
AZANIA

£1.50

WORKER

 No 11/12

Special Double Issue

BOYCOTT

or

COLLABORATION

in

SOUTH

AFRICA

THE AIM OF AZANIA WORKER

1. The struggle for national liberation in South Africa is a struggle against white domination and racial oppression of the majority black population. White domination and racism are inextricably woven into the economic development of capitalism in South Africa. The elimination of white domination and racism can only be completed after the disappearance of capitalism. Thus the struggle for national liberation is a combined one with the struggle for socialism.

2. The leading role in the struggle for socialism is played by the working class. In South Africa at the present time, this role belongs to the black working class in industry, mining, agriculture and the domestic service of white households. The black workers and their families constitute not only a majority of the population but are also the most oppressed and most exploited section of the population and working class in South Africa.

3. The working class can only secure its leading role in the combined struggle for national liberation and socialism through its own independent political working class organisation which expresses its specific political, economic and social demands. We thus fully support the project of creating an independent political organisation of the working class in South Africa.

4. An independent political organisation of the working class is necessary because:

(i) without an organisation of their own the workers will never in their own name and interests be able to struggle for, assume and maintain power; workers' power is a necessary condition for successful and meaningful social change that will bring an end to racism and capital-

ism and usher in a period of transition to socialism; an independent political working class organisation is the means by which the working class secures its interests and representation in any political conjuncture, now and in the future;

(ii) without an organisation of their own the workers will not be able to press within the popular and national liberation struggle the political, economic and social demands of the working class and other dominated classes: the example of many former colonial countries shows that the popular and national struggles often end by serving the interests of indigenous middle class elites rather than those of workers and other toiling classes.

5. An independent political organisation of the working class can only be created out of the political and trade union organisations and the various socialist currents which exist at the time. For this organisation to have deep roots and a mass base in the working class itself, it cannot be built in isolation from the working class and the organisations in which the workers presently find themselves, nor can it be built by any one socialist current in isolation from all others actively involved in workers' and mass struggles.

There is a need, as a step towards the building of a working class organisation, for all socialists to engage in discussion. Our journal is offered as an open medium of expression to

all socialists actively involved in struggles, and remains non-sectarian in that it will publish contributions which may not agree with our own.

6. Without a relevant theory and practice of social change the working class can have no organisation worthy of its leading role. Our journal is further offered as a forum in which socialists from all political currents within the trade unions, student and national liberation movements can contribute towards the development of a relevant theory and practice of social change, and in which they can exchange experiences and lessons drawn from present and past struggles.

7. In a world dominated by capitalism the struggle against capitalism is an international one. We cannot therefore conceive of a political organisation of the working class in South Africa in isolation from the organisations, experience and history of the working class in other countries of the world. We offer our journal as a link between the struggle in South Africa and the struggles in other countries and, to this end, extend an invitation to socialists in other parts of the world to join us in developing a relevant theory and practice of social change and share with us their experiences of struggles in a manner relevant to the workers' struggle in South Africa. In particular, we seek contributions of articles which will help in the understanding of questions such as race, class, culture, ideology, consciousness and subjectivity.

AZANIA WORKER

ISSUE No 11/12
OCTOBER 1988

Contents

	Editorial	page 3
Roseinnes Phahle	Antipathy Towards Boycott	5
A. Byrnes	Boycott and Non-collaboration	14
Sophie Mort	Communist Party Activity in 50s	22
<u>Book Reviews</u>		
Livingstone Mqotsi	An Appetite for Power	29
Sipho Nxele	Chief with a Double Agenda	34

EDITORIAL

The liberation struggle in our country is going through an acutely critical stage. The great mass movements which commanded the stage during most of the eighties have been severely affected by the repressive measures imposed by the Botha government. In the townships and in the workshops, schools and colleges, the struggle continues but the populist movements which assumed the leadership roles in the early years of the decade - especially the United Democratic Front (UDF) - are no longer able to play a visible role.

The hope, cultivated by the ANC, that the growing and increasingly militant mass movements within the country, combined with pressure from the outside world - economic sanctions, cultural and sports boycotts, etc - would have their effect in curtailing the brutalities of the apartheid state apparatus, has mani-

festly failed. All the schematic proclamations emanating from Lusaka, "people's power", "armed struggle", etc are so much water under the bridge of history. This failure to seize the moment has led the populist leaders to re-evaluate their tactics and strategies. There is a clear rift in the ranks of both the ANC and UDF between those who want to retain the politics of non-collaboration/boycott and those who want to experiment with alternative tactics and strategies. This was first raised by Archie Gumede of the UDF but it is increasingly evident that under pressure from Moscow the South African Communist Party (SACP) is exerting its influence within the ANC in this direction.

The discussions now taking place between Pretoria, Angola and Cuba (with the US State Department

playing a pivotal role) reflect on what the Gorbachev regime would like to see happen in South Africa - negotiation instead of confrontation. The Soviet government is anxious to limit its commitments in Africa. One Soviet adviser on African policy is reported to have said "Africa is in bad shape, and we certainly don't want to see the destruction of its largest and most successful economy, which is South Africa. That is why we don't want to see too much reconstruction too soon there."

A hint from Moscow is the green light to the SACP. If negotiation is to be the order of the day then the question to boycott or not to boycott apartheid's "separate" development institutions is again on the agenda.

Pragmatism as opposed to principle has always been endemic in the politics of the SACP and the ANC.

This emerges quite clearly from the article in this issue of Azania Worker by Roseinnes Phahle. He systematically dissects the tortured history of the ANC and SACP on this issue showing that they have supported boycott only when it was clear that the masses would boycott whether they did or not. In the years when the Unity Movement, albeit in a sectarian fashion, was actively propagating the boycott and non-collaboration, they were derided by the SACP and ANC.

The article also throws light on the relationship between the exiled ANC leadership and Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha with Oliver Tambo, the president of ANC, giving support to those "who are participating in this enemy imposed programme (ie Bantustans) in pursuance of patriotic objectives." That Buthelezi abandoned "patriotic objectives" for self-advancement is not the fault of the ANC leadership but they cannot escape the fact that they endorsed in principle this essay in collaboration.

A. Byrnes in her article "The Boycott, Non-collaboration and the Black Working Class in South Africa" deals with the same problem. It is clear from the evidence she produces that Gumede's sally was not a solo performance. The question of participation in the October municipal elections was high on the agenda at the Frankfurt meeting between the ANC and the white liberal opposition National Democratic Movement, though no agreement was reached.

Apart from the ritual genuflections to Lenin in the 1905 Duma, parallels have also been drawn to the policy of Sinn Fein in Ireland. This is a distortion of the real situation. In the Irish Republic, Sinn Fein recognises the Dail (parliament) and if elected would

probably take their seats. But, essentially, they use the elections as platforms for their revolutionary politics. In Northern Ireland, the situation is quite different. Sinn Fein does not recognise the legitimacy of the Westminster parliament. It fights elections but when elected do not take their seats. This is in the long tradition of the Irish national movement. Participation in the elections is a legitimate revolutionary tactic where there is universal franchise as is the case in the Irish Republic and in Northern Ireland. This is not the case in South Africa where the huge majority of the people are voteless.

Sophie Mort contributes a valuable article on the activities of the SACP and CPSA (as the SACP was formerly known) in the early fifties leading up to the founding of the Congress of the People and the launching of the Freedom Charter in 1954. The theme of boycott or participation is carried forward in her paragraphs on the white CP members of the all-white parliament in the 1950s. Non-collaboration was forced on them by expulsion of the CPMPs from parliament and the Suppression of Communism and Unlawful Organisations Acts.

We conclude with reviews on two books on Gatsha Buthelezi which throw a great deal of light on the politics of participation and collaboration.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the contributing individuals and organisations, and are not necessarily those of the Editorial Collective.

For the survival of the publications we need to regularly receive cash donations and contributions of articles. Our address is

AZANIA WORKER

BM BOX 4863

LONDON WC1N 3XX

THE ANTIPATHY TOWARDS BOYCOTT

Roseinnes Phahle

We are moving towards yet another of apartheid's phoney elections. The ruling class has mounted an expensive campaign to woo our people into participating in nationwide municipal elections.¹ What we wish to remark upon presently is the debate on whether to boycott or participate in the elections. Boycott looms very large in our struggle for national liberation, and it takes many and varied forms. Inside the country there are boycotts of schools, consumer goods or public transport. Outside the country, there is a cultural boycott of South Africa and a boycott of agricultural or manufactured goods emanating from South Africa. Our consideration now is not with any of these forms of boycott but only with the boycott of undemocratic, unrepresentative, racially segregated and powerless institutions created under statutes by South Africa's white minority government. These institutions include the Bantustans and all of them have been created by the government in pursuance of its so-called separate development policies. Within the movement for national liberation they are called dummy because of their powerlessness or sham because they do not take away real decision making powers from the white minority parliament. They do not in any way concede the minimum goals of the national liberation struggle: a vote for every one and direct representation in parliament.

The debate on the boycott of separate development institutions is not new. Every election which the white minority regime has in the past foisted upon the oppressed people in South Africa has always been accompanied by the debate on whether to boycott or participate. The debate is occasioned by the existence of a powerful element which has never been happy with the policy of boycott. That element is lodged within the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.² In a way the antipathy of some sections within these organisations to the boycott is explained by the fact that in South Africa the boycott is a tradition associated with South African trotskyism. But the way the aversion is played out is by accusing the protagonists of boycott of making a principle out of what should be a tactic, and by invoking Lenin, whose support for participation in the Duma is meant to signal that we ought to opt for participation in apartheid's sham institutions.

1. Elections set for 28 October 1988.

2. Recent interventions in favour of participation are by Steven Friedman, Tom Lodge, Ivor Sarakinsky and Mark Swilling. For references to them, see the excellent criticism of their positions by Guy Berger, "The great participation debate", *Work In Progress* No 55, August/September 1988, pp24-28.

Of course, since the 1976 Soweto Uprising support for the boycott stance in the liberation movement has grown so powerful and preponderant that both the ANC and SACP have had to go along with the popular feeling. The degree of unity achieved as a result contributed immensely to the success of the boycott whenever it was implemented. Obviously, a total and successful boycott is achievable if all the popular organisations support it. The most notable success was the boycott of the 1984 elections to the tricameral parliament.

The Black Consciousness Movement, by virtue of its obdurate opposition to participation, has been the single most important factor in securing a seemingly united front in support of the boycott policy. This view is supported by Glenn Moss:

The influence of the black consciousness position, which had as a principle plank in its programme the non-participation in state-created, ethnically separate bodies, accentuated the conventional position of progressive opposition groups - non-participation in and boycott of Bantustan administrations, Urban Bantu Councils, Coloured Representative Council, South African Indian Council and other similar bodies.³

Despite the success of recent boycott campaigns, there have been attempts to get the national liberation movement or some of its sections to adopt a policy different from that of boycott. Early this year the press reported on an ANC delegation meeting in West Germany with some white South African parliamentarians in order to discuss the possibility of participation. Shortly after its launch, in 1983, the United Democratic Front at a Special Conference held in the Eastern Cape was being urged by its anti-boycott lobby to put up candidates for the elections to the tricameral parliament. In 1979, a most determined effort was made by a group within the Natal Indian Congress, an affiliate of the UDF and member of the ANC-led Congress Alliance (when legally existent), to move away from the policy of boycott.

Debate within Natal Indian Congress

When the government tried to establish a "South African Indian Council" (SAIC) a debate was pro-

3. Glenn Moss *Work In Progress* No 10, November 1979, p2.

voked in the Natal Indian Congress on whether to boycott or participate in the accompanying elections. Glenn Moss distinguished four major positions in what he described as "a wide-ranging debate on strategy and tactics in contemporary South African politics." In 1971 the NIC had taken a decision to boycott the SAIC. But a strong though minority tendency inside the NIC, known then as the "pro-reassessment group" was seeking to reverse this position. According to Moss, they argued that

in the current state of "Indian politics", there were good tactical reasons for participating in the SAIC elections; this group suggested that a tactical advantage could be obtained for anti-apartheid forces by contesting the elections.⁴

"Tactical" appears twice in this brief quotation from the article by Moss. The word is significant because it is invariably used in all debates on the boycott by individuals and groups opposed to the boycott. The pro-reassessment group in the NIC, like its predecessors, criticised supporters of the boycott by alleging that they were making a "moral principle" of the boycott.

The pro-reassessment group suffered defeat because at the end of the debate the NIC resolved to continue the policy of boycotting the SAIC. The vice-president of the NIC and chairperson of the Natal Anti-SAIC Committee at the time, M.J. Naidoo, countered their arguments by saying that

Any participation by members of the Natal Indian Congress or their sympathisers in the forthcoming SAIC elections could cause irreparable harm and embarrassment to the sustained overseas campaign against South Africa.⁵

Other forces against SAIC

It is interesting that Naidoo should have raised the question of the SAIC boycott in the context of the international campaign to boycott South Africa. In this way he was countering the segregationist means by which the South African government uses its racially defined structures, the SAIC for example, to divide and rule on an ethnic or racial basis.

But at the time Naidoo made his statement there was already a movement gathering in momentum inside South Africa which perceived the SAIC elections not as an "Indian" but a national issue of concern to every section of the black people. Arranged to take place in the middle of October 1979 was a convention

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid, p3.

of all movements opposed to participation in the SAIC elections:

Some 200 delegates and observers representing 29 organisations, NIC, AZAPO, SACOS and COSAS gathered to launch a campaign of active boycott against the SAIC elections.⁶

However, the convention did not take place. It was postponed because of fears that Inkatha would violently disrupt the convention. One of the delegates, mistaken for Dr Nthato Motlana,⁷ was tarred and feathered by a group of people strongly believed to be members of Inkatha. Nonetheless, the array of organisations represented demonstrated the extent to which the SAIC was removed from the parochial arena of an "Indian" affair and had become the concern of all sections of the oppressed. The pro-reassessment group in a statement abandoning its support for participation must have been acknowledging the popular view when it stated:

After due consideration we firmly believe that the SAIC elections should be boycotted and in this regard we commit ourselves to the NIC programme . . . The Indian community is being subjected to divisive manoeuvres by the state to further separate the community from the other Black communities, to divert it from participation in the national democratic struggle . . .⁸

Thus began one of the most vigorous campaigns which lasted a period of two years and during which a vast number of people were mobilised against the SAIC elections. That the campaign to boycott the SAIC elections was not an "Indian only" issue was amply proved by the prominent roles which the Natal and Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committees played in other struggles which could not conceivably be stamped as the concern of "Indians" only: the anti-Republic rallies and the consumer boycotts in support of actions by some independent trade unions. On 4 November 1981, the campaign culminated in a 90 percent boycott of the SAIC elections.

The invocation of Lenin

Mention has already been made of the stock-in-trade criticism of the supporters of the boycott that they make a moral principle of boycott, or that they cannot distinguish a tactic from principle. Another point which pro-participationists invariably raise is the position of Lenin with regard to the Duma in Czarist

6. Ibid, p6.

7. At the time a member of the pro-boycott Soweto-based Committee of Ten.

8. Glenn Moss, op.cit, p6.

Russia. According to Moss, the pro-reassessment group:

In support of their (first) proposition, ie that participation in any institution does not always imply acceptance of the functions of that institution, the pro-participationists outlined a number of instances where progressive and even revolutionary forces had participated in useless bodies for tactical gain.

For example, after the failure of the 1905 revolution in Russia, the militant Social Democratic Party (which under the leadership of Lenin took state power in 1917) participated in the powerless Dumas (sham parliaments). It was argued at the time that boycotting the Dumas would distance the Party from the people, leading to the isolation of leadership from the masses.⁹

There is a presumption (in the last remark) by Moss or the pro-reassessment group that in South Africa the elections to sham bodies involve or have involved the participation of masses of the oppressed. There is also a presumption that social formations and their attendant traditions of political struggle in one country are capable of replication in another; in particular, that South Africa's racially exclusive creatures of apartheid have parallels in other countries and epochs. And that other countries have had institutions as racist and totally devoid of power as South Africa's separate development institutions.

But leaving aside these presumptions, the account by Moss (as indeed by all those who in the past have invoked Lenin to justify their participation) gives the impression that within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party the issue of boycott or participation in regard to the Duma was an unproblematical one. More specifically, Moss gives the impression that the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was unanimous on participation in the Duma. Later in this article an attempt is made to show that this was far from the case, especially among the Bolshevik faction of the RSDLP. At the moment, suffice it to say that only the Mensheviks (who were also in the RSDLP) supported from the outset participation in the Duma and that the Bolsheviks boycotted the first Duma. Thereafter, at party congresses in 1906 and 1907, Lenin was alone amongst the Bolsheviks to alter his position from one of boycott to participation in subsequent Dumas, and an overwhelming number of local Bolshevik organisations remained opposed

to participation.¹⁰

Yet it is precisely the change in position by Lenin which in South Africa has acted like a bench-mark in the arguments of all groups, from left to right, now and in the past, who have supported participation in one form or other in the sham and racially divisive statutory institutions. They have drawn attention to Lenin's flexibility and his preparedness to participate in the Duma for tactical reasons. Interestingly enough even Gatsha Buthelezi in his famous Jabulani speech, before quoting from Nelson Mandela on the same theme to lend authority to his own participation in a Bantustan, said of Dr Nthato Motlana's and the Black Consciousness Movement's support of the boycott:

the basic error in this argument lies in the fact that it regards the boycott not as a tactical weapon to be employed if and when objective conditions permit but an inflexible principle which must under no circumstances be varied.¹¹

Participation by ANC and SACP

In his study of the debate in the NIC on whether to boycott or participate in the elections to the SAIC Moss gives the impression that non-participation and boycott were "conventional position(s) of progressive opposition groups" in South Africa. The fact, as already remarked, is that boycott and non-participation are not conventional to the ANC and SACP. The pro-reassessment group itself pointed to the example of the Communist Party of South Africa which participated by putting up white candidates to stand as "Native Representatives" in an exclusively white parliament and in the 40s

put up candidates in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town for the City Council elections. In 1948 it had one of its members elected in the Cape Western seat (on an African communal roll). This Cape Western seat was thereafter won by such people as Brian Bunting, Ray Alexander (ie other members - RP) and finally by Lee Warden. Lee Warden was a member of the Congress of Democrats which was part of the Congress Alliance. It was with the **permission** of the Congress Alliance that Lee Warden took his seat in Parliament as a representative of the Cape Western Africans

10. Even when later some Bolsheviks participated in the elections to the 2nd Duma, Lenin still had difficulties because "the question of the boycott was not shelved", according to Tony Cliff, *Lenin: building the party*, Volume 1, Pluto Press, London, pp281-285.

11. Buthelezi speech delivered at an annual Inkatha rally held at Jabulani Amphitheatre, Soweto, on 21 October 1979.

9. Ibid, pp2-3.

(sic).(Emphasis added).¹²

As for the position of the ANC, the SACP historians Simons and Simons noted:

Three leaders of the Youth League, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, urged Xuma in December (1949) to accept their principles of African Nationalism, Africa for the Africans, and a boycott of segregated institutions. The first two, he replied, were consistent with the policy of Congress since its inception, but he objected to a boycott because it would **split** their ranks. The League thereupon threw its weight behind Moroka and secured his election on a boycott platform at the annual conference of Congress later in the month."¹³ (Emphasis added).

The two quotations above show how politically close to each other the Communist Party and the moderate nationalists of the ANC were on the question of participation in dummy institutions. In fact, it is inconceivable that a small and largely white Communist Party could have had its candidates win elections without the support of the ANC; and equally inconceivable that the moderate nationalists of the ANC (and Gatsha Buthelezi) would have justified their participation in Leninist terms if the words had not been put into their mouths by the Communist Party. On the collaboration of the Communists and conservatives in the ANC during the 1940s, a leading member of today's ANC, Francis Meli, remarks:

From a radical perspective, militants seek to expel the communists while conservatives defend their rights.¹⁴

The tensions which in the 40s existed in the ANC over boycott and participation, between the youthful radical nationalists and the old-guard conservative nationalists, did not last for long. By the early 50s, apart from a few individuals who re-emerged at the end of the decade as the Pan Africanist Congress, the Youth League under the leadership of Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo, had made its peace with the conservatives and communists.

According to Francis Meli:

In the early 1950s Nelson Mandela also changed and adopted together with all the Youth Leaguers, a position that there was room for everybody,

12. Cited by Glenn Moss, *op.cit.*, p3.

13. H.J. and R.E. Simons, *Class and colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, Penguin Books, 1969, p603. R.E. Simons is one and the same person as Ray Alexander, the participationist member of the SACP cited by the pro-reassessment group.

14. Francis Meli, "South Africa and the rise of African nationalism" in *The national question in South Africa*, ed. by Maria van Diepen, Zed Books, London, p72.

including communists, in the national liberation movement.¹⁵

While it is difficult to understand why any one could ever have believed that there was no room for communists in our struggle for national liberation, Meli does not spell out what accommodation Mandela and the Youth League were providing. They were surrendering a policy of boycott of the segregated institutions for a policy of participation, as instanced by the candidature of Lee Warden, etc. in these institutions. Again this shows why it is incorrect to characterise the boycott as a conventional position of the ANC and SACP. The cases, amongst many others, of the ANC's erstwhile support for Buthelezi and a speech by ANC's president Oliver Tambo in 1980 provide further evidence of their unease over a policy of boycott and their support for participation.

The ANC, Gatsha Buthelezi and "Patriotic Participation"

Those who do not favour the use of the boycott against apartheid's dummy institutions are usually in the habit of justifying their practice of participation. Either they have sought the authority of Lenin or, lately, they proclaim the "permission" of the ANC, or they do both. Thus the pro-reassessment group said of Lee Warden that "It was with the permission of the Congress Alliance that (he) took his seat in Parliament . . .".

Gatsha Buthelezi also owes his participation to the permission of the ANC. In his Jabulani speech he laid bare to his huge audience as much proof as he possibly could to authenticate the pedigree of his participationist politics. In graphic detail he illustrated the unbroken tie since his birth he enjoyed with the ANC. Distributing hundreds of photocopies of letters written to him by Mandela from Robben Island, he told the audience that

among men I consulted about whether to take up my hereditary chieftainship, were Chief A.J. Lutuli, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. They all emphasised the importance of my taking over my hereditary chieftainship in the interests of the black liberation struggle and whatever I have done in my political career has been done after discussions with people such as these.¹⁶

Gatsha Buthelezi made these and other similar statements without any repudiation from the ANC. As a matter of fact, at the time he was making these

15. *Ibid.*

16. Buthelezi speech, *op.cit.*

statements he was regularly meeting with the ANC during his many visits abroad - at the same time, inside the country, black consciousness youth were denying Buthelezi any platform among the people, even preventing him from attending the funeral of Mangaliso Sobukwe. The most momentous of these meetings was in 1979, when, shortly before he was to make the Jabulani speech, the entire National Executive Committee of the ANC led by its president met in London with the entire National Executive Committee of Inkatha led by Buthelezi. A few months later, in January 1980, Tambo expounded the ANC position on "those serving within the 'separate development' institutions". Tambo's statement is worth quoting at some length (all the emphasis is added):

We know that some of our people will have nothing whatever to do with these institutions. We know that some are participating as irretrievable traitors or fortune seekers. We also know, however, that there are some who are participating in this enemy-imposed programme in pursuance of **patriotic** objectives, believing that such participation would weaken and facilitate the destruction of these institutions from within.

Others have entered these dummy bodies to block and keep out self-confessed stooges of the regime, and to convert these institutions into platforms of struggle against the enemy rather than instruments for the implementation of the enemy's apartheid programme.

Where the united weight of active mass resistance fails to prevent the imposition of a dummy institution, public interest focuses on those who, working within this separate development institution, defend their role as one of **patriotic** participation as distinct from one which helps to condemn our people to perpetual domination.

But what constitutes **patriotic** participation in the enemy's separate development institutions or programme? We suggest: if, as a result of such participation, the development or progress of the programme is halted; if its functional capacity to serve the enemy is restricted and reduced to nil; if the masses of the people use the institution to wage mass struggles over a whole range of issues that agitate them, such as land, mass removals, citizenship rights, evictions and deportations, wages, rents and rates, prices, fares, housing, taxes and other levies, health and educational services, police harassment and brutality, unemployment, enemy soldiers thrust into our midst as teachers

and doctors to tame us for domination."¹⁷

The support albeit qualified which Tambo, in the name of the ANC, is giving here for some participationists is yet another refutation of the claim by Moss that boycott is the conventional position of all progressive liberation organisations in South Africa. Worth noting is the fact that in 1980, 9 years after the NIC had resolved to boycott separate development bodies, the ANC was still supporting some form of participation, namely, "patriotic participation".

The criteria for "patriotic participation" listed by Tambo in the last paragraph quoted above are a contradiction of what he himself calls dummy institutions. These would not be dummy institutions (or toy telephones) if they were capable of advancing the struggle for national liberation, or simply redressing any of the people's grievances he mentions. Of course, all participationists without exception have always claimed to be working for our liberation from "within the system." But what do they achieve for the people? In the period of the 40s and 50s when the Congress Alliance "permitted" its own adherents to participate in these institutions just what advances were made in the struggle for national liberation? The 75 years in which the ANC has been in existence and many of its leading members participating in all sorts of dummy bodies are known as singularly lacking in concrete advances or material gains for the oppressed people of South Africa. So in what way did or does "patriotic participation" help the people?

But more to the point: just who in 1980 was known to Tambo ("We also know" he said) and the ANC as participating in dummy institutions from patriotic considerations? It would not be hazarding a guess to say that in the eyes of the ANC the Number 1 patriotic participationist was none other than Chief Gatsha Mangosotho Buthelezi.

Tambo's statement came within months of the meeting held in London between the ANC and Inkatha Executive Committees. The ANC was under intense pressure to explain its meetings with Buthelezi and Inkatha. Inside the country the meeting was viewed with incredulity by youth and others sympathetic to the ANC, and with much criticism within Black Consciousness organisations. Only six years later, at its 1985 Consultative Conference, was the ANC able to unequivocally admit its relationship with Buthelezi and Inkatha: it had "clothed" - a word used by

17. Oliver Tambo speech delivered on 8 January 1980, "Let us rise to the occasion" in *Sechaba*, March 1980 (official organ of ANC), p9.

the ANC itself - him in its own colours. In words similar to those which Buthelezi had himself frequently used to prove that his participation in the apartheid development programme of KwaZulu had been supported by the ANC, the ANC National Executive Committee's report to conference confirmed:

we maintained regular contact with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of the KwaZulu bantustan. We sought that this former member of the ANC Youth League who had taken up his position in the KwaZulu bantustan after consultations with our leadership, should use the legal opportunities provided by the bantustan programme .. (emphasis added).¹⁸

Boycott: tactic or principle?

The reference to Lenin by South African protagonists of participation is made to draw attention to Lenin's attitude to the Duma. The Duma is likened to South Africa's separate development and dummy institutions. If Lenin could decide against the boycott of the Duma, doesn't this suggest that in South Africa we can also abandon the boycott and engage in some form of participation? In Lenin's hands, the boycott, we are told, was a tactic while the supporters of the boycott in South Africa are castigated as making a moral principle of boycott.

Undeniably, Lenin stressed the tactical nature of the boycott of the Duma, especially much later when he was strenuously arguing to get the Bolsheviks to give up the boycott. But equally important to note is that in retrospect he spoke of an **obligation** for the Bolsheviks to stop the convening of the Duma:

We were obliged to do -and did- everything in our power to prevent the convocation of a sham representative body. That is so. But since it has been convened in spite of all the party's efforts we cannot shirk the task of utilising it" (Vol 11 pp 80-81).¹⁹

At a stage when Lenin saw the boycott as an obligation he clearly could not have regarded it as a tactic. It was a matter of principle to stop the Duma from becoming a reality and, to this end, the boycott was the only possible means.

There were very particular conditions in Czarist

18. *Documents of the Second Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, Zambia, 16-23 June 1985*, published by ANC, Lusaka, p20.

19. All references to Lenin are to his *Collected Works* translated from the 4th Russian edition, and are cited by Tony Cliff, *Lenin*, op.cit. I am indebted to Cliff's book for making access to the *Collected Works* easier for me but I do not share in the idolisation which sees Lenin as making correct mistakes!

Russia which led the Bolsheviks in 1905 and 1906 to support a boycott of the Duma. In the case of Lenin, as he was to argue later (perhaps with hindsight), his support for the boycott was premised on his assumption, a mistaken one as it turned out, that the revolution of 1905 would continue and gain momentum. His support for an active boycott was inseparably linked to a revolutionary situation. Even when the Moscow Uprising of December 1905 was finally crushed, he continued to support and call for an active boycott because he believed that the defeat was only a temporary setback. In his own words:

an active boycott is unthinkable without a clear, precise and immediate slogan. Only an armed uprising can be that slogan (Vol 9 pp182-3).

At first the Mensheviks were opposed to the boycott of the Duma. But by the time of the election in April 1906 to the first Duma, they had changed their attitude and were supporting a boycott. Thus the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party came out united as a party in boycott of the elections. But there were individual members, none of them from the Bolshevik faction of the party, who defied the party line and many of them were successful in the elections. Their success, but even more than success, the fact that fourteen of them constituted themselves into a Social Democratic block when the Duma assembled, sowed the seed of change in Lenin's own attitude to the boycott:

(But) it goes without saying that, if real party Social Democrats have been elected to the Duma on really party lines, all of us, as members of a united party will do all we can to help them fulfill their arduous duties (Vol 10 pp423-4).

After the elections to the first and second Dumas, Lenin's attitude to the boycott having changed, there followed an acrimonious debate between him and the rest of the Bolsheviks. In the course of the debate, he stood alone amongst the Bolsheviks to call for participation in the Duma and the elections to it.

Soon after the first elections, the Mensheviks also changed their attitude and revived their initial position in support of participation in the Duma. Among the Bolsheviks, Lenin was alone to support them. According to Cliff

When the Stockholm Congress of the RSDLP (April/May 1906) assembled, the Menshevik delegates from Transcaucasia proposed that the party should give up its boycott and nominate candidates to the elections that were still pending.

The Bolshevik faction accused the Mensheviks of betrayal. But to their consternation they found that Lenin was the **only** Bolshevik delegate to side with the Mensheviks. In fact he ignored party discipline and voted with the Mensheviks.²⁰

Again, still according to Cliff:

After making the change in his line Lenin found himself isolated from the other Bolsheviks. At the third conference of the RSDLP in Kotka (Finland), on 21-23 July 1907, (Lenin) proposed a resolution against the boycott. **Not one Bolshevik delegate supported Lenin** (all emphasis added).²¹

Lenin was accused of betraying Bolshevism.²² He in turn paid tribute to his comrades by recognising that their opposition to participation was motivated by the best of revolutionary intentions. But he stood his ground firm, and strenuously argued that the boycott had been based upon definite political conditions and that the boycott must now be called off because those conditions no longer obtained. In the absence of the political conditions which gave rise to the boycott call, the boycott was not a correct tactic. The boycott was correct tactics

only under conditions of a sweeping, universal and rapid upswing of the revolution developing into an armed uprising, and only in connection with the ideological aims of the struggle against constitutional illusions (Vol 13 p60).

Thus very particular conditions in Czarist Russia gave birth to the boycott of the Duma and only when those conditions altered did Lenin, without the support of his comrades, adopt a position against the boycott and in favour of participation. The initial resolution to boycott the Duma was a matter of principle, an obligation as Lenin himself put it, and remained so for the Bolsheviks. In the years of the first two Dumas, the exception among them was Lenin who, when he changed his position, argued that the boycott was a tactic.

The boycott may be a matter of tactic. But it is not always used as a tactic. It all depends on the circumstances. In the particular conditions of South Africa, those organisations which have traditionally advanced the boycott have done so on the basis that the

boycott is a method of struggle.

In subsequent Dumas, it must be said, some Bolsheviks joined Lenin and did stand for election to the Duma. But they were only a faction of the Bolsheviks and those elected constituted a very tiny proportion of the total number of deputies to the Duma.

Some justification for boycott in South Africa

The manner in which Lenin's attitude to the boycott of and then participation in the Duma is appropriated for application in South Africa by sections that have difficulty with the boycott of segregated institutions is by abstraction. They employ Lenin's argument for the boycott as a tactic to support their participation on the ground of tactic. For them, the boycott is invariably a tactic whose advantage is always outweighed by participation. In this sense they, too, can be accused of making a moral principle of participation. If Lenin conceived it as a tactic in the particular conditions of Russia it does not follow that boycott in South Africa is also a tactic. We must guard against basing ourselves on abstractions from other countries and other epochs. It is after all Lenin himself who never tired of stressing that tactics and strategy must be based "on an exact appraisal of the objective situation" (Vol 26 p135) and "shaped after analysing class relations in their entirety" (Vol 26 p56); or that "there is no such thing as an abstract truth. Truth is always concrete" (Vol 9 p86) and "any abstract truth becomes an empty phrase if it is applied to any concrete situation" (Vol 7 p65).

Among the several qualifications for participation which Tambo makes, an interesting one is "where the united weight of active mass resistance fails to prevent the imposition of a dummy institution . . ." This does imply that a rejection of dummy institutions must be accompanied, initially at any rate, by a most determined effort to prevent their imposition. In the case of the Duma, Lenin spoke of an obligation to prevent its convocation. Only when this failed because of "constitutional illusions" (and the revolutionary mood waned) did Lenin adopt the tactic of participation. First boycott - obviously this is premised on the existence of the right conditions and doing everything possible to organise a boycott which must be an active boycott. Only when a boycott fails because people have illusions (Lenin) or the dummy institutions are imposed (Tambo) is consideration given to participation as a tactic. This way of posing the question seems to be correct.

20. Tony Cliff, op.cit, p250.

21. Ibid, p251.

22. In this respect of loyalty to democratic centralism, Lenin is different from other great marxists who when they had profound differences with the Party would nevertheless accept the decision of the majority as publicly binding on themselves. Notable examples are Lukacs and Althusser.

There is though some problem with Tambo's formulation - this is apart from the fact that he was saying all this in order to lend ANC support to Buthelezi. The problem is that the sham bodies in South Africa are always imposed. So, according to Tambo, participation in them would be proper because they are imposed despite the people's most determined efforts to prevent their existence. The present government even declared that it would impose the Tricameral parliament if it was totally boycotted, that is, if no one voted and no candidates came forward. Tambo's view is not based upon a consideration of all the prevailing circumstances in their entirety but upon a single factor, namely, the failure of mass resistance to prevent imposition. As mass resistance does not necessarily amount to a revolutionary upsurge, it is interesting to speculate whether mass resistance to the Duma, if there had been any, would have led Lenin to argue against the boycott!

In cases where the political conditions for a successful boycott do exist it is not incorrect to adopt a boycott. Because of South Africa's racial oppression of the majority, lack of consent by the majority to their rule by a minority and a host of other factors very peculiar to South Africa, the conditions for a successful boycott have always been present, and its primary object is to make the designs (for example, legitimation) of the rulers unattainable. But for a boycott to be successful it must be supported by all the progressive movements. Where we have had such unity, as in the years since the 1976 Soweto Uprising, our boycotts have been nearly a 100 percent successful.

There is a case then for the boycott of sham bodies in South Africa. However, in contrast to the extraordinary conditions to which Lenin linked the boycott, we cannot pretend to have ever had in South Africa anything approaching an armed uprising or a revolutionary situation with an imminent conquest of power by the liberation movements. To use Gramsci's metaphors, our wars of manoeuvre are continually being thrown back to become moments in a war of position. But we could refer to several of the crucially interrelated aspects of the South African crisis to which an active boycott is linked and continues to be pertinent. One aspect we single out for some attention is the legitimation crisis to which the South African social formation is permanently subject.

Schematically, the structural racism which inheres South Africa gives rise to a failure of the regime and all preceding regimes to legitimate themselves in the

eyes of the black majority or those who suffer disadvantage as a result of the racism. Foszia Fisher expresses a commonly held view that "the present social structure in South Africa was brought into being by conquest Exploitation resulting from conquest is unusually transparent" (emphasis added).²³ The exploitation, of course, is not transparent in the strictly marxist sense but is broadly seen as the racial exploitation of the majority by the white minority. However, the net effect of all this is to make South Africa unique amongst social formations, particularly capitalist ones, in that the majority do not suffer any illusions of a democratic polity. Sivanandan, noting that South Africa is an "exceptional capitalist social formation" refers to two superstructures, one for whites and another for black people:

The white superstructure, so to speak, accords with the economic imperatives - and is modified with changes in the level of the productive forces and of class struggle. It exhibits all the trappings of capitalist democracy and of capitalist culture (except when it comes to mixing with the blacks). For the blacks, however, there is no franchise, no representation, no rights, no liberties, no economic or social mobility, no labour movement that cannot be put down with the awesome power of the state - no nothing.²⁴

So what we have is rule without mass consent and a ruling class without legitimation. Indeed, those who, like Isaac Tabata and the Unity Movement (the so-called Trotskyists of South Africa), have over a course of many years argued for - in contrast to actively organising - a boycott of dummy bodies, based their argument upon the regime's efforts to overcome precisely the dual lack of legitimation and mass consent to rule by a minority.

In a manner of thinking very much akin to Gramsci's concept of the traditional and organic roles of intellectuals but long before Gramsci was accessible to marxism outside Italy, and in a manner certainly foreshadowing, albeit in a non-rigorous fashion, Althusser's *Ideological State Apparatuses*, Tabata wrote of "bridges" the ruling class in South Africa had to erect between itself and the conquered majority. He wrote of the "policeman-intellectual" and the "policeman-chief" the ruling class recruited among the ranks of the oppressed in order to maintain

23. Foszia Fisher, *Class, consciousness among colonised workers in South Africa* in *Change, reform and economic growth in South Africa* by Lawrence Schlemmer and Eddie Webster (eds), Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1978.

24. A. Sivanandan, "Race, class and caste in South Africa; an open letter to No Sizwe" in *Race & Class* Volume XXII Number 3 Winter 1981, Institute of Race Relations, London, p298.

the bridges which, of course, were the dummy institutions.²⁵ These bridges could not legitimate an undemocratic and racially oppressive regime unless the blacks themselves in the persons of their chiefs and intellectuals, teachers and clergy, were seen to be working them. Hence, the call to boycott them and, a phrase used by the Unity Movement, render them unworkable.²⁶

In the South African situation, an active boycott is linked to a war of position: a political and ideological struggle, in the context of the national democratic struggle, against powerless and unrepresentative institutions, that is, precisely against those means with which the ruling class seeks to generate mass consent to its rule and thereby legitimate itself. Viewed in this way, against a background of conquest, a transparent oppression, a permanent crisis of legitimation of the ruling class and a democratic struggle by the majority, the distinction between boycott as a tactic and boycott as a principle is blurred.

Therein lies one of the major differences in the concrete situations obtaining in Tsarist Russia and South Africa respectively. The Duma belonged to a realm in which the feudal mode was dominant and so the social formation at the time was dominated by ideology and religion. The belief that kings enjoyed a divine right to rule did have literal meaning.

That both the workers and peasants acknowledged the Tsar's divine right to rule - according to Lenin they "believed in the Tsar" (Vol 8 p97) - is illustrated by the fact that the revolution in whose context Lenin supported the boycott of the Duma was in its initial objective not against the Tsar. Thus the workers addressed a petition to the Tsar, "Our dear father". Tony Cliff put it this way:

The leaders of the (Russian Factory and Workshop Workers) Assembly thought that it would be a good idea to have the workers turn to the Tsar for support. The Police Department concurred with this: a few benevolent words from the throne, accompanied by some measures, however small, to ameliorate workers' conditions would be enough, they thought, to stop the movement from going to extremes and would reinforce the myth of the Tsar as the workers' friend. Thus the idea was born of a petition and a solemn procession, carrying the Tsar's portrait, holy icons and church

banners. The petition would humbly beg the Tsar for redress of the workers' grievances. Chanting prayers and hymns, the workers would, on bended knees, entrust the petition to the Tsar.²⁷

Such was the modality of the ruling ideology in feudal Russia that a petition and march along these lines were conceivable. But as a result of amendments instigated by the Mensheviks the final petition bore no resemblance to the cap in hand posture described above. Though the workers, 200 000 strong, marched peacefully to the Tsar's Winter Palace, the death toll at the end of the march was more than 1000 killed by the Tsar's troops. It was then that the priest, police-agent and workers' popular leader, Father Gapon, realised: We no longer have a Tsar. A river of blood divides the Tsar from the people.²⁸ Evaluating the events, Lenin wrote:

The working class has received a momentous lesson in civil war; the revolutionary education of the proletariat made more progress in one day than it could have made in months and years of drab, humdrum, wretched existence (Vol 8 p97).

That is, in one day, the workers learnt that the King's rule was founded on a mythical right, and his immediate downfall was demanded. That says something of the context within which the Bolsheviks supported the boycott of the Duma. But the dominant reign of the ideological instance dies hard. The workers and peasants did not answer the Bolshevik's call to boycott the Tsar's Duma.

The Duma became a reality not because it was imposed but because the workers and peasants accepted it - they suffered "constitutional illusions", Lenin said. On the contrary, in South Africa the people have not accepted the bantustans, tricameral parliament and other separate development institutions. All these have been imposed upon them.

Belief in Botha or any of his predecessors, belief in the divine right of the whites to rule, these are not characteristic of a conquered majority whose oppression is transparent, in a social formation within which an advanced capitalist mode of production is both dominant and determinant!

27. Tony Cliff, *op.cit*, p152.

28. Cited *ibid*, p153.

25. I.B. Tabata, *The Boycott as a weapon of struggle*, published by the African People's Democratic Union, Durban, 1952.

26. Whereas Lenin counterposed boycott to participation, the Unity Movement counterposed boycott to collaboration and so they argued that boycott was a practical consequence of non-collaboration with South Africa's rulers.

The Boycott, Non-collaboration and the Black Working Class in South Africa

A. Byrnes

The principle of non-collaboration and the use of the boycott as a method of struggle against South Africa's racial system have a long history, dating from the 1930s. Before 1960, organisations as diverse as the Worker's Party of South Africa (WPSA), the All-African Convention (AAC), the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) at various points adopted a position of boycotting the government's racially-constituted political institutions. The non-collaboration movement was eclipsed, along with other liberation tendencies, in the State of Emergency following Sharpville. In the mid-1970s, however, the movement revived in the general re-awakening of the liberation movement under the influence of Black Consciousness (BC). Non-collaboration became part of the struggle against the governments' granting of independent status to bantustans and its attempt to promote and coopt a black middle class which would be amenable to working within apartheid structures. In 1984 the majority of people classified Coloured and Indian rejected the government's attempt to incorporate them into its latest racial structures by boycotting elections for those bodies, and by the mid-80s, mass pressure, especially from youth, for non-collaboration with racial structures led to violent physical confrontation against presumed collaborators. A principle which in the 1950s had become associated with abstention from politics, has in the 1980s been completely turned on its head by the mass upsurge.

It is paradoxical, then, during a period when recent boycotts have been so successful in mobilising mass support, that some individuals associated with the United Democratic Front (UDF) and with white-opposition parties have been trying to open a debate on the boycott, contending that the boycott should be seen as a tactic rather than a principle. The Frankfurt meeting between the African National Congress (ANC) and the white liberal opposition National Democratic Movement (NDM) discussed the possibility of participation in the upcoming elections, the NDM being "... keen to exploit what political leverage there is to be used from electoral opportunities, even under a segregated system."¹ The progressive *Weekly Mail* has featured several articles calling for

a reassessment of the boycott tactic and suggesting that the use of boycott candidates, as in Northern Ireland, might be a useful option to explore.²

Why now?

The current attempt to open a debate on the boycott despite the popular rejection of all racial institutions, stems from the fact that the liberation movement is at a crossroads in terms of its goals, strategies and tactics. The high-profile methods that have characterized what the international press calls the anti-apartheid movement, particularly the UDF, are recognized as having been inadequate both in terms of winning reforms or pressuring the state and preventing and resisting increased state repression. The movement has moved from an offensive position in 1984 to a weakened and defensive one. Thus, as an influential political commentator writes, there is a

... realisation that the strategies and tactics of the past few years have not achieved the gains which activists confidently expected in the euphoria which preceded the second State of Emergency (which is accompanied by) ... a growing belief that the extra-parliamentary movement needs to move beyond protestand to seek new tactics if it is to survive and grow.³

What are the choices?

While participation in the upcoming elections has been rejected out of hand by most, if not all, popular organisations, this alternative has, nonetheless, received substantial media attention. People arguing for participation contend that the boycott is a tactic and that at certain periods, when the liberation movement is in a weakened state or when "extra-parliamentary" activity is severely restricted, "fighting the elections could offer extra-parliamentary groups some of the space to campaign which the Emergency has denied them ... Indeed, some argue that campaigning might offer more scope for rejecting the system than a simple boycott campaign."⁴

1. *The Independent*, 27 May 1988, p9.

2. Steven Friedman, "Has the time arrived to take Gumede seriously?," and Gerry Adams, "Participation or boycott: the view from Belfast", *Weekly Mail*, July 24-30, 1987, p14-5; Mark Swilling, "The big what if", *Weekly Mail*, Feb 26-Mar3, 1988, p4.

3. Steven Friedman, "Hotting up : the debate that is not happening", *Weekly Mail*, Feb 19, 1988, p12.

4. *Ibid.* See also Swilling op.cit.

Lenin and the Boycott

The word *boycott* "soon came into common English use and was speedily adopted by the French, Germans, Dutch and Russians."⁷ In Russia, Lenin, too, recognized the boycott as an active method of working class struggle. Yet the boycott as he conceived and practised it went beyond its original meaning in late nineteenth-century Ireland. In the pre-revolutionary conditions of Russia, where the possibility of the working class directly challenging state power became increasingly evident, boycott became a means of challenging the authority of the state.

The boycott, Lenin argued, is a specific means of struggle employed when the objective conditions make possible a choice between direct revolutionary struggle, in which the people are able to form their own representative institutions, and reformist action within the institutions created by the ruling class. The boycott is used to prevent the emergence of reformist institutions and, thereby, to prevent a popular upsurge from being diverted onto a reformist path. In other words, institutions are not boycotted merely because they are reactionary, but because they no longer serve the interest of a revolutionary working class possessing the political capacity for creating and substituting its own organs for those of the bourgeoisie. Boycott of the institutions of the old authority and the creation of new institutions is the logical expression of a revolutionary movement because it opens up the possibility of dual power. Dual power, in turn, is just one step before the actual overthrow of the old authority. In Lenin's words:

Boycott is a refusal to recognise the old regime, a refusal, of course not in words, but in deeds, i.e., it is something that finds expression not only in cries or the slogans of organisations, but in a definite movement of the mass of people, who systematically defy the laws of the old regime, systematically set up new institutions, which, though unlawful, actually exist The connection between boycott and the broad revolutionary upswing is thus obvious: boycott is the most decisive means of struggle, which rejects not the form of organisation of the given institution, but its very existence. Boycott is a declaration of open war against the old regime, a direct attack upon it. Unless there is a broad revolutionary upswing, unless there is a mass unrest which overflows, as it were, the bounds of legality, there can be no question of the boycott succeeding.⁸

7. Ibid.

8. V. I. Lenin, "Against Boycott", (1907) *Collected Works*, v. 13, p 15-49. See page 24-5. Quote p. 25. Emphasis in original.

But is the choice to participate or boycott merely a choice of tactics? Those people affirming this have offered no yardstick to help distinguish between tactical issues, methods of struggle and political principles, even though this question has bedevilled the liberation movement since the 1940s, when the call for non-collaboration and the boycott became widespread.⁵ This paper wishes to discuss the origins and development of non-collaboration and the boycott in South Africa with a view to assessing their applicability to the very changed conditions of South Africa today. It will look first at the origins of boycott in the Irish struggle, then at Lenin's argument on the boycott of the Russian Duma in 1905-07, and finally it will examine the historical development of non-collaboration and the boycott in the context of the South African liberation struggle. It will suggest that non-collaboration and the boycott need to be reassessed in light of the development of the black working class and the deepening class struggle in South Africa.

The Origin of "Boycott"

Boycott originated as a form of working class protest over economic issues. The term was derived from the name of Captain Boycott, an estate agent for an aristocratic landlord in Ireland, whose tenants were dissatisfied with their rents and thus offered rents which they felt more equitable. When Captain Boycott, in 1880, refused their rents, he

had his life threatened, his servants compelled to leave him, his fences torn down, his letters intercepted and his food supplies interfered with . . . He was hooted and mobbed in the streets, and hanged and burnt in effigy.⁶

Boycott, then, was not in origin a passive means of protest: quite to the contrary! Yet, although it often took violent forms, boycott was at that time a form of working class self-defence. It did not explicitly challenge the framework of social relations, but sought to make those relations more equitable, to ensure the survival and livelihood of the working class. Even though the working class was not making explicit political demands by boycotting, it was actively expressing its own needs through methods that broke the legal conventions of bourgeois society, and signified developing class consciousness. In this sense, the boycott, even in its early stage, was part of the road towards working class revolution.

5. A Davids, *A critical analysis of I. B. Tabata's book - The All African Convention*, Cape Town: Forum Club, 1950(?)

6. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. vol 1V, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1910, 353.

The Russian Duma, 1905-07

In 1905 Lenin and other Social-Democrats urged the boycott of the First Duma as part of their fight against the illusions that meaningful reform could be achieved through the institutions created by the monarchist constitution. In 1905, Lenin writes,

The alternatives were these: was the old authority to convene Russia's first representative institution and thereby for a time (perhaps a very brief, perhaps a fairly long time) switch the revolution to the monarchist-constitutional path, or were the people by a direct assault to sweep away - at the worst, to shake - the old regime, prevent it from switching the revolution to the monarchist-constitutional path and guarantee (also for a more or less lengthy period) the path of direct revolutionary struggle of the masses?⁹

Participation in the Duma, the Social-Democrats argued, would have diverted the revolutionary upsurge onto a reformist path. While they urged the boycott as a means of contesting the terms of struggle, the Social-Revolutionaries, by contrast, called for participation in the Duma to test its capacity for reform.

Yet by 1907, the Social-Democrats were calling for participation in the Third Duma because the defeat of the revolutionary masses destroyed their capacity for creating their own alternative institutions, without which a boycott would be meaningless. The Social-Revolutionaries argued for a boycott of the Duma on the grounds that it had proved in practice to be reactionary. The Social-Revolutionaries were fighting for the content of the institutions created by the monarchist constitution; the Social-Democrats were challenging the very framework of these institutions.¹⁰

Non-collaboration in South Africa and the Marxist struggle against class collaboration

The debate over non-collaboration and the boycott in South Africa has been marked by confusion over whether they are principles, tactics, weapons or methods of struggle. This stems from the fact that their main proponents never gave them adequate theoretical elucidation.¹¹ This confusion has opened

the way for periodic calls for participation in the state's racial dispensation.

As Alexander has pointed out, non-collaboration was influenced by the Marxist principles of the political independence of the working class in its struggle against the capitalist system.¹² By all indications, Trotsky's 1935 letter to socialists in South Africa was extremely influential in the development of the idea of non-collaboration. His letter to the WPSA was circulated and discussed amongst many of the people who later formed and led the NEUM, known for its non-collaborationist stance and its advocacy of the boycott. In his letter, Trotsky emphasized the need for an anti-imperialist movement based on the class struggle, so that the interests of the working class would not be submerged to those of a national petty-bourgeois or even bourgeois leadership. Trotsky counterposed this to the class-collaborationist popular-front approach then being pushed by the Comintern and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) as part of the anti-fascist struggle:

The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the **class struggle**. The Comintern, beginning from 1924, transformed the programme of national liberation of colonial people into an empty democratic abstraction which is elevated above the reality of the class relations. In the struggle against national oppression different classes liberate themselves (temporarily!) from material interests and become simple "anti-imperialist" forces. In order that these spiritual "forces" bravely fulfill the task assigned to them by the Comintern, they are promised, as a reward, a spiritual "national-democratic" state.¹³

Non-collaboration was an attempt to apply this perspective on class struggle on the particular conditions of South Africa. The possibility that non-collaboration could have coincided in a concrete way with an anti-class collaborationist approach lay in the fact that the huge majority of the black population was working class, comprising an urban proletariat, migrant labour and semi-proletarianized rural population. Alexander explains that:

For the Marxists in the NEUM, the policy of non-collaboration had a profound meaning in that it

9. Ibid p. 20.

10. Ibid p. 17.

11. Very little has been written on non-collaboration and the boycott by their advocates. See I B Tabata, *The boycott as a weapon of struggle*, Durban: Apdusa and London: NEUM, 1952; Sarah Mokone, "Majority rule: Some notes" in *Teachers League of South Africa*, 1982; New Unity Movement, "The ten point programme and non-collaboration" in *New Unity Movement Bulletin*, v. 1 n. 2, Aug-Sept 1987, 12-13; and "Boycott as a weapon of struggle" in *New Unity Movement Bulletin*, v. 1, n. 3, Nov-Dec 1987, 12-13

12. Neville Alexander, "Aspects of non-collaboration in the Western Cape 1943-1963" in *Azania Worker* Vol 3 No 1 (Issue No 6) February 1987, pp18-26, or in *Social Dynamics*, Vol 12, No 1, 1986, pp1-14. see p3-4.

13. *Leon Trotsky on South African Problems: Remarks on the draft thesis of the Workers Party of South Africa*, published by Workers Party of South Africa, Cape Town, 1935. No page numbers but quotes are on third page. Trotsky's letter is also available in Leon Trotsky, "Le Probleme National et les Tachesdu Parti Proletarian," (letter to WPSA, 1935) in *L Trotsky Oeuvres Janvier 1935 - Juin 1935*, intro by Pierre Broue and Michel Drefus, Paris: Inst Leon Trotsky/ Etudes et Documentation Internationales, 1979, 242-252.

represented the path by which the workers and peasants would be taught the politics of class independence. For, it should be understood that the "Non-Europeans" referred to in the name NEUM consisted of (poor and landless) peasants, rural workers, urban workers, a tiny layer of petty bourgeois and a few aspirant bourgeois individuals. By uniting the "Non-Europeans", so some of the leadership of the NEUM believed, they were forging the classical alliance between the workers and the peasants that had led to the victory in the Soviet Union and which was then being consummated successfully in China. The policy of non-collaboration was conceived of as a strategy to keep out of the politics of the national movement of the oppressed any ruling-class influence whether from the right or from the so-called Liberal left.¹⁴

The main theoretical elaboration of non-collaboration and boycott in the South African context is found in Tabata's *The Boycott as a Weapon of Struggle*. This work is informed by an analysis of the method of control used specifically by the British imperialist wing of the ruling class in South Africa. This gives the book its anti-imperialist thrust, but also explains its inadequacy in developing a class analysis of South African society proper. Tabata argued that the peculiarity of SA has rested historically on the need by the ruling capitalist class to control what was in the early twentieth century a largely rural-based labour force. The mechanism of control, he contends, has changed over time in response to new conditions created by capitalist development. Initially, control was exercised through the reconstitution of the tribal chieftainship hierarchy, i.e., the creation of a native authority system as in much of British-controlled Africa. After military conquest had been completed, and as the urbanization and movement of labour spurred by capitalism led to disintegration of tribal authority, the ruling class began to systematically incorporate the tiny black petty bourgeoisie into the new political system. It used the intellectual strata through the transmission of ideas to control the black population.¹⁵

The boycott as a method of struggle, Tabata writes, was developed in response to this evolving method of control. The divide-and-rule tactic of the ruling class was countered by the call for black unity and the rejection of racial segregation, especially in the political sphere. The call was first articulated at a na-

tional level in the 1930s with the formation of black united fronts, of which the most well known-known was the AAC. The state's attempt to persuade the majority to operate and participate in the instruments of their own oppression, with the aid of black intellectuals, was countered by the policy of non-collaboration through the means of boycott:

the Boycott is directed against those political institutions that are created for our own enslavement in the case of the political institutions, there is nothing to force us to operate the machinery, if we don't choose to do so. Those who operate it do so of their own free will. It is because the Boycott exposes this voluntary acquiescence on the part of the quisling-intellectuals that they direct their venom against it.¹⁶

In a number of respects there is a striking similarity between Lenin's conception of the boycott as a direct attack by the working class on bourgeois authority and Tabata's discussion of non-collaboration and the boycott, although there is no evidence, and it seems unlikely, that members of the WPSA read Lenin on the boycott. Compare, for example, Lenin's views with Tabata's statement that non-collaboration "...[in] its larger aspect means not only rejecting and defeating the ruler's plans for [the people's] oppression, but directing the people towards organising their own forces for a concerted struggle for liberty." Like Lenin, Tabata saw the boycott as an active method for struggle. Indeed, he wrote, "the duty of going out to the people and carefully explaining to them why they must boycott a particular institution or elections to it [is] political activity of the highest order." Moreover, Tabata continues, the boycott is well adapted to prevent the emergence of new institutions: "It is particularly applicable at those moments when the quisling are engaged in the very act of luring the people into putting the noose round their neck."¹⁷

Yet Lenin situates the boycott against the backdrop of the ebbs and flows of the class struggle, while Tabata's discussion, by contrast, lacks a conception of class movement and development. He assumes that the masses are passive until stirred to action by an outside agent: it is a political organisation, which, in raising the boycott slogan, "calls upon the people to bestir themselves, throw off their lassitude and intervene in their own fate".¹⁸

14. Alexander, op.cit,p4

15. Tabata, op.cit, p18, 25-27, quote on p19.

16. Ibid, p19.

17. Ibid. Quotes on p26-7, 24 and 23 respectively.

18. Ibid, p18.

The failure of the NEUM

It is not surprising then that the NEUM's policy of non-collaboration and its practice of the boycott failed to promote the political independence of the working class. Although Tabata notes that the boycott is only one application of non-collaboration, through the 1940s and '50s the NEUM failed to systematically develop any other practices.¹⁹ Aside from a few occasions when boycott became associated with a mass movement, non-collaboration became synonymous with the boycott, which in turn became tantamount to abstention from political action in general and working class mobilization in particular.

Part of the reason for the failure to develop a theory and praxis of non-collaboration based on class struggle that went beyond the boycott lay, as Alexander pointed out, in the class basis of the NEUM.²⁰ At that time the revolutionary potential of the black working class was not easily discernable, and instead of directly organising the working class, Trotskyist organisations, particularly in the Western Cape, competed for the support of the black intelligentsia, seeing them as the vehicle with which to penetrate the masses. Consequently, the social base of the NEUM was largely restricted to black intellectuals and the upper strata of the black proletariat, that is, urbanized, "Coloured" artisans. These elements were able to remain aloof from the daily needs and struggles of the more oppressed majority of the working class.

However, the political dominance of the black petty bourgeoisie in the NEUM must be understood not only in terms of its own internal dynamics, but in terms of the relative strength of class forces during the 1930s, '40s and '50s that led to the political dominance of the petty bourgeoisie throughout the entire liberation movement during those decades.²¹ Since the defeat and cooption of the white working class in the early 1920s, politics in South Africa has been dominated by the struggle between the state, representing the bourgeoisie, and the black population. In the 1930s the black working class was still recovering from the severe repression it had experienced in the late 1920s. Consequently, the black petty bourgeoisie led the political revival of the mid-

1930s, and the periodic upsurges by the black working class in the 1940s and '50s remained subsumed under a petty bourgeois leadership with clearly reformist and not revolutionary goals.

The back seat that the black working class took in all national liberation organisations, including the NEUM, was reflected in the theoretical inability to develop a class analysis of South Africa that explained its peculiarly racial development. For example, Tabata's analysis breaks South African society into three groups: the *herrenvolk* (master race), which ambiguously referred either to whites in general or to white supremacy in particular; a tiny black middle layer who were subject to cooptation by and collaboration with the *herrenvolk*, and finally the masses of "Non-Europeans," who were considered to be predominantly peasant in consciousness. In short, although the NEUM preached non-collaboration with the instruments of oppression, it failed to analyse in a dynamic, historical manner, the class nature of the oppressors and the class nature of the oppression.

Throughout most of this century the debate on the nature of oppression in South Africa has been posed in terms of class versus colour. This formulation reflects the historic failure by all socialist tendencies in the country to develop an explanation of the way in which class and colour have articulated. Neither the Trotskyists of the NEUM or the Fourth International Organisation of South Africa (FIOSA) nor the Communists of the CPSA developed an explanation reflecting the peculiarly racial development of South African capitalism. The CPSA/SACP has never gone beyond a mechanical linking of the "class" and "national" struggles, which are conceptualized as two separate struggles, the "colonialism of a special type" analysis, being merely an updated version of the 1928 Black Republic thesis, which itself flowed from the Stalinist conception of a two-staged revolution.²² The NEUM, by contrast, spoke about colour oppression in public and class oppression in its private, inner circle. This dichotomy reflects not merely extreme cautiousness about using radical or Marxist discourse in public, but more fundamentally, the inability to integrate, theoretically, the two forms of oppression in South Africa. Thus the NEUM was unable to develop a strategy and praxis of non-collaboration which could have conceivably acted as a

19. Ibid, p27: Alexander, op.cit.

20. Alexander, op.cit.

21. For overviews of major socio-economic and political events in the 1930s and 1940s see Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*, London: Longman, 1983, Chapter 1; and Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, eds. *The politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, London and New York: Longman, 1987, chapter 1.

22. For an introduction to the literature on the Black Republic thesis see Martin Leggassick, *Class and Nationalism in Southern African Protest: The South African Communist Party and the Native Republic 1928-34(?)*, Syracuse University, *Eastern African Studies*, XV, July 1973.

programme for mobilizing and organizing those sections of the black population with revolutionary potential. Non-collaboration, conceived as a mechanism for promoting class struggle, turned into its very opposite: it became divorced from class struggle to the point where it has come to obscure it.

The Boycott in Practice

The boycott has often been associated with abstention from mass politics and working class struggles, yet, on particular occasions, which confirm Lenin's analysis, boycott calls have mobilized mass support. The masses have energetically supported boycotts each time the government has unveiled a new racial dispensation during periods of mass upsurge. Given the alternatives of going into racial institutions or boycotting them, they have always boycotted when they have been in a position of strength. Even when they are on the defensive, they have historically continued to boycott racial institutions, but they have done so passively rather than with widespread enthusiasm.

The call to boycott was first raised in the 1930s, but it did not become a mass rallying call until 1943, with the formation of the Anti-Coloured Affairs Department (CAD). In 1930, radicals in the Western Cape ANC called for a boycott of racial institutions and in 1935 radicals in the AAC urged a boycott of the government's proposed Native Representative Council (NRC).²³ However, these calls came in a period when the mass movement was still feeling the effects of the severe political repression of the late 1920s and the Great Depression. It was not until 1935 that the mass movement began to experience some regeneration, but the political awakening of the mid-1930s was one in which the black petty bourgeoisie took the initiative, and still sought to ameliorate its social position by pressuring the government from within the system. Thus, during the 1930s, when the boycott call was first raised, the liberation movement was not yet strong enough as a **movement** to refuse to participate in government-created institutions or to put forward its own alternative institutions. Although the AAC was formed to oppose the NRC and other anti-black legislation, many of the leaders of the AAC and ANC decided on an individual basis to participate in the NRC. Within nine years, though, they themselves withdrew from the NRC, conceding its ineffectiveness in advancing the struggle for democratic rights.²⁴

By the 1940s the black working class was on the move, evidenced by increased strikes, bus boycotts and squatters' movements. The ANCYL, NEUM and the African Democratic Party (ADP) were all formed in 1943 to give leadership and direction to this popular upsurge. In this social context, and given the widespread perception of the impotence of the NRC, radicals of the New Era Fellowship in Cape Town were able to attract a large movement, under the rubric of the Anti-Cad, in response to their call to fight the whittling away of "Coloured" rights, which was seen as part of a larger attack on the rights of all blacks, and to reject the government's proposed Coloured Affairs Council (CAC).²⁵

In the Transkei, as well, the call to boycott the Rehabilitation Scheme and the NRC came at the height of a popular rural resistance movement, dating from the late 1930s, against stock-culling and other forms of government intervention. People were effectively boycotting government practices in much the same manner as the Irish had protested against the **abuses** of private landowners. Rural resistance took militant, often physical forms, as well as explicitly political forms such as rejecting representatives who supported the Rehabilitation Scheme and forming "a Vigilance Association which had 'sprung up as a check on Bunga representatives' at 'the initiative of the people themselves'".²⁶

The ANCYL's 1949 Programme of Action, which called for boycotts and other militant activity, marked a significant departure in approach from traditional ANC. Their new stance undoubtedly reflected the NRC's failure in practice as well the influence of the NEUM's continued boycott propaganda. By this time, however, the mass movement had suffered serious setbacks and was no longer on the upsurge. In 1946 the African Mineworkers' strike was severely crushed, signalling the defeat of the wave of trade union organisation that had grown during the war years. The 1948 National Party (NP) victory led the way for increasingly repressive legislation, and the NP soon disbanded the now defunct NRC.²⁷ Thus, at a practical level, the ANCYL's adoption of the boycott had little or no effect.

However, in the 1950s the liberation movement once again began to revive, and by the late 1950s all

1882-1964, vol. 2, Claremont, Cape, South Africa: David Philip and Stanford Hoover Institution Press, 1973, p10-11, 70-73.

25. *Ibid.*, p70-73.

26. Colin Bundy, "Land and liberation: popular rural protest and the national liberation movements in South Africa, 1920-1960, in Marks and Trapido, op.cit, pp254-285. See p268-269.

27. Karis and Carter, op.cit, p70-73.

23. Gavin Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, Cape Town & Johannesburg David Philip, 1987, p10.

24. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of South African Politics in South Africa*

liberation organisations were experiencing pressure from their constituencies for a more militant stance against NP repression. In this context the NEUMS 1958 boycott campaign during the first elections for the white Coloured Representatives which was in opposition to the calls for participation by the South African Coloured Peoples Organisation and the Congress Alliance, met with success when more than eighty percent of the eligible "Coloured" voters rejected this new government dispensation. In short, the boycott was a rallying call in the early to mid 1940s and again in 1958. After this it ceased to be a mobilising slogan until the 1970s struggle to prevent the independence of the bantustans. In fact, "...the execution of boycott campaigns in later years (after 1958 approximately) came to mean no more than a series of indifferently attended public meetings."²⁸

It is clear that the call for a boycott by itself has never been able to generate a mass movement when the objective conditions were absent. This does not mean that progressive organisations should call for participation if the masses have clearly opted for boycott, but they must develop a variety of methods of struggle depending on the objective conditions. It is hardly possible to mobilise a mass movement on a call to boycott institutions that the majority of people have already rejected! Yet this is precisely what the NEUM continued to do, without giving direction for any other type of political activity, and this is why the boycott has become associated with abstention, rather than being seen as a means of political education and mobilisation at particular historical junctures, as it was intended to be.

The Boycott: Tactic, Principle or Method of Struggle.

If the choice to participate or boycott is merely tactical, this implies that it is not the political framework of government created institutions that is being challenged, but rather the content of those institutions, ie. their ability to promote some degree of reform. For Lenin, the boycott was a direct challenge to the authority of those in power. Consequently, the decision to boycott was not a question of a "line of tactics" but a question of a **method** of struggle, whose applicability depended upon objective conditions. In South Africa the boycott has two dimensions. It is both a direct attack on state authority in the Leninist sense and a principled rejection of racism. While it has not been practised in a manner that

promotes recognition of the **class** nature of South African society, it has developed as a rejection of the **racial** framework of South African politics. The majority of the oppressed have rejected the government's repeated attempts to obtain their acceptance of a racial framework for over forty years, and it is not they who are raising the issue of participation. In continuing to reject participation, we are supporting the majority's right to decide the political framework in which they will participate. Thus the boycott in this context means the practice of democracy **outside** government structures.

If the government were to dismantle all racial political structures and institute direct universal franchise with a non-racial Parliament, this would clearly spark off a tremendous debate in the liberation movement. Presumably, many blacks, perhaps the majority, would want to go into such a parliament. Presumably, too, for the government to make such a major concession, one that would represent a complete break with its racial tradition, it would signify that a mammoth shift in the balance of forces had taken place. Depending on the specific conditions and particularly the strength and radicalism of the working class movement, socialists would have to assess whether to participate or continue to call for a boycott of all state initiatives, urging the people to challenge state power by forming their own governing structures. However, in present conditions, when the balance of power is clearly in favour of the state, such a scenario is unlikely, and it may in fact be impossible.

The Transformation of Non-Collaboration into Active Struggle.

Since the 1970's non-collaboration has undergone a significant transformation, due to the development of a national mass movement, principally working-class in character. BC carried on this process, started by the NEUM, of unifying blacks across the imposed ethnic/racial lines, while the rapid self-organisation of a militant black working class, together with the recognition of the governments' attempts to develop a black middle class, collaborationist stratum, pushed BC to the left, forcing it to confront the class struggle. In this period, students, youth and even children played a vanguard role, and applied non-collaboration actively by demonstrating in support of the fall of white supremacist rule in other areas of Southern Africa, protesting against the independence of the Bantustans, punishing collaborators, and developing an alternative peoples organisations.

28. Alexander, op.cit.

Nevertheless, despite the strength of the black working class in fuelling this upsurge, non-collaboration has not been practised in a manner that promotes their political interests as that section of the working class with revolutionary potential. This contradiction has sharpened in the 1980's, and particularly in the last few years, as the black working class has continued to grow from strength to strength despite all attempts to restrain it, both on the part of the state and on the part of elements in the liberation movement that have tried to stall the development of a workers' programme or charter. At the height of the upsurge in the 1984-5 period non-collaboration methods included the highly successful boycott of the tricameral Parliament and building of alternative popular structures. More ominous, though, was the rejection of presumed collaborators in ways demonstrating political anarchy. Yet none of these applications of non-collaboration has succeeded in promoting the leadership of the black working class in the liberation struggle. Non-collaboration today not only lacks class content but even obscures the class struggle when it is used to justify the suppression of political debate within the liberation movement.

The Boycott, Non-collaboration and the Black Working Class.

At this important juncture, we must recognise that while non-collaboration and the boycott are intrinsic parts of the liberation movement, there are limitations in the way they have been practised over the decades. Non-collaboration was designed to fight the subsuming of working class interests to those of the petty bourgeoisie in a context where petty bourgeois cooptation was based on accepting, promoting and working within government created racial structures. Yet it has failed to promote the political interests of the black working class. The boycott arose as a specific means of fighting racial structures, yet even at its most successful, it has never been a direct challenge to the capitalist basis of those racial institutions. The task for socialists then is to broaden non-collaboration to include not only the fight against direct collaboration with the state, but against the subsuming of working class interests to those of a reformist and nationalist leadership. Boycott propaganda must spell out the link between the racial development of capitalism in South Africa and racial politics; only when such an analysis informs the popular organisations that arise in opposition to those put forth by the government, can the boycott be a direct challenge to racial capitalism.

The principle of non-collaboration needs to be given political direction based on the actual conditions of South Africa today, which are different from conditions in the 1930s and 40s. In the 1980s, South Africa possesses an organised and militant black working class, a large proportion of which is urbanised, and sections of which have sporadically called for a programme of workers' interests, indicating a consciousness of their particular class interests as black workers. The fight against class collaboration in South Africa today means, first, developing a programme of action based upon the objective interests of the black working class, and second, forming a united front against state repression in which all progressive tendencies can work democratically.

Up to the time of the July 1987 Cosatu Conference, the possibility of developing a workers' charter was a subject of intense political discussion, and at that time it seemed that Cosatu, rather than Nactu, would play the leading role in devel-

oping such a charter. While some socialist activists feared that Cosatu's adoption of the Freedom Charter would sidetrack organised labour from developing a workers' programme of action, others believed that once the Freedom Charter was adopted, the road would be cleared for discussion of a workers' charter. Many thought that the general principles in the Freedom Charter did not preclude a socialist programme. Since Cosatu's adoption of the Freedom Charter, however, there has been virtually no discussion of developing a workers' charter. By contrast the reformist wing of the ANC has taken the political initiative with its recent unveiling of proposed constitutional guidelines which, in contrast to the Freedom Charter's ambiguity, are premised on the hope of deracialising capitalism, in clear opposition to the interests of the black working class.²⁹ Only in the past few months have there been indications that socialists are trying to re-open this debate. The development of a workers' charter by black workers would be both complementary to and a significant step beyond the boycott, in that, in addition to rejecting the institutions created by the dominant authority, the black working class would be articulating its own political demands and programme of action in opposition to both racial and deracialised capitalism.

Working class interests and a socialist project can be freely discussed and debated only in a democratic united front. Suppression of political debate and attempts by particular tendencies to proclaim hegemony obscure an understanding of the material and political conflicts of interests between the black working class and those sections of the black petty bourgeoisie that continue to stall the development of a socialist movement in the hopes of bringing about a negotiated settlement. Given the state's overwhelming military and political superiority now and in the foreseeable future, it has no need to negotiate, and, in any case, negotiations under such conditions would be at the expense of the black working class: the deracialisation of capitalism means deracialisation of the bourgeoisie, not for the working class. The first step in countering these reformist moves is to draw up a political programme that will serve as a guide for the use of boycotts as one of the many instruments to fight racial capitalism and that will promote the aspirations of the black working class.

29. John D. Battersby, "For a New South Africa, Some Plans", *The New York Times*, July 29, 1988, p4; "Building on the Freedom Charter", *Work in Progress*, No. 53, April/May 1988, p3-6.

SOME CPSA/SACP ACTIVITY IN THE EARLY 50s

Sophie Mort

Paper presented at the Eighteenth Annual Congress of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa held at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, 29 June - 2 July 1987

This essay looks at events in the early 50s in more or less chronological order, from the Suppression of Communism Act to the Congress of the People, in an attempt to show that although "communists" did have extensive influence on political organisations and events of the time, via individual involvement in these organisations, control of certain newspapers, and a presence in parliament and provincial councils, this influence was less as communists than as liberal-democrats. This paper will look firstly at the role of former members of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in the Congress movement, and the influence these individuals had on events of this period. Secondly, the paper will examine the evidence that the Communist Party went underground in 1953, later changing its name to the SACP, and produced pamphlets and the journal *African Communist* (from 1959), and recruited former members and new members.

However, this paper in no way implies that the Communist Party was functioning as a party in the 1950s, even through the Congress Alliance (as the State alleged) or as an independent (from the Alliance) political grouping. Rather, the decision, in 1953 to go underground should be understood as a denial of the Communist Party's centralist method of operation as espoused in the party's founding principles of 1921. In fact, the Communist Party gave up whatever role it had had as a vanguard party, and could be alleged to have made the final move in 1953, from its ideal as a vanguard of the working class, into a small, exclusive party whose members were in fact liberal-democrats who compromised the class basis of the CPSA/SACP in favour of what they believed was populism in the Congress Alliance.

However, this paper is not a critique of the theoretical shifts, and of the growth of stalinism, in the Communist Party. Instead, it is an attempt to show the influence of "communists" on political organisation and events of the 50s, whilst continuously doubting whether these people were living up to their party's founding principles and the Comintern's 21 points on how a Communist Party should operate. It is not for academics to make

moral judgments, only to show how a party failed to keep to its manifesto, thereby making one doubt whether such a party could even be called a Communist Party, such was its distance from class politics.

The Suppression of Communism Act

In May 1950 the Communist Party dissolved itself before the passing of the Suppression of Communism Bill on 17 July 1950. At this time there were about 2000 members of the Communist Party, although their supporters were a greater number than this. According to Edward Munger¹ the membership was divided as follows: Blacks 1200, Whites 900, Indians 250, Coloureds 150. Of these, 600 were "named" as communists by the Minister of Justice: Blacks 256, Whites 236, Indians 46, Coloureds 67.² It has been alleged that Moses Kotane, who had been general secretary of the Communist Party since 1939, was given authority by the Central Committee of the CPSA which was then based in Cape Town, to dissolve all the branches of the Communist Party and to destroy all documents. When Sam Khan, the only person to be elected to parliament on a Communist Party ticket, announced the dissolution of the CPSA in parliament on 20 June 1950, he also said that 11 records had been destroyed and all party assets liquidated.

However, the way in which the Communist Party was dissolved was to prove a central part of the States' case against Sam Khan's court challenge to the right of the Minister of Justice to appoint a liquidator to wind up the affairs of the former CPSA, as it was dissolved before the Suppression of Communism Bill became law, that it no longer exists, and that a liquidator can only be appointed for an existing organisation.³ When the case came to court in November 1950, the liquidator denied that the CPSA had dissolved and proved that in June it was still operating a bank account (at the Pretoria East branch of Barclay's Bank).⁴ The liquidator said that the CPSA was dissolved on condition the Unlawful Or-

1. E. Munger, *African Field Reports*, p. 674.

2. E. Munger, *African Field Reports*, p. 674.

3. *The Guardian*, 21 September 1950 p. 1.

4. *The Guardian*, 2 November 1950 p. 1.

ganisations Bill was passed, but this was scrapped and replaced by the Suppression of Communism Bill, which became law⁵. In this case the Judge found that the CPSA was not legally dissolved according to its constitutions since it was bound to call a national conference to dissolve itself, and he didn't know what had happened to CPSA property and money⁶. Khan's application was dismissed with costs.⁷

The Suppression of Communism Act was amended in February 1951 largely as a result of Khan's case. It redefined a communist as someone who "at any time before or after (my emphasis) the commencement of the Act" whether in South Africa or overseas, advocated or encouraged any of the objects of Communism.⁸ Other amendments allowed the Minister of Justice to expel members of parliament, senate and the provincial council, if a committee appointed by the house of assembly decides that the member is or was a communist, and a newspaper may be banned if the Minister of Justice believes it "serves mainly as a means of expressing Communist views".⁹ The amendment which broadens the definition of a "Communist" was to stem criticism of the "naming" process whereby a number of people who were no longer members of the CPSA were "named". For example, Soly Sachs (who was expelled from the CPSA in 1931) claimed that he was "named" not to combat communism but to remove him and others from leadership of the Garment Workers Union (GWU) and generally also to smash the growing trade union movement.¹⁰

Suppression under the Suppression of Communism Act

According to the Act, once one was sent a letter by the liquidators "naming" you as a communist, you had three weeks to make "representations", and if they failed, you were listed by the Minister of Justice as a communist.¹¹ Sam Khan, MP for Western Areas (African representative) and Fred Carneson, on the City Council for the same constituency, were found to be Communists by a Parliamentary Select Committee, and were expelled in mid-1952.¹²

Throughout 1950, 1951 and 1952 hundreds of people were "named", and most of them were "listed" by the Minister of Justice soon afterwards. There were also reasons a few cases where the State prosecuted speak-

ers at meetings for allegedly propagating communism. Some raids under the Suppression of Communism Act took place at *The Guardian* offices and at ANC members' homes. A number of people who were politically active although they had never been members of the CPSA were "named", such as a number of leaders of the Indian Congress.¹³ A number of listed people were also banned and ordered to resign from the political organisations to which they belonged, and prohibited from attending any political gatherings or travelling to certain parts of the country. Many of the individuals issued with such orders defied them during the Defiance Campaign.

The Minister of Justice appointed a committee in mid-1951 to investigate *The Guardian*. In an editorial, acting editor, Naomi Shapiro (standing in for Brian Bunting) said that *The Guardian* is "socialist and anti-Fascist" and seeks by all means "to advance the economic and social well-being of the working classes", and is "not the official organ of the CPSA or of any other political party".¹⁴ *The Guardian* was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in May 1952, but *The Clarion* came out the following week - on the same day, with the same editor, writers, business editor, cartoonist, address and printer. Even the size, layout and titles were the same. At this time circulation was about 35,000 in Cape Town.¹⁵ Similar editions were produced in Durban and Johannesburg. In August 1952 *The Clarion* changed its name to *People's World* as there was another paper called *The Clarion*. In November it changed to *Advance*. In April 1954 *Advance* claimed that it had a circulation of 100,000 in the Cape.¹⁶ After a police raid in September 1954 on the offices of *Advance* and the homes of its employees, most of whom were "listed" - Brian Bunting, Fred Carneson, Lionel Forman, Naomi Shapiro, Mary Butcher (all in Cape Town), Michael Harmel (Johannesburg), Jaqueline Arenstein (Durban) - it became clear that *Advance*, like *The Guardian* would soon be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act.¹⁷ A week after it was banned a paper called *New Age* appeared with the same staff and the same address, but a different publisher - previously it was the Competent Publishing and Printing Company, now it was the Roal Printing and Publishing Company (Pty) Ltd.¹⁸ Both these companies were owned by Brian Bunting. *New Age* continued until 1962. Although *New Age* was written, published and funded by members of the

5. *The Guardian*, 2 November 1950 p.1.

6. *The Guardian*, 9 November 1950 p.5.

7. *The Guardian*, 23 November 1950 p.1.

8. *The Guardian*, 15 February 1951 p.1.

9. *The Guardian*, 23 November 1951 p.1.

10. *The Guardian*, 12 October 1951 p.1.

11. *The Guardian*, 14 September 1950 p.1.

12. *The Guardian*, 8 May 1952 p.5.

13. *The Guardian*, 23 November 1950 p.1.

14. *The Guardian*, 15 February 1951 p.1.

15. *The Guardian*, 19 June 1952

16. *Advance*, 1 April 1954 p.1.

17. *Advance*, 2 September 1954, 21 October 1954, p.1

18. *New Age*, 28 October 1954.

SACP, it cannot be described as “a Communist paper”, instead it advocated the liberal-democratic values of the Congress Alliance.

Brian Bunting, the editor of this series of newspapers, stood for parliament in November 1952 in the seat which Sam Khan had been forced to resign. Like Sam Khan, he was expelled from parliament after a select committee found he had “advocated, defended and encouraged the achievement of the objects of communism” in October 1953.¹⁹ Ray Alexander, a former member of the CPSA and secretary of the Food and Canning Worker’s Union then stood for the same seat (Native representative in the Western Areas), but the Suppression of Communism Act was amended so that Alexander could not take up her seat as she was named Communist, and thereby “incapable of being chosen as a member of the House of Assembly”, according to the Minister of Justice.²⁰ The 1954 Amendment made it an offence for the writings of speeches of banned persons to be recorded, published or disseminated in any manner except with the Minister’s approval. Len Lee-Warden then stood for parliament in this constituency in December 1954, and represented black voters in Cape Town until 1960 when all African representatives were removed. Although he was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, he was not “listed”, so he could not be expelled from parliament.²¹ Lee-Warden was also vice-President of Congress of Democrats (COD) and involved in the Treason Trial of 1956-61.

Growth of progressive organisations

1952 was highlighted by the Defiance Campaign which began on June 26. A number of ANC leaders, such as Kotane and Moroka defied their banning orders to lead groups of up to 3000 people in various campaigns against unjust laws. The Joint Planning Council of the campaign was Maroka (chair), Sisulu, Marks, Dadoo and Cachalia. Marks and Dadoo were former “communists”. The Suppression of Communism Act was used to weaken the two organisations leading the campaign: the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC); various orders forced leaders such as Dadoo, Kotane, Marks, Bopape and Ngwevlatoresign from their positions in organisations, and restricting their political activities and their freedom to travel in South Africa. A number of participants in the Defence Campaign were given suspended sentences under the Suppression of Communism Act. In this way, the Suppression of Communism Act helped to lay the founda-

tions of a new sense of defiance and solidarity across racial barriers. In many ways the Congress Alliance was the result of repression under the Suppression of Communism Act, and also the multi-racial populism of the Defiance Campaign.

The origin of the Congress of Democrats is well documented in *Advance*. The COD arose from a need for a “progressive” white organisation during the Defiance Campaign. Two hundred white democrats met Sisulu, Tambo and Cachalia in November 1952 and agreed to form an organisation to:

- 1) expose the evils of discrimination and the colour bar;
- 2) mobilise support of the greatest number of people for the abolition of all discriminatory laws and practices;
- 3) stand for equal political rights and economic opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of race, colour and sex;
- 4) win for all South Africans the freedom of speech, assembly, movement and organisation²².

As a result of this meeting the South African People’s Congress (later COD) was formed in Johannesburg in January 1953.²³ Most white members of the CPSA became members of COD, and more “left wing” activists in COD were recruited into the SACP in the late 50s and early 60s, according to evidence from the Rivaria and Fischer trials. However, this in no way implies that COD was a “communist front” as the state alleged, or that the SACP operated through COD; rather most of the members of COD saw themselves as liberal-democrats, and many were anti-communist.

In July 1953 the Democratic League was formed in Cape Town, with Len Lee-Warden as chairman. Its constitution was based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and sought to extend the franchise to all adults.²⁴ In October 1953 a conference of all white democrats was held, sponsored by COD (Johannesburg), the Springbok Legion and the Democratic League (Cape Town).²⁵ Similar bodies attended from Durban and Port Elizabeth. ANC, SAIC and SACPO delegations, were also present. Thus 88 delegates established the South African Congress of Democrats, which was to operate in the white constituency.²⁶ Piet Beylveld was elected president, Len Lee-Warden vice-president and Jack Hodgson, secretary.²⁷ COD

22. *Advance*, 27 November 1952, p.1.

23. *Advance*, 22 January 1953, p.5.

24. *Advance*, 24 September 1953, p.3.

25. *Advance*, 8 October 1953, p.1.

26. *Advance*, 15 October 1953, p.1.

27. *Advance*, 15 October 1953, p.1.

19. *Advance*, 1 April 1954 p.1.

20. *Advance*, 2 September 1954, 21 October 1954, p.1.

21. *New Age*, 4 November 1954, p.1, 16 December 1954, p.1.

membership peaked at 500 and decreased to 350 after the Treason Trial, according to Beyleveld.²⁸ Therefore COD was a small movement but it was influential because of its connections with the other congresses, and because its members had been involved in political and union activity for a long time, in some cases since the 30s.

The fourth congress, South African Coloured People's Congress (SACPO), was founded in September 1953 in Cape Town. The office holders were Edgar Deane, R. van der Ross, S. Rahim, Reg September and John Gomas. Other organisations founded in the early 50s were the South African Peace Council and the Liberal Party. The South African Peace Council was launched in August 1953 in Johannesburg from the regional Peace Councils which had been founded since 1950.²⁹ These Peace Councils were the result of the Cold War and they tended to sympathise with the Soviet Union. The Liberal Party was formed in May 1953 with Margaret Ballanger as president, Leo Marquard and Alan Paton vice-presidents, Dr. O. D. Wollheim national chairman, and Leslie Rubin was vice-chairman. Another progressive organisation operating at this time was the Springbok Legion of ex-servicemen, many of whom went into COD.

The Congress Alliance

In November 1953 Chief Luthuli made the first call for a multi-racial front, which was formed in March 1954 from a working alliance between the four congresses: the ANC, SAIC, SACPO and SACOD and was called the Congress Alliance.³⁰ In August 1953 at the ANC Cape Conference, Professor ZK Matthews brought up the idea of a Congress of the People to work out a Freedom Charter.³¹ In March 1954 the first meeting was held of leaders of the ANC, SAIC, SACOD and SACRO, organised by the ANC, to plan the Congress of the People.³² This was the beginning of the Congress Alliance. According to *Advance* "a campaign to form local people's convention committees in every suburb and township, every village and reserve in cities and rural areas throughout the length and breadth of the Union, will begin immediately. The first task of the local committees will be to hold public meetings to discuss the drafting of the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter will not be submitted, even in draft form, by the leaders. The charter will emerge from countless discussions among the people themselves. It will truly be, in every sense of the word, the Charter of the ordi-

nary man and woman."³³ In April 1954, Sisulu announced a general election "to elect people's representatives to a Congress of the People". In May, the executives of the ANC, SAIC, and COD drew up a document "Let us speak together of freedom". This is the way the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter were envisaged: a result of democracy, of mass support for the Congress Alliance and a strengthening of the resistance movement.

However, the first draft of the Charter was in fact drawn up by Moses Kotane who was general secretary of the CPSA from 1939 to 1950, and of the SACP from 1953 to 1970, and who was also on the national executive committee of the ANC from 1945 to 1952. In an article in *Advance* in May 1954, he described what should be in the Charter. He wrote: "The people must proclaim through the Freedom Charter their demands:

- o that freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom of association and freedom of assembly be guaranteed:
- o that the rich farmlands of South Africa be shared among their rightful owners - those who plough them and water them with their sweat:
- o that the big mining and other monopoly-owned industries of our country become the property of the people:
- o that the working people be guaranteed by law their right of free, recognised trade unions, wages sufficient for a civilised life, leisure and social security in sickness, unemployment and old age:
- o that urgent steps be taken to provide houses for the homeless, schools for the children and hospitals for the sick, without discrimination."³⁴

The parallels between this draft and the Freedom Charter are clear, and one must note that this was written and widely read before any demands had been made. The Kotane articles, including the one from which the above excerpt was taken, were later published in a 16-page booklet called *South Africa's Way Forward*, which was widely distributed.

In March 1954, a National Action Council was formed from the executives of the ANC, SAIC, SACPO and the COD. The chairman of the council was Luthuli, but he was banned in July and restricted to Stanger, north of Durban, so he did not play an important role in organising the Congress of the People or drawing up the Charter. The other members of this council were Sisulu, who was replaced by Tambo when Sisulu was banned, Cachalia, Lionel Bernstein, who was replaced by

33. *Advance*, 25 March 1954, p.1.

34. *Advance*, 13 May 1954, p.5.

28. E. Munger, *African Field Reports*, p.653.

29. *Advance*, 30 July 1953, p.1.

30. *Advance*, 5 November 1953.

31. *Advance*, 14 January 1954, p.1.

32. *Advance*, 25 March 1954, p.1.

Slovo when he was banned, and Stanley Lollan.³⁵ Thus the chairman was the ANC president and the four others on the executive represented the four sponsoring organisations. The July 1954 launch of the Congress of the People was attended by 1200 delegates, and in the same month the ANC, SAIC and COD issued a joint call for 50,000 volunteers to propagate the plan for the Congress of the People. In August individuals and group representatives were invited to gather grievances and demands and to send them to the National Action Council for incorporation in the Freedom Charter.³⁶

Volunteers soon began signing up at various meetings as the first stage of the campaign included making its aims known and understood throughout the country, to recruit 5000 volunteers, to set up provincial committees and to arrange the venue and to issue leaflets, pamphlets and posters. The second aim was for the provincial committees to establish local committees (at least 2000 of them) together with written demands for inclusion in the Charter, to plan the election of delegates, to bring the number of volunteers to 50,000 and to give the volunteers lectures on the Congress of the People. The third aim was to convene the Congress, draw up a draft of the Charter, and to plan follow-up activities to popularise the Charter.³⁷ This plan, however, soon appeared too grandiose; the provincial committees did not succeed in establishing significant number of local committees, least of all 2000 of them; the number of volunteers was far fewer than expected; fewer delegates were present at Kliptown than was anticipated; and plans to popularise the Charter were inhibited by the treason trial of 1956-61 when the leaders of the Congress Alliance found their political activities restricted by the trial.

The demands for inclusion in the Charter were to be sent to the National Action Council (NAC) by 15 March 1955. From March to June 1955 *New Age* ran a series of articles on the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, explaining their significance in South African history, and how people were to send delegates and demands. A number of demands were published each week. Many of these were about local issues such as sport and recreational activities (in a specific area) and social conditions, like housing, rents, wages and passes. Some people did demand broader political exchanges and describe a vision of the South Africa they would like to live in.

Clearly the Congress of the People did not develop at it

was intended. In May 1955 Luthuli said that, at the Congress of the People, "we shall re-dedicate ourselves to the struggle for freedom in that great assembly of the people, where we shall write (my emphasis) a charter of freedom".³⁸ For him there was clearly going to be debate and discussion at the Congress of the People; delegates were going to the Congress to participate in the writing of the charter and not just to ratify a draft of the Charter which had been drawn up by a small group of people. In contrast, a draft resolution by COD of a COD statement to be read out at the Congress of the People, discusses the Freedom Charter, indicating that the writers of this resolution had already seen the draft of the Charter and that it was not open to change or debate.³⁹ In the March 1955 edition of *Liberation*, a journal with a distribution of a few hundred mostly among the leadership of the Congress movement, an editorial (the editors were Dan Tloome and Michael Harmel, both active in the SACP) on the Congress of the People says that it is not difficult (my emphasis) to know what will be in the Charter, as "the demands, everyone, reject the hated principles of apartheid and the colour bar, and speak up for a conception of freedom and human rights broad enough to include everyone in South Africa, of whatever race, colour or creed. They speak out for the simple things that all men need - food and houses and land and jobs. And for the right to secure these needs: votes, education, equality of opportunity."⁴⁰ This seems to imply that the author knew what the Charter would contain.

A small group from the National Action Council drew up the Charter between April and June 1955 in Johannesburg. Tom Lodge notes that the poetic style of the Charter was probably the influence of Lionel Bernstein, one of the drafters, and a leading member of COD who was listed in 1962.⁴¹ The committee which drew up the Charter may have consisted of Bernstein, Slovo, Dadoo, Tambo, Cachalia, Mandela and possibly Turok, but this is a personal hypothesis based on a list of national leaders of the four congresses who lived in Johannesburg.

The draft of the Charter was discussed by Sisulu, Mandela and Joe Matthews on 22 June and by some members of the ANC National Executive Committee on 25 June. It is not known whether the Charter was subsequently altered. Two thousand eight hundred and eighty four delegates attended the Congress of the People, as well as representatives from the Liberal

35. Karis and Carter, Vol. 3 p. 58.

36. *Advance*, 12 August 1954, p. 1.

37. *Advance*, 2 September 1954, p. 1.

38. *New Age*, 19 May 1955, p. 1.

39. Karis and Carter, microfilm, COD file.

40. *Liberation* No 11, 1955.

41. T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 71.

Party and the Labour Party as observers.⁴² The agenda of the Charter at the Congress was as follows: eight minutes to put forward the demand, two minutes for interpretation and thirty minutes for public discussion, which the record shows was actually speeches by delegates, most of which are not recorded as they weren't in English.⁴³ All the demands were adopted unanimously by the delegates. The number of COD speakers (Turok, Bunting, Beyleveld, Joseph, Press) and of 18 speakers. It is clear from the record of the Congress that its role was merely to ratify the Charter which had been drawn up by a committee in which COD members were prominent. Tom Lodge says that it is "true that the formulation of the Charter included only a limited amount of consultation; certainly popular demands were canvassed but the ultimate form the document assumed was decided by a small committee and there were no subsequent attempts to alter it in the light of wider discussion. The forum provided by the Congress of the People was scarcely suited to any kind of debate."⁴⁴ The Charter was adopted by the ANC after much debate at an ANC conference nine months later.

This section on the Congress of the People was not intended to de-bunk the populist myth of the Congress Alliance as many authors have tried to do - rather it was an attempt to show the prominence of SACP members in the Congress Alliance, and to show the liberal-democratic values the "communists" embodied at this time. Thus, the influence of SACP members on the Congress Alliance was as liberal-democrats and as individuals, rather than as communists operating from a Communist Party. Most of the members of the CPSA were actively involved in the Congress Alliance, but this in no way compromised the democratic, humanistic nationalism of the Congress Alliance.

The SACP in the 1950s

The evidence of the SACP's underground existence in the 50s is the court record of the Fisher trial and other treason trials of the 60s. In a July 1960 pamphlet issued by the SACP called "Who will they ban next?", the pamphlet says that "the people of South Africa know that the Communists have never stopped fighting for freedom and human rights for all in our country ... (the CPSA) was dissolved, but most of its members carried on with the struggle for the interests and needs of the people as they had always done."⁴⁵ The pamphlet went on to praise the Congress Alliance: "We communists pledge ourselves to work loyally and coura-

geously with democratic South Africans of all political views to destroy racialism and colour bars. Let us unite in the great fight for freedom and democracy, to win for every single person in our land."⁴⁶

In the September 1960 edition of *Inkululeko* this pamphlet was discussed. Thousands of copies were distributed on 14 July in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and other centres. There is also an interview with a member of the SACP who explains the two-stage theory: the SACP's immediate task was the abolition of white supremacy and "in this task the workers should join with other progressive forces and classes in building a national united front for democracy."⁴⁷ One question asked of the SACP member "Wasn't the timing of your party's emergence ill-advised in view of the State of Emergency?" implies renewed or greater underground activity in 1960.

A 1961 SACP pamphlet called *The Story of the Communist Party* claims that in "the defiance campaign, the Congress of the People, the movement against passes, the bus boycotts, the Treason Trial, the Maritzburg Conference and many another stirring chapter of South African history, the communists have played a full and exemplary part."⁴⁸ This does not imply that the CPSA/SACP was operating as a party in these events - only that former or present members of the party played a prominent role. The pamphlet goes on to say that the CPSA dissolved, but a new party, the SACP "has grown up in its place to carry on with the struggle and carry it on to victory."⁴⁹ It goes on to describe the two-stage theory and a call for a National Convention to draw up a new Constitution, and calls on people to join the organisations like trade unions and to build up the underground ANC and to support the SACP.⁵⁰ A third SACP pamphlet "for higher wages, land, freedom and equality" appeared later that year (1961).⁵¹ Amy Thornton, a COD member, said in an interview in June 1987, that members of COD were aware that the CPSA was operating underground in the 50s as pamphlets came out, but they did not speculate on which individuals in COD or other congresses were "communists" and/or operating in the SACP.

In his evidence in the Fisher trial when he turned State witness, Beyleveld said that he was recruited into the SACP in 1956. Munger wrote that a section of the CPSA wanted an underground Communist Party, and its headquarters were moved from Cape Town to Johan-

46. SACP pamphlet, p.2, 1960, Karis and Carter, microfilm, CPSA file.

47. *Inkululeko*, September 1960, p.6.

48. SACP pamphlet, p.1, 1960, Karis and Carter, microfilm, CPSA file.

49. SACP pamphlet, p.1, 1960, Karis and Carter, microfilm, CPSA FILE.

50. SACP pamphlet, p.2, 1960, Karis and Carter, microfilm, CPSA file.

51. Karis and Carter, microfilm, CPSA file.

42. Karis and Carter, Vol.3 p.60.

43. Karis and Carter, microfilm, *Congress of the People* file.

44. T.Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p.72.

45. SACP pamphlet, p.2, 1960, Karis and Carter, microfilm, CPSA file.

nesburg when it went underground.⁵² The *African Communist* was produced by Michael Harmel from October 1959 which implies renewed activity. Tom Lodge claims that only in 1960 did the SACP begin to reconstruct itself as a separate and distinct political force⁵³, but there is evidence from the trials of the 60s that members were recruited from the CPSA and new members in the 1950s. It is probable though that it was an informal grouping from 1953 to 1959, and only began to use the name, SACP, in 1959.

This paper is work in progress and the conclusions are tentative, but it does seem as if the SACP only reconstituted itself as a separate, independent political group in 1959-60, and it did so in Johannesburg mainly. It is apparent that individual "communists" did have extensive influence on political organisations and events of the 50s, but that the extent of this influence was less as communists and more as liberal-democrats, and that these individuals compromised the CPSA/SACP's theory of class politics in their movement towards "populism". Individuals from the CPSA/SACP became so submerged in the Congress Alliance that they lost any conception they may have had of the role of a communist party as working class leadership, of the centralist method of operation and a vanguard of the working class. Perhaps this paper goes some way in proving the old adage that the State calls the liberals communists, but in fact the communists are liberals.

52. E. Munger, *African Field Reports*, p.680.

53. T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p.87.

A Selected Bibliography

- Advance* newspaper Nov 52 - Oct 54.
 Carter and Karis, microfilm, *Congress of the People file*.
 Carter and Karis, microfilm, *CPSA file*.
 Carter and Karis, microfilm, *Freedom*.
 Carter and Karis, microfilm, *Inkululeko*.
The Clarion newspaper May 52 - Aug 52.
Contact.
Fighting Talk.
 L. Forman and S. Sachs, *SA Treason Trial*.
The Guardian (Southern edition) newspaper 1950 - May 52.
 Karis and Carter, *From Protest to Challenge Documents 1882-1962*, Volumes 2 & 3.
Liberation.
 T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*.
 E. Munger, *African Field Reports*.
New Age newspaper Oct 54 - 1962.
People's World newspaper Aug 52 - Nov 52.
 E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*.
The Spark.
 R. Suttner, "The Freedom Charter - The People's Charter in the nineteen-eighties", *The 26th T.B. Davie Memorial Lecture, University of Cape Town, 26 September 1984*.
 Suttner and Cronin, *30 Years of the Freedom Charter*.
The Torch.

Subscription rates to AZANIA WORKER

United Kingdom and Eire

Individuals £4.00

Institutions 6.00

Europe

Individuals 6.00

Institutions 9.00

Rest of the World

Individuals 10.00

Institutions 15.00

Special rates on application to South African students abroad and unemployed South African freedom fighters in exile.

If possible please arrange to pay your subscription in sterling or US dollars to

AZANIA WORKER
BM BOX 4863
LONDON WC1N 3XX

An Appetite for Power Buthelezi's Inkatha and South Africa

BOOK REVIEW

by Gerhard Mare and Georgina Hamilton
Ravan Press/Indiana University Press

What clearly distinguishes Gatsha Buthelezi from other collaborators and bantustan operatives is that not only does he function within the structures created by the apartheid regime for the continued enslavement of the African people, but also does so with unequalled zeal and in addition takes initiatives of his own in order to render that system even more effective. In addition, he is an active agent in the global conspiracy against the struggles of the South African oppressed peoples. Internationally he is feverishly involved in the propagation of apartheid, promotion of his initiatives and the condemnation of those individuals and groups that are opposed to a system that has launched him into prominence. As he himself boasts, the "exposure, so far as the international scene is concerned for me personally, is much more than that of any other Homeland leader."

Indeed, his exposure to the media in South Africa itself is unique. And it is the image of a moderate, anti-communist, pro-capitalist Zulu leader that is his passport to the international scene. In the words of the writers: "In addition to growing veneration by South Africa's media and promotion by the Government, Buthelezi has received much favourable attention from Western governments, notably those of the USA, the UK and West Germany."

Whilst projecting a picture of himself as a freedom fighter (Reagan also calls his Contra friends in Nicaragua as well as Savimbi freedom-fighters) he has consistently allied himself with right-wing and reactionary forces in South Africa and abroad and has often expressed his admiration for Margaret Thatcher, Reagan and others of the same persuasion, including South African agents of terror. General Coetzee was an ex-spy-master and police commissioner. Of him Buthelezi said: "I have never hidden the fact that I have a high regard for General Johann Coetzee both as the highest officer in the South African Police Force and as a fellow South African."

In alliance with the central police state he has put himself and his army of bantustan police and Inkatha vigilantes in the forefront in the suppression of the "politics of intimidation", that is, the politics of the liberation movement. Hence his fervent appeal to South Africa's Law and Order Minister, A.J. Flok, for more and drastic police functions, to put them (that is, the surrogates of the South African regime) "in a position where we can better defend that which so badly needs to be defended . . . I sincerely hope that the South African Government will not continue to tie my hands at the level of my leadership (as KwaZulu bantustan Minister of Police) simply because I am opposed to apartheid."

Having been granted this request to help make the system of apartheid work even more efficiently, Buthelezi promptly grasped and used the power to stop and search "suspects" without a warrant and detain them for up to 90 days without trial. The already vicious Natal Code of Native Laws was amended to speed up deportation of "disobedient people" in order to maintain law and order in KwaZulu bantustan; enable imposition of heavy fines with corporal punishment recommended for those too poor to pay the fines, and forced labour for the unemployed.

As a reward for these valuable services to the central police state, Buthelezi demands to be paid, "to maintain a dignified standard which becomes our position and status."

That status also enables him to proceed to regiment and control by legislative fiat all those employed in any section of the KwaZulu bantustan public service. They have to swear an oath of allegiance to this bantustan, a creature of apartheid. This oath of loyalty extends to the personnel of the bantustan as well - "the chief minister (Buthelezi), the cabinet, Ministers of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and all

persons in authority in the KwaZulu Government service."

These totalitarian devices are clearly inspired by Buthelezi's admiration for similar draconian measures employed by the central state, of which his is merely a reflection in miniature, against its political opponents.

It is a grotesque situation and the writers have evidently captured its enormity when they say: "This is an oath of loyalty to a bantustan government, created under the apartheid policy in which Buthelezi has claimed he is participating under duress and purely as a strategy."

They also rightly castigate Buthelezi's supporters for their hypocrisy. These supporters are silent about the involvement of Inkatha members in violence against opponents of the state. Instead Buthelezi is praised "for his support for capitalism", his "Christianity", and his "moderation".

The writers conclude that "this support also implicitly extends to the ethnic belligerence that characterises an increasing number of speeches by Buthelezi and King Goodwill, under the banner of 'Zulu Renaissance' and the revival of the 'Zulu Nation'".

The roots of Buthelezi's political life lie in the apartheid system. He got his baptism in the two years he served in the Native Affairs Department to "wipe out" the two years of association with the African National Congress Youth League at Fort Hare University. It was in response to the architect of apartheid, Dr. Eiselen himself, the Secretary for Bantu Administration, that Buthelezi undertook his period of apprenticeship. On the 6th September, 1957, Buthelezi qualified and was duly installed a bantu chief.

This period was characterised by the people's resistance against the imposition of the Bantu Authorities Act by the apartheid state. As a consequence the countryside in the whole of South Africa, including Zululand, was in a state of ferment. Buthelezi was naturally uncomfortable with this situation. His contribution to this repressive measure was to suggest that its acceptance should be made compulsory "like Bantu Education and other Acts of Parliament."

He assured the authorities that he was a loyal subject who was opposed to communism and was keen to collaborate. Essentially they (the Zulu people) had co-operated "as loyal subjects with whatever

government...(was) in power." But in his view the government was not speedy enough in resuscitating tribalism. "We cannot be expected," he complained, "to move towards self-determination and self-realization at ox-wagon pace."

The present Inkatha movement, of which Gatsha Buthelezi is leader, continues the tradition of the 1928 organisation enshrined in the constitution that was drawn up by J.H. Nicholson at the instigation of George Heaton Nicholls, a member of the Native Affairs Commission (See their apartheid blueprint 1936). The document according to the writers "ensured that the interests of the conservative African petty bourgeoisie and tribal elites were firmly entrenched in Inkatha." The organisation itself was backed by whites, many from agriculture and mining backgrounds. And it came into existence partly to serve as a counter to the rising strength of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU).

The present Inkatha has declared war on the COSATU complex of workers' organisations and is backed by the same interests as the original body. In addition it has the support of some academics, the press, white political personalities and parties. No wonder Buthelezi extols the virtues of labouring in the mines of white South Africa when he acts as recruiting agent in his region: "I have thought of it, that such work situations with their heavy demands on discipline and endurance are a far better training ground than any of the so-called guerrilla camps outside the country in making us men among men."

The writers conclude that "the tradition of the founding 'founding fathers' of the ANC and of the first Inkatha to which the contemporary Inkatha appeals is a conservative tradition with strong elements of anti-popular and anti-worker rhetoric and action." Buthelezi prides himself on being "a politician of the marketplace."

Buthelezi's Inkatha explicitly serves the interests of capital. It pleads at the door of capital to share some of the spoils that accrue to the participants. Buthelezi now as in 1957 wants to be used: "My ability lies in my following." The authorities must pay due regard to his ambition and try to meet "the middle-class tendencies" of the Inkatha members. Indeed, the Secretary-General of Inkatha, Oscar Dhlomo, puts the matter beyond any doubt, and he should know: "I believe that what Inkatha would like to see happening is the overhaul of the free enterprise system aimed at ensuring that black people have equal access and that they derive equal benefit from the

system.”

Buthelezi hopes to eat his cake and have it; to be involved in bantustan politics in a leading role and yet also play a leading part in national politics - his “short-term day-to-day goals and long term goals.”

It is in an attempt to reconcile these two conflicting roles and objectives that Buthelezi shows the contradictions, not only in his own logic, but also in his personality - the writers’ focal point in this superb study of a maverick and eclectic character. They state their aim in these terms: “This book is primarily an examination of the way Buthelezi projects and sells himself and his movement, and of how they have acted and responded to the competitive terrain of South African politics over the past decade.”

Gatsha Buthelezi relies heavily upon his selective memory of the tradition of the African National Congress, especially as it relates to the position of the “founding fathers” of that organisation; on his ethnic association with some of these personages, and also on his “voluntary association” with some of the present leaders of the ANC whose names matter to him in the promotion of his freedom-fighter image. This he does in order to achieve, broadly, two things: first, to cast Inkatha in the role of a freedom movement and secondly, to justify his collaboration with the oppressor, and, specifically, to operate these institutions that have been created for the oppression of the African people. He claims that Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the “great founding father of the ANC” was his uncle and that he was close to him. Then there was J. Dube, first president of the ANC who later became a member of the Native Representative Council along with Albert Luthuli, the last legitimate President of the ANC according to him. There was also the Rev. S. Mahabane another president of the ANC. The Secretary-General of the ANC, the Rev. James Calata was also a member of the NRC as were Professor Z.K. Mathews and Dr. Xuma. This is an impressive array of people, leaders in the mainstream of ANC politics, that Buthelezi identifies himself with. To make his case even stronger he claims that his present participation in bantustan politics had the approval of people like Chief Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, his erstwhile colleagues in the authentic ANC. And he avers: “Thus both by heredity and by voluntary association, I was steeped in the struggle for liberation.”

The tradition thus invoked suits Buthelezi very well.

That is why it must stop at 1960 when the ANC was banned and then had to operate underground and later embrace the legitimacy of armed struggle. But even so he does not cut off links with the “external mission” immediately until he is offended personally in 1979/80. The birth of the United Democratic Front, which he perceived as a threat to him and a “surrogate” of “the ANC in exile” deepened his hostility to “the mission in exile.” He now had to fight the enemy right at home. His “constituency” was threatened; the tradition that informed his political behavior was in jeopardy. But true to his double-speak and “double agenda” tactics and strategy Buthelezi does not entirely shut the door behind him. Thus as late as 1984 he claims that even though he no longer briefs Oliver Tambo directly he still has contacts with some of his colleagues.

This claim should not be dismissed lightly. In the past such contacts have served his strategic objectives. He has used them to bolster his image as well as to confound his pro-ANC adversaries as he did with Dr. Motlana who, after Buthelezi had adduced irrefutable evidence of concert and collusion with the ANC, had to apologise for daring to impugn Buthelezi’s integrity by suggesting that he was an imposter when he claimed that he was doing all he did with the authority and knowledge of the ANC.

Indeed, until the ANC comes clean on the question of collaboration and non-collaboration with the oppressor; until they come clean on the role of the MNRCs; of those who served on the Advisory Boards, the Bantu School Boards and the School Committees set up under the bantustan education system, participation in which fell squarely within the ambit of the tradition of the ANC as articulated by Buthelezi, they will find it impossible to disentangle themselves from Buthelezi’s present collaboration. The admission elsewhere by Oliver Tambo that Buthelezi is “in a way our fault” is true in more ways than one. When the Chief Minister of KwaZulu bantustan argues that participation in bantustan institutions is “not acceptance of the apartheid system but evidence of a desire to progress within whatever system is imposed upon us”, he is echoing sentiments that emancipated his illustrious predecessors to feel free to serve on all sorts of dummy institutions.

His unity in collaboration is also reminiscent of the days he is harking back to. When it suits him he appeals to black nationalism to counter white nationalism: “Let us, therefore, unite as a people as whites

are united to glean whatever development is allowed us in our life time, for the benefit of posterity."

It is partly this concept of legality that renders him opposed, as his predecessors were, to the idea of boycotts and non-collaboration with the oppressor. Participation "under protest" or entering elections "on a boycott ticket", was the positive thing to do. And so you had to get the right people to man these dummy institutions, like the great leaders of the ANC who kept their seats on the NRC until it was "legally" abolished in 1951 with the passing of the Bantu Authorities Act, the Act that gave Gatsha Buthelezi a place in the political sun. Like his forebears he claims he is participating in order to keep sell-outs out! In this regard he is not enunciating any new principle. He is continuing the tradition of "fighting from within", that is, participating as a strategy for engaging in the politics of liberation.

That strategy has now been discredited and it behoves the ANC to say so if they wish to shake Buthelezi off their political shoulders. It will not do to rationalise. The writers are therefore on more tenuous ground in their reference to Buthelezi's allegation that Nelson Mandela actually suggested participation in the election of Coloured representatives in 1958, two years before the end of the great period of the ANC when the ethos of the "founding fathers" reigned supreme. In recalling this incident Buthelezi is underscoring his claim that his behaviour is in line with the traditions of the ANC in these matters. There is no difference in principle between the two forms of collaboration. And this is where Buthelezi will always embarrass the ANC until the latter acknowledges the mistakes of the past and condemns both forms of collaboration unequivocally. The duty of an organisation that claims to be inspired by revolutionary perspectives is neither to diminish nor exaggerate the contribution made by its pioneers.

One of the methods that Buthelezi uses to project and sell himself and his movement is to appropriate to himself the achievements and titles and external trappings derived from both the "Zulu tradition" and the "ANC tradition". That is, "the ANC before it was banned in 1960", not the "Mission in Exile", the group that was sent off by Chief Albert Luthuli "to drum up support for the liberation struggle of black people inside South Africa." His Inkatha movement is claimed to be founded upon the principles of that ANC. It is, in a sense, a continuation and a reincarnation of the ANC that was banned in

1960. And in line with the tradition that began with the presidency of John Dube (1912-1917), the leadership of the liberation struggle was bequeathed to Gatsha Buthelezi (one of the Inkatha documents claims) by Chief Luthuli, "the last constitutionally elected President of the ANC":

In a symbolic meeting between Chief Luthuli and the Hon. Chief M.G. Buthelezi in the 1960s, the heritage of the leadership of the liberation struggle was passed on to the Hon. Chief Buthelezi.

But to appreciate how futile Buthelezi's quest for power and influence is other than that exercised by collaborators as agents of an oppressive regime, let's look at his position in South African politics graphically as it emerges from this carefully documented book. Let's see in particular how he relates to the struggles of the oppressed people of South Africa:

1. May 1987 the people call for a stayaway protest strike against apartheid.

Buthelezi calls this a declaration of war and orders members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly to go back to their constituencies to counter this move against the system.

2. The resistance movement fights through its organisation, such as the ANC, PAC, AZAPO, UDF, NF, etc.

Buthelezi forms Inkatha to fight against these enemies of the state, that is, the central apartheid state of which KwaZulu is an integral part, thus duplicating its functions.

3. Ilanga LaseNatala was founded by John Dube, first President of the ANC, to fight for people's rights.

Buthelezi founds The Nation to propagate collaboration with apartheid. When it fails, he appropriates the Ilanga itself and puts it to the same use, while claiming to be following Dube.

4. The resistance fights for a democratic South Africa free of racial and ethnic divisions that have served apartheid so well.

Buthelezi and his movement exploit these differences and mobilise under ethnic calls.

5. The resistance forms fighting trade unions, some explicitly anti-capitalist, united under the umbrella of COSATU etc. for effective struggle against the entire capitalist system and its South African version.

In 1986 Inkatha under the leadership of Gatsha Buthelezi launched a pro-capitalist, anti-strikes, 'trade union' and called it the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA), a body with strong links, inter alia, with Israel.

6. Resistance fights for non-racial democracy and socialism.

Buthelezi and his movement fight for multi-racial capitalism.

7. Resistance fights for universal franchise in a unitary state.

Buthelezi and his movement will settle for a compromise which will leave present economic and political relationships essentially the same, so long as the interests of the petty bourgeoisie in his movement are safeguarded.

8. The resistance is basically and in principle opposed to the politics of the apartheid state.

Buthelezi and his movement are opposed to these only in detail.

9. The resistance is pledged to work for a broad South African nationalism.

Buthelezi is inspired by ethnic or cultural nationalism.

10. The resistance movement would discourage foreign investment and promote sanctions in fight against apartheid oppression and exploitation.

Buthelezi is passionately in favour of foreign investment and against sanctions and fight with even greater vigour than the apartheid state itself against protagonists.

11. The resistance movement forms the South African Students Organisation (SASO) to mobilise the youth against apartheid.

Buthelezi and his movement form the Youth Brigade "to counter the influence of the South African Students Organisation (SASO)" and that of the National Union of South African Students and to collaborate directly with the Afrikaner youth in their semi-fascist organisations. (e.g. Afrikanse Student Bond ASB).

12. The resistance movement resorts to armed struggle involving military training as part of the struggle against oppression and exploitation.

Buthelezi and his movement set up Youth Service Corps, including "well-disciplined and regimented

impis in every Inkatha region" to buttress the system of apartheid in all its forms and increase Buthelezi's stake in it. In addition, Buthelezi prefers to send young men to the mines for training in "discipline and endurance".

13. The resistance movement advocates nationalisation of the mines etc.

Buthelezi vows that if Inkatha were ever to wield power he would "never allow a situation where whites - or blacks - were deprived of the fruits of the sweat of their brows."

14. Children decide to boycott bantu education schools as a protest against indoctrinated schooling.

Buthelezi regards this as an attack on him and counter-attacks.

15. The resistance movement stages protest meetings to defend the education of the people under attack.

Buthelezi's followers break up parents' protest meetings.

16. From time to time the resistance has called for national convention and unity in the struggle against national oppression and class exploitation.

Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement call for bogus unity and bogus conventions, such as:

(a) the Black Unity Front (1976) with Phatudi, and Ntsanwisi - collaborators all;

(b) the South African Black Alliance (1977) with the Reform Party (Indian), Labour Party (Coloured) - collaborators all.

(c) In a desperate bid to snatch the white liberals from the ANC he went into the National Convention Movement with the Progressive Federal Party of white liberals and representatives of capital.

A man and a movement with such a record cannot in sanity expect to go down in history as a fighter for the rights and liberties of the oppressed. His role has been exposed for what it is - a monstrous enterprise of collaboration with the oppressor. In doing so the writers have also laid bare the nature and machinations of the apartheid state itself, in the maintenance of which Buthelezi and his movement have become an essential element. Apart from its clear implications for the liberation movement, I welcome this book as overwhelming proof of the fact that the bantustans are an integral part of apartheid South Africa.

Livingstone Mqotsi

GATSHA BUTHELEZI

Chief with a Double Agenda

by Mzala

Published by Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN

Price @ £7.50(Pbk) £27.95(Hbk).

Friends have hailed him as a messiah. His foes have castigated him as a collaborator. This is how Buthelezi was swept into the South African political arena. The protagonists argued that Buthelezi could use his position as Chief of KwaZulu as a political platform from which he could attack government policies. The antagonists on the other hand contended that by working within the apartheid structures, he would invariably compromise his political position. The analogy was that of playing a game. If one wants to participate in the game then one has beforehand to agree to obey the rules of the game. In this instance Pretoria sets the rules.

Notwithstanding the perceptions of the contending parties, it has to be pointed out that the popular national liberation movements, i.e. the ANC and PAC, were banned in 1960. The national leaders were either incarcerated or forced into exile. It was therefore opportune for Gatsha Buthelezi to step into the political vacuum. This to his credit he once upon a time conceded. He averred: "It is also a well known fact that when the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress got militant in the early sixties they were clamped down for the very reason that the authorities in South Africa could not tolerate the militant way in which they articulated the wishes and aspirations of their people, despite the fact that they were leading an unarmed people. There was a void, which lasted almost ten years on the African political scene."

There is now much writing on South Africa. **Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief with a double agenda** is an addition to the list. Mzala, the author, has set himself the task of unravelling the various strands that make up the enigma called Gatsha Buthelezi. His book is commendable.

A fruitful point at which to begin the story of Buthelezi is the dismissal of Albert Luthuli as chief of the Amakholwa people. His political activities were a thorn in the governments flesh. The writing was on the wall. Dr. W.W.M. Eiselen, the Secretary for Native Affairs, in no uncertain terms spelt out his disapproval of Chief Luthuli's participation in the Defiance Campaign. The Chief would not budge. He

would fight shoulder to shoulder with his people until their ultimate goal was achieved i.e. full citizenship rights for all the people in South Africa irrespective of race or colour. He was accordingly dismissed.

A relatively unknown chief made his presence felt on the occasion of a meeting of chiefs called by Dr Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs, in 1955. This was in line with the requirements of the clause on "consultation" in the Bantu Authorities Act. Gatsha Buthelezi thanked the government for retaining chieftainship and requested Dr Verwoerd to grant more land to his impoverished people. This was hardly the speech of a rebel.

Buthelezi's name had caught the public's eye. The question on everybody's lips was what is his attitude towards Bantu Authorities. Before attempting to answer this question, some background information on Buthelezi is necessary.

At Fort Hare he was closely associated with the Youth League of the ANC. Buthelezi participated in a boycott organised by the Youth League on the occasion of a visit of the then Governor-General, Brand van Zyl. Various other incidents ensued which led to Buthelezi's expulsion from Fort Hare. Mzala is sceptical about the extent of Buthelezi's involvement in the entire episode. The fact is that he took his examinations at another university, the University of Natal. This left an indelible blemish on the character of an aspiring chief. He was reminded of this incident by Eiselen, the Secretary for Native Affairs, who cautioned him that such behaviour did not befit a future chief and that he had to mend his ways.

The first Zulu Regional Authority was inaugurated in 1959 at Eshowe. Buthelezi was noted by his absence. A *New Age* reporter mistakenly alleged that Chief Buthelezi had boycotted the ceremony because of his opposition to Bantu Authorities. He was quick off the mark to deny all these allegations and categorically stated that he at no stage opposed Bantu Authorities. It was crystal clear where he stood.

Chief Buthelezi had mapped out the political course he was going to tread. This would explain why he eschewed national politics. Yet his mother, Princess

Magogo, actively participated in the campaign against passes.

By the early seventies Black Consciousness was a political force to be reckoned with. The South African Students Organization (SASO) challenged the legitimacy of Buthelezi's claim to being in the forefront of the national liberation struggle. He was cast in the same mould as other Bantustan leaders.

Mzala deals sympathetically with the arguments advanced by SASO and he shows that they were consistent in distancing themselves from the likes of Buthelezi.

Chief Buthelezi claims that his present position in KwaZulu is a hereditary traditional right. It was not created by the bantustan constitution. This is disputed by Mzala. He usurped his present position in violation of Zulu royal tradition. The whole scenario is viewed by Mzala through rose tinted glasses of tribal nostalgia. He may have a point in the sense that many of the chiefs who lead Bantustans were thrust into prominence by the government. But monarchy and chieftainship are by their very nature conservative institutions and not readily amenable to change.

There is a tendency by Mzala to idealize pre-capitalist social formations. These societies had their inherent contradictions which we should not overlook. Chiefs and monarchs occupied privileged positions Pretoria realised that chiefs would be erstwhile allies in the retribalization of African society. Buthelezi should be judged in terms of the reactionary politics he has acted in the service of Pretoria rather than, as Mzala does, by the fact that he violated Zulu royal tradition. Customs and traditions are not sacrosanct.

Challenges from the fledgling trade union movement in Natal and black students in SASO were undermining Buthelezi's position. In order to survive he had to conjure up spirits of the past. He had to appeal to popular sentiments by borrowing speech, passion and illusion from the solemn symbol of Zulu unity. Thus was Inkatha formed. Yet Inkatha was also draped in the garments of the A.N.C. Mzala rightly points out that Inkatha was formed within the framework of apartheid and therefore bears the hallmark of ethnic particularism.

The author fails to provide an adequate explanation as to why the ANC was meeting with Chief Buthelezi in London up to 1979. One agrees that an organisation in the rural areas is important but to believe that this could be achieved with the helping hand of Buthelezi is a fallacy. The meetings stood him in

good stead because he used them to confirm his claim that Inkatha was continuing the tradition of the ANC.

The word "vigilante" conjures up scenes of pillage and plunder. The vigilante phenomenon emerged as a result of the states inability to control events in the townships. Those who took part in the government-imposed community councils were censured by the people. Consequently community councillors resigned *en mass*. Vigilantes mushroomed in every corner of South Africa and eventually became rooted in Natal. The role of Inkatha vigilantes is characterised by a catalogue of nasty incidents. Witness the raving bands of Inkatha impis attacking unarmed people at the unveiling of Msizi Dube's tombstone in Lamontville. The unceremonious attack on people attending a memorial service for the murdered UDF leader Victoria Mxenge is another case in point.

Mzala in the remaining chapters of the book deals with Chief Buthelezi's attitude to the working class, sanctions and the KwaZulu-Natal indaba. Buthelezi's attitude towards the working class is singularly hostile notwithstanding protestations to the contrary. Since the launch of his "trade union", UWUSA, the incidence of fatalities amongst members of rival unions has increased. MAWU had three of its members murdered. An NUM official met a similar fate.

On the issue of sanctions Buthelezi has consistently sided with Mrs Thatcher, President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl. Unfortunately at this point Mzala introduces a red herring when he argues that sanctions were responsible for the fall of the Smith regime in Rhodesia. Surely, it was the fighting forces of the Patriotic Front which brought Smith to the negotiating table. Similarly the examples of Lesotho and Argentina that he invokes do not carry much weight.

He cogently demonstrates that the KwaZulu-Natal indaba is a farce. He does not buy the so-called Bill of Rights. Who gave these constitutional lawyers the mandate to formulate a Bill of Rights? The people were not consulted.

The arguments in his conclusion are constrained by his adherence to the Freedom Charter and the two-stage theory. Liberation cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism. Only the proletariat organised as the ruling class can take the bold initiative of making "despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production."

Sipho Nxele

AZANIA FRONTLINE

and

AZANIA WORKER

need money

to carry on publishing the left-wing
views on South Africa which you will not
hear from other newspapers and journals.

We also need funds to support
publications, political and
trade union activity
inside South Africa

We are independent publishers -
our commitment is to socialist organisation
in South Africa.

Please send your donations to

ALSC

BM BOX 4863

LONDON WC1N 3XX