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THE US COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-APARTHEID ACT OF 1986: ANTI-APARTHEID OR ANTI-AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS?

THOMAS J. REDDEN, Jr.

WHEN THE UNITED STATES Congress overrode President Ronald Reagan's veto of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 in September 1986, most observers viewed the vote as a resounding defeat for those who defended the Reagan Administration's 'constructive engagement' policy toward South Africa. The imposition of a broad range of economic sanctions against Pretoria, as called for by the Anti-Apartheid Act, was hailed as a victory for Reagan Administration critics in Congress and their progressive grass-roots allies. The imposition of sanctions, however, represents only one aspect of the legislative package. Of additional significance was the amendment that conservative lawmakers incorporated into the bill that could have a far-reaching impact on US relations with South Africa in the years to come.

In order to win conservative acquiescence for the punitive measures embodied in the Anti-Apartheid Act, the Senate majority accepted an amendment that established parameters for future United States relations with certain South African opposition groups, especially the African National Congress (ANC). In brief, the amendment states that if, at a future date, the South African Government were prepared sincerely to negotiate a transition to democratic rule and the ANC were unwilling to participate in the negotiations, to forego violence, or to commit itself to a democratic post-apartheid government, then the United States would be obliged to support negotiations that excluded the ANC. The amendment, once approved, transformed what had been a sanctions bill into a rigid and dangerous prescription for future United States policy toward South Africa.

This article represents an effort to clarify the political implications of this amendment. Its prominent aspects will be discussed in terms of their potential impact on United States-South African relations. I will also seek to place it within the larger context of the attempt by conservatives to discredit the ANC in the eyes of the American public. Finally, I will argue that the conservatives' policy is self-defeating, given the fact that the ANC remains the leading anti-apartheid group in South Africa. If the United

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States hopes to maintain influence in post-apartheid South Africa, it must recognize the ANC as a central and a legitimate voice for the African majority.

The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986

The Act can be divided into two distinct parts. The first outlines the sanctions to be imposed against the South African regime; the second details the parameters for future United States relations with the ANC. In the former, past United States sanctions against South Africa are greatly expanded. South African imports, such as kruggerrands, uranium, coal, iron, and agricultural products, are proscribed; in addition, loans, nuclear trade and the export of computers, munitions, oil and petroleum from the United States are to be eliminated or greatly restricted.

The Act also calls for a variety of measures aimed at assisting those individuals and organizations that suffer most under the apartheid system. Millions of dollars for scholarships, job and professional training, human rights work and economic opportunities for blacks are to be expanded in the next few years. The law likewise sets forth proper labour practices that United States nationals operating in South Africa are required to follow.

As described above, the Anti-Apartheid Act seeks to apply economic pressure to the apartheid structure as a means of wresting political change from its government. Unlike the Reagan's Administration's policy of 'constructive engagement', the 1986 law involves a distancing of the United States government from Pretoria and a stronger identification with the victims of the apartheid system. Clearly, the strategy of the legislation is to build bridges with the black majority while at the same time to use United States economic and political muscle as a lever for change.

The second aspect of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 involves the amendment that refers to the African National Congress. This ANC-amendment was submitted by North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms on behalf of ten other senators, including conservative stalwarts Strom Thurmond and Jeremiah Denton. Its final inclusion in the legislation came as a result of a compromise struck between Helms, representing anti-sanctions conservatives, and Connecticut Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr, speaking for the Senate majority. In exchange for Helms dropping fourteen additional amendments, the Senate adopted a toned-down version of his original amendment that placed even further demands on the ANC.¹

The four most important parts of the Helms Amendment can be found in sections 102 and 311 of the law. The sections and subsections read as follows:

1. See *Congressional Record Weekly Report* (16 August 1986) pp. 1-4 and the *Congressional Record* (14 August 1986) pp. S11760-11761 for the Helms Amendment and a discussion of its approval.

—Sec. 102 (b) The United States shall encourage the ANC to (1) ‘suspend terrorist activities so that negotiations with the Government of South Africa . . . will be possible’.

—Sec. 102 (b)(2) The US shall encourage the ANC to ‘make known their commitment to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa’.

—Sec. 102 (b)(4) The US shall encourage the ANC to ‘re-examine their ties to the South African Communist Party’.

—Sec. 311 (c) The United States government will support negotiations between ‘the representatives of all communities’ in South Africa and the South African Government. However, ‘if the South African Government agrees to enter into negotiations without preconditions, abandons unprovoked violence against its opponents, commits itself to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa’, and the ANC refuses to participate, or to (1) ‘abandon unprovoked violence’, or (2) to ‘commit themselves to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa’ during such negotiations, then the United States ‘will support negotiations that do not include’ the ANC.

The exact wording of these four segments of the Act reveal precisely how the critics of the ANC sought to recast the entire focus of the legislation. For example, in the first sentence above, the ANC is called on to ‘suspend terrorist activities *so that* negotiations with the Government of South Africa’ are possible (emphasis added). Two points deserve attention here. The first is the unqualified statement that the ANC practices terrorism and is therefore a terrorist organization. This is particularly important given that section 312 (b) of the Act states that the United States will work diplomatically to ‘isolate those [groups or individuals] who promote terrorist attacks’ in South Africa. The second part of the sentence implies that it is the ANC, and not the South African Government, that is the main obstacle to negotiations, a view that is explicitly rejected by the Commonwealth’s Eminent Persons’ Group that explored the question.²

The second subsection quoted above seriously questions the legitimacy of the ANC’s 75-year struggle against white rule. ‘To make known a commitment’ to democracy clearly suggests that the ANC’s democratic ‘commitment’ is not now known. This is a specious demand given that the ANC’s public commitment to democracy was enshrined in 1955 in the Freedom Charter. As the ANC’s historic statement of its political objectives, the

2. The Eminent Persons’ Group’s leaders, Malcolm Fraser and Olusegun Obasanjo, former heads of government in Australia and Nigeria respectively, talked extensively with South African leaders in 1986 and concluded that the government was ‘not yet prepared to negotiate fundamental change’, nor had any intention of ‘negotiating in good faith’. See their article, ‘What to do about South Africa’, *Foreign Affairs*, 65, (1986–7), p. 155.

Charter affirms that 'only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief'.

The third subsection calls on the ANC to 're-examine' its ties to the South African Communist Party. This theme receives much attention by ANC critics who wish to paint the ANC as an agent of Soviet expansionism. The complicated relationship between the ANC and the South African Communist Party is treated in simplistic East/West terms. Just because the ANC has close relations with the South African Communist Party, the ANC's commitment to democracy is called into question, and its relationship to Moscow is characterized as a threat to the United States.

The final and most important point brought out in the amendment reflects nothing short of an attempt by critics of the ANC to deal the group out of the future of South African politics. By incorporating into American law specific demands on future ANC actions during negotiations, critics of the ANC have established a position from which to attack the ANC during the very talks that will define the post-apartheid political system. The potential impact of this provision of the law can be easily imagined if a scenario is created in which negotiations in South Africa itself were to take place.

Chances are that any conference concerning a transition to democracy would be held in the wake of continued large-scale violence. The atmosphere would be one of great tension and distrust, not to speak of sporadic fighting. A state of emergency would likely be in effect that would limit outside press coverage. If anti-ANC forces were able to dominate the debate on South Africa in the United States, the ANC's alleged acts of 'unprovoked violence' or its 'lack of commitment to democracy' could be portrayed as the main obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the talks. In such a situation, the United States would be bound by law to support negotiations that excluded the ANC.

A United States move to exclude the ANC from future negotiations would further undermine the United States' image among the black majority in South Africa. Given the fact that the ANC, and especially its leader Nelson Mandela, are viewed by many South African blacks as the leading symbols of the anti-apartheid struggle, an effort by the United States to remove the ANC from negotiations would be seen as a move against majority rule. Consequently, the United States would be identified further with the racist regime and would push more and more South Africans to assume an anti-American and anti-Western stance, the very result the critics of the ANC fear most.

The question of whether to exclude the ANC from future negotiations may never come to pass. This fact, however, does not negate the importance of the ANC's critics in the United States. In the years to come, they

are sure to play an integral part in the American debate on South Africa. For this reason alone, it is important to understand and assess critically the validity of their arguments.

The conservative case against the ANC

Since the early 1980s, when most observers began to question the longevity of the apartheid system, American conservatives have moved quickly to influence United States policy toward South Africa. They are determined to prevent the 'loss' of yet another Western stronghold to the Soviet Union as they believe happened in Nicaragua, Angola and Ethiopia. Implicit in their view is the belief that the United States can significantly determine the outcome of events in South Africa or, at least, prevent 'turning over' the country to the Soviets.³

In the early 1980s conservatives mounted a concerted effort to draw attention to the dangers that they saw in southern Africa. Senators Jesse Helms and Jeremiah Denton stood at the forefront of a congressional movement to combat the perceived spread of communism in the region. In 1981 for example, because Chester A. Crocker, then a Georgetown University political scientist and nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, did not argue forcefully enough about the dangers of African Marxism, Senator Helms delayed his confirmation.⁴ The following year, Senator Denton held hearings to investigate the level of communist penetration in southern Africa. The one-sided hearings brought forth a number of South Africans to support Denton's thesis that the ANC was a communist-inspired, terrorist organization.⁵

In 1986-1987, as policy analysts turned to the question of the shape of post-apartheid South Africa, the campaign against the ANC gained momentum. Conservative publications, such as *Human Events*, *The National Review* and the *Washington Times* have repeatedly harped on the dangers of an ANC-led state in South Africa. The anti-ANC movement peaked in January 1987 when 34 anti-ANC groups rallied their forces to protest publicly against Secretary of State George Shultz's meeting with

3. See Jeane Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorships and double standards', *Commentary* (November 1979), pp. 34-45; Alan Crawford, *Thunder On The Right* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); and Sidney Blumenthal, 'Dateline Washington: the conservative crackup', *Foreign Policy*, 69 (1987-88), pp. 166-88, for background on the (neo)conservative movement in the US and its arguments.

4. See *Executive Report*, No. 97-98, 'Nomination of Chester A. Crocker', 97th Congress, 1st session (1981).

5. No witnesses sympathetic to the ANC position were heard in the hearings of the subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Committee of the Judiciary, *The Role of the Soviet Union, Cuba and East Germany in Fomenting Terrorism in Southern Africa*, US Senate, 2nd session (March, 1982).

ANC president Oliver Tambo. Known as the Coalition Against ANC Terrorism, and headed by Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, the organization denounced the Shultz–Tambo meeting as ‘reckless’ and warned that the United States should not ‘turn over South Africa to the Soviet Union’.⁶

As represented by Helms’ anti-ANC amendment in the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 and the 34-group Coalition Against ANC Terrorism, the conservative effort to discredit the ANC is sure to continue. As long as the apartheid system remains in place and as long as the ANC remains at the forefront of the anti-apartheid movement, conservatives will perceive the ANC as a threat to United States interests. The arguments put forward against the ANC fall into three general categories: the ‘communist threat’ represented by the ANC; the organization’s use of violence, or ‘terrorism’ as a means of ending the apartheid system; and the existence of ‘democratic alternatives’ to the ANC in South Africa. For each of these reasons, critics of the ANC argue that the United States should repudiate the ANC and lend support to other anti-apartheid groups. Each argument deserves brief attention.

The fear of communist expansion in South Africa is the overriding fear of critics of the ANC. Lawrence Wade wrote in a *Washington Times* editorial that the ANC’s hope to seize power proves that ‘communism is just waiting to squeeze South Africa in its death-like grip’.⁷ A *Human Events* article asserted that the ANC pledges to establish a ‘communist state’ if it takes power.⁸ Richard Viguerie, publisher of the *Conservative Digest*, contends that an ANC-led state ‘would be absorbed into the Soviet Empire’.⁹ Most ominously of all, Senator Jesse Helms predicts that, if the ANC comes to power ‘South Africa, and consequently, all of Africa’ will ‘fall under the control of the Soviet Union’.¹⁰

The assertions above stem from the ANC’s widely acknowledged long-term relations with the South African Communist Party and the Soviet Union. ANC critic William W. Pascoe III of the Heritage Foundation claims that ‘after World War II . . . the ANC was, for all intents and purposes, co-opted by the SACP’.¹¹ These critics contend that the relationship has continued to the present. They point to the presence of a number of South African Communist Party members on the ANC’s executive body,

6. *The Washington Times*, 20 January 1987 and *Washington Inquirer*, 16 January 1987.

7. *Washington Times* editorial entitled ‘What Comes Next in South Africa’, reprinted in *Human Events*, 12 October 1985.

8. ‘What are the Real Goals of the Protest Movement Against South Africa?’ *Human Events*, 5 January 1985, p. 12.

9. *The New York Times*, 25 August 1985.

10. Comment made in hearings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Situation in South Africa*, 99th Congress, 2nd session, July 1986, p. 63.

11. William W. Pascoe III, ‘Moscow’s strategy in southern Africa: a country by country review’, *Background* (The Heritage Foundation), 21 July 1986, p. 3.

the National Executive Committee, as proof of communist allegiances in the organization. At the 1986 hearings, Senator Jeremiah Denton maintained that 'roughly two-thirds' of the thirty-person executive committee consists of communist party 'members or advocates'.¹²

Critics further emphasize the military support provided to the ANC by the Soviet Union. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, states that about 90 per cent of all the ANC's military equipment comes from communist countries.¹³ The weapons, reported to be mostly Warsaw Pact 'surplus supplies' of a 'low level of firepower', are provided through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in accordance with OAU and United Nations resolutions.¹⁴

Criticism levelled at the ANC for its affiliation with communists stems from a Cold War, zero-sum perspective that reflects United States fears, not an understanding of South African history. For decades the ANC carried out a legal, non-violent struggle that was savagely repressed by the apartheid system. Due to the internal repression of the regime and the West's close identification with the South African government, the ANC had no place to turn but to the non-capitalist world and to the South African Communist Party, whose members were willing to suffer and die with the ANC.

Leading scholars dismiss the portrayal of the ANC as a communist front. Gwendolen Carter, a distinguished United States scholar of South Africa, flatly rejects such an argument. She contends that the ANC works with the SACP out of necessity, but that the ANC is not interested in establishing a communist state.¹⁵ Tom Lodge, described by *The Washington Post* as 'South Africa's leading specialist on black politics',¹⁶ says that, although 'about half' of the ANC's leadership belongs to the SACP, 'not too much should be made of this'. The ANC, he argues, is driven by pragmatism, not ideology.¹⁷

The most thorough analysis of the ANC's relationship with the SACP has been made by Professor Thomas Karis, a leading American expert on the ANC. In two major articles in *Foreign Affairs*, as well as in testimony before congressional committees, Karis explains the complicated relationship between the two groups. He argues that the SACP clearly does not control the ANC. The two organizations, Karis asserts, are 'separate' and

12. Statistics given during hearings of Senate Committee of Foreign Relations, *Situation in South Africa*, 99th Congress, 2nd session (July 1986) p. 23.

13. Figure provided by Crocker during testimony in Denton's hearings on *Terrorism in Southern Africa* (March 1982) p. 7.

14. See Stephen M. Davis, *Apartheid Rebels* (Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 66-72 for revealing details on ANC military operations and support.

15. From an interview with Flora Lewis, *The New York Times*, 12 January 1987.

16. *The Washington Post*, 19 January 1987.

17. Article written by Tom Lodge, 'The Second Consultative Conference of the ANC', in the Appendix of hearings on *Terrorism in Southern Africa*, p. 253.

'independent of each other'. The ANC is recognized as the 'leader of the alliance' and that the SACP must be 'loyal to it'.¹⁸

A further refutation of the ANC critics' argument is ironically itself a product of conservative efforts to discredit the ANC. A section of the Helms amendment states that the President shall have a report written that would determine 'the extent to which Communists have infiltrated' anti-apartheid groups and 'set the[ir] policies'.¹⁹ The study released by the State Department in January 1987 speaks of the ANC being 'deeply beholden to the SACP and the Soviet Union . . . for its arms and training' and states that the SACP will maintain 'entrenched . . . influence' in the ANC. However, the report continues that the SACP is 'only one element' within the ANC and that 'Moscow has learned that it will be no easy task to gain ascendancy in such a diverse organization as the ANC'.²⁰

The second major theme emphasized by ANC critics is the outlawed group's commitment to armed struggle. By depicting the ANC's dedication to violence as a reflection of the kind of society that it would organize, the critics attempt to portray the ANC as little more than power-hungry terrorists, bent on gaining power at any cost. For example, John R. Silber, President of Boston University, claims that the ANC is a 'Leninist' organization that is trying to implement its 'ideology . . . by terrorism and murder'.²¹

The fundamental flaw in the critics' argument about ANC violence, like its argument about the group's communist connections, is its disregard for South African history. In the context of ANC history, violence has played a part in the organization's strategy for only a relatively short time. From 1912 to 1960, the ANC was a non-violent organization that argued in favour of national reconciliation and understanding. In the 1950s, however, when the ANC was transformed into a mass organization and openly, yet peacefully, challenged the system of apartheid, the regime responded with wanton violence against unarmed civilians. With the shocking massacre at Sharpeville in 1960, the ANC finally admitted that the non-violent struggle had failed to further its cause of freedom. With great reluctance, the newly outlawed organization took up the sword where its pens and reason had failed.²²

18. Quote from House hearings of the Subcommittee on Africa of Committee on Foreign Affairs, 98th Congress, 1st session, 14 September 1983, pp. 87–88. Also, for Karis' arguments, see 'Revolution in the making: black politics in South Africa', *Foreign Affairs*, 62 (1983–4), pp. 378–406 and 'South African liberation: the communist factor', *Foreign Affairs*, 65 (1986–7), pp. 267–287.

19. For reference for the proposed amendment, see *Congressional Record*, 1 August 1986, p. S11761. For reference to the law itself see *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986*, Sec. 509 (a).

20. United States Department of State, *Communist influence in South Africa*, written to comply with Presidential Order No. 12571 of 27 October 1986, under direction of the Secretary of State, (1987), pp. 1, 4, 10.

21. *The New York Times*, 9 October 1986.

22. For a full historical and documentary presentation of the 1912 to 1960 period, see the first-rate study of the ANC in Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter's four-volumed study *From Protest to Challenge* (Hoover Institution Press, 1982–1977).

In justifying the use of violence, then-ANC president Chief Albert Luthuli, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1961, explained that prior to 1960 the organization had 'patiently, moderately and modestly' knocked on the door of freedom in South Africa. 'What were the fruits of its moderation?', he asked rhetorically. 'Thirty years of . . . laws restricting our rights and progress, until today we have reached a stage where we have almost no rights at all' was the stark response.²³

The Reverend Desmond Tutu, South Africa's second black Nobel Peace Prize laureate, continues personally to renounce violence. He does not, however, denounce the armed struggle of the ANC. Tutu admitted that, if 'he were a young man in South Africa [today], he would no longer be listening to Bishop Tutu' about non-violence.²⁴ A similar notion is echoed by William F. Buckley Jr who, though a conservative and no advocate of the ANC, acknowledged that, if he were a black South African youth today, he would both join the ANC and take up the armed struggle. The problem, he bemoans, is 'that there aren't any solid alternatives [to the ANC and violence] in South Africa'.²⁵

The fundamental contradiction in criticizing the ANC's use of armed struggle lies in the absence of a realistic alternative to violence. As the Eminent Persons' Group concluded, negotiations for the purpose of establishing majority rule have never been entertained by the South African Government. For example, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's proposal of racially-based power-sharing in the province of Natal, a modest plan compared to the idea of majority rule, was rejected by Pretoria. Even the argument made by the Reagan Administration that 'economic growth' will magically lead to the dismantling of apartheid was contradicted by the Administration's own hand-picked group headed by IBM's former Chairman of the Board that studied the question.²⁶ The sad fact remains that alternatives to armed struggle in South Africa, though preferable, provide no hope, by themselves, of ending the apartheid system for the moment. The ANC's use of violence is important because it complements the non-violent civil struggle of other popular groups, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and international economic sanctions in bringing full pressure to bear on the apartheid regime.

The fact that a 'democratic alternative' to the ANC already exists in South Africa is the third main reason given by critics for not supporting the ANC.

23. Quoted by Nelson Mandela at the Rivonia Trial in 1964 when he explained and justified the ANC's decision to take up arms. See Mary Benton (ed.), *The Sun Will Rise* (International Defence and Aid Fund, 1981), p. 14.

24. Senator Lowell Weicker quoted Tutu in hearing *Situation in South Africa* (July 1986), p. 23.

25. 'What Would You Do If You Were They', *National Review*, 24 October 1986, pp. 62-63.

26. For the 'economic growth' argument, see 'US Export Policy Toward South Africa', *Department of State Bulletin* (May 1983), p. 27. For a description of the study headed by Frank T. Carey of IBM and former Secretary of Transportation William T. Coleman, see *The New York Times*, 11 February 1987.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, former United States ambassador to the United Nations, contends that 'there really is a democratic center in South Africa ... committed to non-violent political action and inclusive democratic institutions'.²⁷ Leading virtually every critic's list of 'democratic opposition' is the chief minister of the KwaZulu homeland, Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi.²⁸ As head of the reportedly one million strong political organization Inkatha, and as chief of six million Zulus, Buthelezi represents a formidable force in black South African politics.

Buthelezi's attraction to critics of the ANC is due to his pro-Western, pro-capitalist ideological stance. Buthelezi strongly supported 'constructive engagement', denounces divestment as anti-black, has accepted the position of a homeland chief and rejects violence for the moment as a tool for political change. While in the United States in 1987, the chief's message must have been very comforting to his conservative American allies. In a speech that would shock most third world nationalists, he extolled 'the dollar, the American Marines, and the heavy weight of American clout' as a 'force for international peace in the world'. His goals, he explains, are 'consonant with the American dream'.²⁹ For many black nationalists in South Africa, however, Buthelezi's perceived tribal orientation and cozy relationship with the white government are his greatest liabilities. Thomas Karis argues that there is 'much exaggerated wishful thinking' about Buthelezi's role in black politics. Karis calls him a 'tragic figure' who may evoke from blacks 'more intense hostility' than any other figure in South African politics.³⁰ The Reverend Alan Boesak, the coloured South African president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, states that Buthelezi 'has neither the support nor respect of black people'. The Reverend Smangaliso Mkatshwa, secretary of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, calls the chief a 'leader that is wasted' for being unable to go beyond ethno-nationalism.³¹

A final concern for many South Africans about Buthelezi centres on his reputation as an authoritarian leader in KwaZulu. It is reported that Buthelezi has an 'infrastructure of intimidation' that he uses against both the ANC and the United Democratic Front. One of Buthelezi's former advisers referred to Inkatha and its leader as 'autocratic' and 'incredibly

27. *The Washington Post*, 18 January 1987.

28. While in the United States in November 1986, Buthelezi appeared on Pat Robertson's 700 Club, received an honorary degree from Boston University (whose president is ANC-critic John Silber had a 'working dinner' with the Heritage Foundation, and met with numerous others, including George Bush, Sal Marzullo of Mobil Oil, and the editorial board of *The Washington Post*. See Michael Massing's article, 'The Chief', in the *New York Review of Books*, 15 February 1987, p. 15.

29. Speech by Buthelezi: 'The Plight of Responsible Black Leaders in South Africa' (delivered at Boston University, 17 November 1987), pp. 8-10 of text.

30. Statement by Thomas G. Karis during testimony to House hearing of Subcommittee on Africa, *Developments in South Africa: US Policy Response* (12 March 1986), p. 32.

31. William Raspberry, 'What Role for Buthelezi?', *The Washington Post*, 10 December 1985.

violent'.³² For ANC critics to portray Buthelezi as the 'great black hope' for South Africa and the West is to distort both the harsh reality of South Africa today and the Chief's role in it.

Conclusion

The Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 is important for at least two reasons. First, it represents a case study of a piece of legislation that was dramatically altered in the course of the congressional debate and that needed compromise to ensure its passage. Ironically, the ANC-amendment may have a more significant impact on the long-term United States relations with the post-apartheid government than the imposition of sanctions that are at the heart of the law.

Second, the Act represents an effort by conservatives to seize the ideological and political initiative in dealing with change in South Africa. By focussing on the ANC's perceived threat to United States national security, the issue of self-determination is pushed to the back burner. Furthermore, by applying a narrow definition of what comprises 'democracy', conservatives hope to deny political legitimacy to the ANC. In the process, the United States is encouraged to wed itself to unpopular 'democratic moderates', such as Buthelezi, and discredit the more legitimate and popular movements, as embodied in the ANC.

The fundamental flaw in the conservative arguments against the ANC is that they do not honestly confront the central issue of the historical consequences of an apartheid system that has blossomed, in part, due to its close relations with the United States and the West. To blame the ANC for its relations with communists and its use of violence at a time when no reasonable alternatives existed is to misplace blame. If conservatives accept the legitimacy of the struggle for freedom in South Africa, then they also have to be honest about the means available to achieve it.

32. For a more detailed account of Buthelezi's dictatorial tendencies, see Massing, 'The Chief', p. 19, and Davis, *Apartheid Rebels*, pp. 106-110.