

The ANC rank-and-file seem to have been little affected by the years before exile when, through the popular-frontism of the Congress Alliance, the communist tail had wagged the ANC dog. Nor do the authors seem aware of this, and even endorse the validity of Kliptown.

The hardest fight was, indeed, to get their white, coloured and Indian members, first, at Morogoro in 1978, into the ANC itself, and secondly, at Kabwe in 1985, into the National Executive Committee. It is one of the ironies of politics that among those who voted against the latter were Johnny Makatini and M.B. Yengwa, both sadly no longer alive, and both, in pre-exile days, close to the Liberals, then the pioneers of non-racialism when the Congress Alliance both practised and preached multi-racialism. The authors seem to suggest that it was as Zulus that they opposed the elimination of racial barriers to NEC membership.

Models some may have been of what South African communists were expected to be, yet it was always in those parts of the ANC/Umkhonto of which they had control that the greatest wrongs were done, such as in Mbokodo (the Security set-up), and Military Intelligence.

In the command structure of Umkhonto, crucial to its effectiveness, Party membership could count for more than ability: a case study is that of Steve Tshwete's appointment, over the heads of well-qualified veterans, as army Political Commissar (third in the Umkhonto hierarchy). Hani, Chief of Staff under the army commander Joe Modise, a non-communist, 'was able to pull off this coup only because of the influence of the Party inside the ANC.'

As model South African communists they believed (as they doubtless still do) in 'democratic centralism' which gagged criticism and dissent, fossilizing the movement in policies that were often obsolete and unworkable.

The military struggle, the authors demonstrate convincingly, should long since have given way to political action. The ANC's strongest suit, its political appeal, was sacrificed to its weakest, its military power, whereas P.W. Botha was weaker politically and stronger militarily.

Similarly the rural peasantry might have provided a far better habitat for ANC guerrillas (using Mao's well-worn analogy of the fish and the sea) than the urban proletariat. CP dogma based on ancient decisions dictated otherwise and could not be changed, only justified by



JENNY SCHREINER; her effective unit applauded

theory and analysis.

So the Communists took over the leadership of the ANC.

All the dead theories and counter-productive practices of their creed came with them.

The authors do not spare us the squalor and futility of the Umkhonto camps in Angola, the mutiny and its aftermath (though the popular rehabilitation of seven of the Committee of Ten who led the mutineers is a bright spot in a somewhat dismal chronicle), the series of terrible failures of nearly all the cross-border regional councils which were the ANC's response to the township risings

of 1984-5, the 'modest achievement', as the authors euphemistically call it, of Umkhonto, for all those lives lost or blighted.

They point to the new post-Cold War and post-*perestroika* world, where the very bases of communism and socialism are held in doubt and leave us wondering what path South Africa's communists will follow if they are to put to their country's use their talents and residual idealism.

Perhaps, as an epigraph, an anecdote from Sheverdnadze's memoirs may be appropriate (quoted in *The New York Review of Books*, 19 December 1991). He and Gorbachev, on a Black Sea holiday in the early 1980s, 'confided in each other their disgust for the state of the Kremlin leadership and the country as a whole.'

"Everything's rotten," Sheverdnadze said to Gorbachev as they walked along the beach at Pitsunda. "It has to be changed."

"We cannot live this way any longer," Gorbachev replied." Nor do they, in what was once the mothership. And nor should those dedicated ideologues of the South African Communist Party, as they are revealed to us in this illuminating book. ●

— RANDOLPH VIGNE

## How the violence affects the youth in the townships

**Faces in the Revolution: The Psychological Effects of Violence on Township Youth in South Africa** by Gill Straker with Fatima Moosa, Rise Becker and Madiyoyo Nkwale. Published by David Philip, Capetown.

**A**T LAST we have a book that looks past the statistics and sensation of township violence and attempts to make sense of the material conditions that have caused it and still maintain it.

Although Professor Straker uses a small group of subjects from Leandra, the information and experiences can be extrapolated to hold true for any area in South Africa wracked by civil war. It is a book that should be read by anyone interested in solving the human problems assailing the country today.

The work is scholarly and professional, but entirely accessible to the lay person. It is an absorbing look at the

"individual and psychological" aspects of the violence, and its effect on the people who are suffering through it. She contextualises the lives of victims and perpetrators so that the reader can come to an understanding of the complex forces which have caused the present situation and work through the changes that these high levels of violence have wrought in the psyches of the youth.

Straker was one of a group of psychologists called in to counsel refugees from the violence and the police who had fled from Leandra and sought safety at a church community centre. Finding that she and her colleagues were often handicapped by their "middle-class" techniques which were inappropriate for this situation she set out to analyse and

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WITH THE Nationalist Government facing charges of abuse of power and financial corruption more serious than at any time in its history, has come the bland admission by Cabinet Minister Jacob de Villiers that “apartheid was the problem”.

But, he insists, the irregularities, amounting to seemingly incalculable millions in the often renamed department he now controls, “are in the past. The Government is committed to exposing the truth about them.”

In support of this claim he lists President F.W. de Klerk’s announcement of a judicial inquiry into allegations that members of the security forces were behind the murder of Eastern Cape community leader Matthew Goniwe and two others, the publication of the Pickard Commission’s report of the graft in the Department of Development Aid, and De Klerk’s instruction that the Goldstone Commission should investigate allegations of a secret police base from which ‘dirty tricks’ were planned.

Yet there is a perception in the broader world community and among white South Africans in particular that corruption is especially prevalent in black Africa.

Here COLIN LEGUM looks at why Africa is portrayed as exceptionally corrupt and the reason for the corruption that in fact exists in many African countries.

# CORRUPTION

WHEN WILLIAM F. WELD, the US Attorney for Massachusetts, retired after serving in the Justice Department’s criminal division, he wrote: ‘I would like to underscore a concern that increasingly troubled me throughout my years of involvement in law enforcement. My concern is that, while Americans frequently deride other countries for corruption in their public institutions, they greatly underrate public corruption as a political and economic problem at home.’

What William Weld wrote about Americans applies no less to South Africans, the British, the Germans, Japanese and others. Their own record of corruption is generally treated as exceptional aberrations in their system, and not inherent in the system itself. Yet — and this is the first point I want to make — corruption is endemic in every country in the world and under every kind of political system.

As has now been shown, communism produced corrupt societies in the USSR and throughout Eastern Europe despite the high moral tone set by Marxists. Japan — one of the closest regulated countries in the world — has been rocked by a succession of corruption scandals that have toppled prime ministers, finance ministers and other top officials and financiers.

A trial has just concluded in Italy involving a dozen prominent bankers and industrialists, while its recent elections have been shot through with fraudulent practices.

The ‘pork barrel’ politics in the United

States, which involves rewarding politicians and their cronies, remains chronic. It has forced a former Vice President and several Governors out of office; currently threatens scores of Congressmen; involves leading figures in the biggest financial ramp this century (including President Bush’s son) over what we know as building societies; and it has in recent years rocked some of the most illustrious financial companies in Wall Street.

In Germany, there is the recent case of a finance minister being forced to resign over a scandal involving the creaming off of funds for political purposes, while a number of industrialists have been tried over illegal trafficking in weapons and chemical supplies.

Even in puritanical Switzerland, industrialists have been involved in illegal arms deals. This, too, has been discovered in Sweden over the controversial deal by the weapons-makers, Bofor, in a multi-million pound deal with India.

Britain has not yet recovered from the exposure of the role of top businessmen and city financiers over the Guinness affair, while even the prestigious Lloyds is trying to regain its former prestige — ‘A1 at Lloyds’ — after a series of scandals.

Name any country in the Arab world and in Asia (except for Singapore), or in Latin America, and one can list scores of scandals involving corruption. Nearer home, current cases involving corruption during the apartheid years, show that South Africa is among the most corrupt countries in the continent. At

present there are at least a dozen cases involving financiers who are on trial for financial malpractices involving hundreds of millions of rand. At least one former Minister was forced to resign because of corrupt practices; and the country is unable to deal effectively with businessmen who have illegally exported capital out of the country, estimated at some R17 billion. Some of this colossal sum has been transferred — under arrangements which make possible the evasion of laws governing exchange control regulations. For a country desperately short of investment capital the loss of such large sums of surplus wealth, this transfer of funds abroad is a national scandal.

Yet, nobody talks about South Africa, Japan, the United States, Britain or other countries as corrupt societies in contrast with the habitual reference to corruption in Africa.

Why are African leaders and governments stereotyped as corrupt? This portrayal of Africa is by now so imprinted on the minds of South Africans that if any newspaper reader is asked to apply a description of Africa they can usually be relied upon to say ‘corrupt’, ‘dictatorial’, and ‘nepotistic.’

I am reminded of a recent report by an experienced correspondent on African affairs writing for a Johannesburg paper who described the new Attorney-General of Zambia as one of the few lawyers of integrity to serve in such a capacity in Africa. How many attorney generals in the continent does this correspondent know to justify this kind of judgment? I have direct knowledge of at least 30