much and have grown to be close friends ... George's autobiography, *Odyssey to Freedom*, is not only a personal account of an extraordinary life but an invaluable addition to the historical record of our nation, captured here by a man whose contribution towards entrenching the human rights that lie at the heart of South Africa's constitutional values is impossible to overrate.'

This rich and rewarding book provides captivating reading for the layperson. For the lawyer who seeks to understand the nature of the beast he dances with daily, it is essential reading.

Faizel Ismail, member of the Johannesburg Bar

