

# SPARK AND THE 'RED NUN'

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### Spark — A Revolutionary Journal

From June 1935, through August 1939, the journal *Spark* was sold in the streets of Cape Town. This mimeographed paper, directed to workers and intellectuals, was the most advanced left-wing publication of the time in South Africa. It carried a mix of international surveys from the pen of Leon Trotsky and his followers, and discussion of events in South Africa. Informed by readings of Marx and Engels, local events were subjected to critical analysis. There were appraisals of the state of the economy, the nature of the working class, the calling of the All African Convention to meet the threat of Cape African disenfranchisement, and the Indian and Coloured organizations of Natal and the Cape.

*Spark* was edited and produced by the Workers Party of South Africa (WPSA) and although the existence of that organization and its paper are barely remembered today, they had an impact at the time that transcended the boundaries of the small group in Cape Town. Some of its adherents emerged later inside the Non-European Unity Movement, but by that time they had moved far from the original programme of this pioneer Trotskyist movement. Copies of *Spark* are not easily available today, and we reprint two articles in this issue.

It is possible to reproduce articles from *Spark*, but retrieving information about the members of the Workers Party is more difficult. Their names are forgotten by most, and even where they are known, they remain shadowy figures. Some came from eastern Europe and brought with them the traditions of Marxism, others were South Africans who rebelled against the accepted values of an oppressive society. Precisely what led this band of socialists to the Workers Party is largely unknown, but in discovering their stories it is possible to trace part of the intellectual and social history of those that came together to build a Marxist group.

The story of Clare Goodlatte, editor of *Spark*, is remarkable in many ways. Until the age of 54 years she led a sheltered existence as teacher, nun, and principal of a teachers' training college. Thereafter, Goodlatte moved through a succession of liberal bodies before joining a socialist group in her late 60s. Her reading of socialist literature before this is unknown, and there is no indication that she had read Marxist literature before the early 1930s. Yet, Goodlatte emerged as the editor of *Spark*, associated herself with the writings of revolutionaries, and was respected as one of the foremost members of the WPSA. There are few indications of what led her to this

position, but quite obviously she reacted to oppression and the devastating poverty experienced in the depression of 1929–31. These posed questions, the answers to which took her to increasingly radical groups. Her story fits strangely into the pages of our journal but needs to be told as an example of the forces that push even mildly liberal people into radical movements.

### Clare Goodlatte, Teacher

In May 1942 in an obituary in the journal *Education*, Helena Olendorf remarked on the three phases in the life of a much beloved teacher:

On April 23rd [1942] there died at Woodstock the woman known to thousands of past students at the Grahamstown Training College as Sister Clare, or more commonly, more affectionately, as Clarie. To her neighbours, to the Woodstock Ratepayer's Association, she was Miss Goodlatte; to her Communist friends of later years, she was Comrade Goodlatte.<sup>1</sup>

Clare Goodlatte was a member of the Anglo-Catholic Community of Resurrection in the 1890s, rose to become principal of the Teachers' Training College in Grahamstown in 1904, and retired (as required) in 1920, at the age of 54. She moved to a cottage in Woodstock, close to Cape Town's poverty-stricken District Six, leaving gown and God behind.

She joined and became secretary of the Woodstock Ratepayers' Association (WRA), and worked for the betterment of the suburb, before resigning in mid-1931 to become secretary of the Cape Town Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu, and the Non-Racial Franchise Association.<sup>2</sup> In 1934 she joined the Independent Labour Party, and went with the group into the Lenin Club and the Workers Party of South Africa.

The personality of Clare Goodlatte must account for part of the move from cloister to revolutionary, but her conversion was also a measure of the discontent felt by many people in South Africa in the late 1920s. A section of the white intelligentsia, small as it was, reacted against the strident racism of Hertzog's cry of *Swart Gevaar* (Black Menace) during the 1929 general election. When the country's economy slumped in the depression, and people (black and white) were starving, ratepayer's grievances, seemingly urgent in the mid-1920s, paled into insignificance. Nevertheless, Goodlatte's new radicalism as she approached the age of seventy, when most people retire to the periphery of political life, was unusual and makes her unique in the annals of the revolutionary movement.

Goodlatte was born in Ireland on 4 December 1866, was educated in London, and proceeded to St Andrews in Scotland to take the LL.A [the

Associate, but not Bachelor, of Laws] in 1885, and her teacher's diploma at the University of Cambridge in 1886.<sup>3</sup> She had advanced almost as far as possible in an era in which women had few openings in higher education, and when ordinary degrees were not open to them in Great Britain.

Goodlatte left for the Cape Colony, and her first teaching post was in Port Elizabeth. She then moved to Grahamstown to join the staff of St Peter's School [for girls]. While there she met Mother Cecile and under her influence joined the Community of the Resurrection. Together they organized the Grahamstown Training College for women, and there she stayed, first as assistant, and then as principal. She travelled to Scotland in 1898–1900, where she took a Froebel course in primary education. On her return in October 1900, in the middle of the war, she was appointed vice-principal responsible for teacher training.

For twenty-six years Clare Goodlatte remained at the College, sixteen of them as principal, and during that period she directed the course of development of the College. There was nothing to suggest any unhappiness, and if there were inner tensions they appeared only in the comments by colleagues that she would be remembered by her students for 'her way with them — so Irish in her vehement denunciation of what seemed to her to deserve it, yet so appreciative of real effort, and so motherly over sufferers in body or in mind.'

The few quotations from Goodlatte's editorials in the College magazine suggests a rare compassion for the less talented. This included the withdrawal of the College team from the local Girls' Tennis Tournament (after winning three times in six years) because the sport had become 'a toil for skilled champions' and afforded little space to the unskilled.

If she had doubts during her years as a teacher — either about schooling or religion — she left no records. All that the College magazine said was:

That on her retirement she should separate herself so completely from the Order to which she had belonged and from the place for which she had done so much was a very great grief to the many who loved her here ...

The only sign that she might break from the order was not understood at the time. On her retirement the staff and students gave her a cheque for £280 as a farewell gift. She had never had so large a sum in her life, yet she donated the money to the College to purchase three school shields and six original South African paintings. The College magazine of 1975 said only that 'She had done her work to the best of her ability and asked for no other reward.' The act could also be interpreted as a wish to start a new life unencumbered by association with life in the College.

## Retirement

Goodlatte's abandoned religion on retirement and moved to one of the poorest Cape Town quarters, but much of her thinking must remain conjecture until 1925. Then, in letters to John George Chapman, a one-time pupil, she expressed some of her views, and sent or informed him of articles she had written for the press. These provide some information on her life and her expanding ideas.<sup>4</sup>

The first letter was written in March 1905 in response to Chapman's congratulations on her appointment as principal. The correspondence resumed in 1925 and extends through 1940. Much of the writing was about daily events, including copious thanks for fruit sent by Chapman from his farm; of books read, and reviews written; of articles submitted to the *Cape Times* or other newspapers; and on persons that Goodlatte met. She wrote about the severe droughts that affected South Africa, her delight at first taking an air trip, and surprisingly for a person who moved to increasingly radical stances, about the British royal family. Some of these topics appeared again in her newspaper articles, and these included items on the countryside, some written in humorous terms that stood in stark contrast to her 'campaigning' articles, whether against the menace of smoke in Woodstock, or against the government for its treatment of the working class.

Goodlatte's early letters were non-political. She mentioned visits to the theatre; spoke of books she had to review (including a book on birth control); and wrote disparagingly of the Jewish intellectual:

too critical for happiness, too 'superior' to be comfy, and too fond of frowsting indoors, in floods of talk, to be quite wholesome ... little meannesses the minute business comes in. A great race, but somehow not quite lovable (12 May 1925).

In 1924 Goodlatte was elected secretary of the Woodstock and Salt River Ratepayer's Association. Such bodies were not known for their radicalism, except when issues affected the wealthier section of the community — but this was Goodlatte's main stamping ground through the 1920s, providing experience in local government. On 2 July 1925 she wrote to Chapman about the 'unrestricted factory smoke, which is blotting out the landscape', enclosed her article about it in the *Cape Times*, and said she would write a leader, if allowed, for the paper. Next, she took up the 'poisonous stench' from a fish meal factory, appeared in court against the company (5 March 1927), and was involved in a tussle with the railway administration over a site for a pavilion and swimming pool.

## The Journalist

Goodlatte declined an invitation to join the *Natal Mercury* staff, because she was 'too old to begin a new career of hustle and howls, and besides I have my niche in Woodstock.' She became an assistant editor of the *Cape Times* and wrote leaders, book reviews, a report on the Prince of Wales visit, and articles on 'Women who earn', on 'Public holidays', on 'Kirstenbosch [garden] walks', and so on. Yet, despite the publicity given to the British seamen's strike that closed the Cape Town docks for nearly two months in 1925, and the press publicity on the riots in the Bloemfontein location, Goodlatte said not a word to Chapman on these larger matters.

Her views were still those of white South Africa, naive and superior. On 25 January 1926 she wrote about the Indians in South Africa, then facing the threat of forced repatriation:

I am really puzzled about the Indians. They are certainly not good citizens from a health point of view, and their little shops are a nuisance, and they are unreceptive mentally. Yet we *did* get them out — the lowest class — for our own convenience! We are reaping what we (or our fathers) have sown and we find it a noxious crop. But it is hard to see the right course. Smuts has preserved an unbroken silence; but I suppose we shall shortly have a big speech from him.

Yet, on 29 March Goodlatte was stirred to write a 5,000 word article critical of the government's 'Native Policy', and the Colour Bar Bill. She saw no possibility of it being printed in South Africa, and sought a British journal. She referred to her 'wild Irish views', and thought that Tielman Roos [Minister of Justice] would deport her if he ever saw it. However, neither of the papers to which it was sent, the *19th Century* and the *Manchester Guardian*, accepted it.

Then came agitation from the Nationalists for a South African flag, and Goodlatte's letter of 10 June 1926 showed how far she would still have to travel before she could be said to have adopted socialism as a political creed:

I foresee that all the papers mean to serve up 'Flag' for breakfast, dinner and tea, for months to come. I am not interested in flags, but I hope the British will hold out for Union Jack, because our Dutch extremists are getting too voracious. The more the patient Britisher gives, the more they grab and go on grabbing. After 25 years of conciliating them and endeavouring to atone for the Boer War by unwearying and magnanimous

penitence, I feel I want to perceive in them a few traces of a corresponding nobility of soul and endeavour!

Goodlatte found the British section 'cowardly', and said she believed that the Nationalists represented 'white S. African feeling and outlook more really than SAP [South African Party].' She predicted that members of the SAP would join the Nationalists in increasing numbers and that the latter would stay in power for as far as she could foresee. 'I think it means a long set-back, and probably, in the long run and in the far future, the final downfall of white South Africa, *but* I think it *does* represent the majority of white South Africans' (5 March 1927).

In 1927 she described two incidents in which she was confronted by destitute persons. In May she was approached in the street by a 'neatly dressed white woman' who was penniless and hungry and a few months later confronted a coloured burglar in her home who claimed he had no means of earning money, and then fled. Goodlatte had never faced such difficulties herself, although she said she had witnessed poverty in London streets in the 1890s. A few months later she was impressed by some railway men. She had entered into talks with the Railway administration over the purchase of land for the WRA, to no avail. But she did meet some of the artisans, she wrote (8 February 1928) and they informed her that 'they are worn out by heavy overtime, continued for months on end, because there is such a shortage of skilled and *experienced* men.'

In March 1928 her article 'South Africa: Glimpses and Comments' appeared in *Contemporary Review*, (London, Vol 133, No.747). This was a rewrite of her previous article, and still gave no indication of the socialist views she was to espouse later — although at the time several British journals had found it too radical for publication. Using anecdotal material drawn from South African experiences she criticized the prevailing white racism, and even the reluctance to shake hands with blacks by persons of 'liberal' sympathies. All whites, she wrote, deliberately or unknowingly helped maintain the subjugation of 'dark-skinned folk ... and the dreary result is a growing bulk of complicated repressive legislation and a bristling array of religious, social, administrative and economic puzzles.' Goodlatte decried talk of a 'black menace', or calls to 'stem the tide of Native domination' as laughable:

He is not accused of having in any way actually offended. His existence is his offence. It does not enter his head to wish to dominate us. It certainly would not be within his power for many centuries to come. The only 'menace' is his presence in moderately increasing numbers. The only 'problem' is that he too must eat and in some sort be clothed, and

therefore room must be found for him on the land or in urban industries...We are afraid of him, but we cannot do without him. Our products need buyers; but we do not pay him a wage that enables him to buy.

There were two fears that dominated the land, she wrote: the economic fear (which was a mutual suspicion of other ethnic groups) and the fear of miscegenation, which nobody, black or white, desired. She continued:

It seems absurd at this stage of human endeavour to be labouring the point that the way of prosperity for any land lies through the lifting up of the whole population. It cannot be attained by pulling up with one hand feeble white folk who are sinking, if at the same time we harshly push down with the other hand vigorous black folk who are rising. If we were not blinded by fear, we whites would set ourselves steadily and rationally to do justice to all ...

Goodlatte wanted an end of 'little-mindedness and greed and fear' and called for 'faith in the future of humanity, faith in life's destinies, faith that this world of ours is indeed part of a cosmos, not a chaos.'

### **The Move to Liberalism**

Despite her encounters with poor whites, and then the large scale unemployment of the great depression, Goodlatte retained a faith that justice would prevail. But this was to change as she came into contact with (white) trade unionists, and joined the liberal body known as the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives. In her letter of 6 July 1930 Goodlatte wrote:

I have joined the European and Bantu Joint Council, *and* the Non-Racial Franchise Association, as a token of sympathy and goodwill, more than as able to help much. Last night I heard Barton speak very firmly on the value of the vote, and he owned quite frankly that it was no matter of party politics because the rank and file of the SAP, if left to themselves, would unite with Nats to take away the Native Franchise in the Cape, and of course keep them out of it in the north.

Old Jagger had started the subscriptions to the Non-Racial Franchise Association with £100, and made a fine speech on it last January ... I understand better now his attitude in regard to wages, and so on, since I have come to close quarters with the 'Trades Unions' and 'Labour men', not to mention the poor whites.

In fact, Goodlatte had written an article in the *Cape Times*, which appeared on 16 December 1929, highlighting the plight of the piece-work labourer who was paid by the day, and received nothing on public holidays. She had shown, after talks with working class wives, that the average weekly wage of £2.8s. allowed the skimpiest of food and accommodation, but made no provision for clothes, illness, or any other extras. She also said that the Coloured labourer's family was in an even more desperate position on the going rate of 28–35s. per week. At the time Goodlatte had no contact with Africans, and could not comment on their position.<sup>5</sup>

Within a year Goodlatte wrote to say that she had been appointed assistant secretary (6 May 1931) and then secretary (19 May) of the Joint Council. She resigned from the WRA, and now wrote on new issues: on 6 May she spoke of her revulsion at Coloureds 'being made to feel outcasts in their own city', and of the distressing news she had heard about Italy under Mussolini. What she did not write about was the influence on her thinking by socialists she met in the Joint Council. There she worked with David Schrire (later associated with members of the Workers Party), and Julius Lewin (a Fabian) who told me that Goodlatte was a remarkable woman for whom he had the greatest admiration, and said he believed he had given her the first book on socialism she had read, Harold Laski's *Communism*.

Goodlatte was engrossed in the work of the Joint Council, and in reply to criticism from Chapman she wrote on 5 May 1931:

I like your calling my nice Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu an extremist group! Why, the extremists are bored and exasperated by our prosy and moderate point of view. Extremists, whether White or Black, give us a wide berth. The Cape Town City Council finds us quite useful in explaining things to the Natives and persuading them to distinguish between facts and suspicions. They regard us as, on the whole, reasonable and helpful.

Goodlatte wrote warmly of articles on economics written for the press by Professor Hutt (a 'liberal' on race questions, but otherwise conservative), but events in South Africa moved her to increasingly critical positions. On 10 September 1931 she wrote sceptically about the government's calling of a conference of the large municipalities to discuss the urgent issue of unemployment. As the 'cure [was] to replace coloured and native unskilled labour by white ditto, I don't see that we will be much forrader.'

Ultimately, her work with the Joint Council demonstrated that petitions and deputations bore little fruit. In 1933, at the request of the Johannesburg Joint Council, she met Oswald Pirow, Minister of Railways, to request that African railway worker's wages, cut during the depression, be restored in



line with that of white workers. He refused, on the grounds that the wages of Africans had not been cut their scale of pay had been altered!

### The Socialist

From December 1932 Goodlatte wrote in her letters of local strikes, and it was at this stage that she met Manuel Lopes, a founding member of the Communist Party who had resigned and joined the Labour Party. Lopes helped launch the Independent Labour Party in Cape Town, and Goodlatte joined the group. On 24 August 1933, after a long delay, she said she had not written earlier because of the many meetings she had attended, and these together with her other occupations 'make a formidable total for a person of my years.' She continued:

I have joined the Independent Labour Party at the time of the May elections — it is the Socialist wing, a daughter of the English Party of the same name and policy. Here, the movement is only three years old; I had not known of it, but joined up directly the election campaign brought it to my knowledge. I am a socialist by nature, and now in old age I have the joy of being in the thick of socialists — the intellectual crowd of University education and sound theoretical knowledge and also (much nearer and dearer to me, though I like them all) the manual workers, skilled and unskilled, European, Coloured and Native. I have been made General Secretary of the Party, which is very tiny, but growing as a result of the election fight and, I suppose, of the attractive force of socialism.

The ILP had four branches and three more were being formed. However, 'I cannot imagine any country *further* from Socialism than our South Africa, but it is good to be at constructive work again and my heart is in it.' She added at the end of a long letter that their numbers were few, and most dare not declare themselves for fear of victimization, or because they felt that human nature could not rise to the claims of socialism. Goodlatte was still in the Joint Council, but doubted whether she would be allowed to remain long. Its leaders believed in Smuts 'with a pathetic devotion'. She wrote about government directives on labour [known as the 'civilized labour policy'] and the consignment of thousands of blacks to the ranks of the unemployed, and in this she found that men like Hofmeyer, whom she had once praised, 'lacked moral courage and determination'.

She now wrote increasingly of her interest in socialism. She was distressed by the deportation of Jews from Germany and recommended John Strachey's book *The Menace of Fascism*. She also suggested that Chapman read a book on Russia by Maurice Hindus [presumably *Humanity*

*Uprooted*].

### The Revolutionary

On 6 September 1934 Goodlatte said that she had broken 'finally and fiercely' with the *Cape Times*, because it had grown more and more reactionary since the Nationalist-SAP coalition. There had been a change of tone as well as content, and she could not condone the vulgar insolence of the articles written on 'The Workers' Way of Life'. Her other announcement, made with little explanation, was even more significant. She had joined, and 'felt at home' in, the Lenin Club.

Sometime in 1933 or 1934 several small groups in Cape Town, many consisting of members expelled from the Communist Party or its associated bodies, joined together to found the Lenin Club. These included the ILP (of which Goodlatte was secretary), the *Linker Kring* (Left Circle) composed of Jews who had been expelled from the Gezerd (*Gezelshaft fur Land*) which advocated the formation of an autonomous Jewish state in the USSR. There do not seem to be records of early supporters of the Club, but among those who remained were Y. Burlak and M.N. Averbuch, the leaders of the factions that emerged; Joe Pick, a foundation member of the CPSA; Paul Kosten, an American sailor with relatives in South Africa, who jumped ship in Cape Town in 1931 and joined the ILP; Charlie and H. van Gelderen, Harry, David and Betty Lunn and Joe Urdang.

Academics and students of the University of Cape Town were attracted to its monthly meetings. Some belonged to a social group at the University centered on Lancelot Hogben, the Professor of Biology, who later achieved world acclaim for his book *Mathematics for the Millions*.<sup>6</sup> Others in this circle included Benjamin Farrington (author of *Head and Hand in Ancient Greece*), Frederick Bodmer (who wrote *The Loom of Language*), the psychologist J.G. Taylor and his wife Dora, and David Schrire. Hogben was not associated with the Club; Farrington presented at least one paper, but did not join. Others, including Bodmer and the Taylors joined, and so too did George Sacks who later returned to the CPSA and helped launch the *Guardian*.

The Club attracted Coloured and African thinkers, some of whom were to become leaders of the Non-European Unity Movement, including I.B. Tabata, S. Jayiya, Goolam Gool, Jane Gool, Arthur Davids, and J. Beyers, who had returned from a visit to Moscow and left the CPSA, disillusioned in what he had seen in Moscow. The one organization in which members of the Club were active was a Coloured Unemployed League which drew large crowds, but collapsed amidst criticisms of gross inefficiency. Thereafter, open activities were limited to Club meetings, the production of leaflets,

some street theatre, and according to Goodlatte (17 November 1934) the holding of weekly street meetings — in Castle Street outside the GPO.

The Lenin Club issued a May Day Manifesto in 1934, in which it noted the quiescence of the socialist movement in South Africa, and called for:

... a new Revolutionary International, a new Revolutionary Workers' Party, a party which will be true to the best traditions of Marx and Lenin and their achievements in the October Revolution, a party which will ... win the confidence of the workers and the oppressed masses of South Africa.

Members of the Club claimed adherence to the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky, and criticized recent events in the USSR — a subject that occupied much of their time — and the Comintern's slogan calling for a 'Black Republic'. Such a slogan, they wrote, ignored all class differences in South Africa, separated white from black workers, and provided a false appraisal of the tasks that awaited the revolutionary movement. Their discussions led them to believe that a socialist programme for South Africa had to be reformulated, and that it rested on them to provide fresh answers for South Africa.

Inevitably the group was divided, but there are no available records of their discussions, and I have an incomplete picture of the issues involved.<sup>7</sup> There were differences on events in Europe and on possible developments inside South Africa. Joe Urdang (but not the others) remembered differences on events inside France, and disagreement on whether the Trotskyists should have entered a French centrist group. But three issues divided the groups irreparably. The minority group that left the Lenin Club to form the Workers Party, and set up the Spartacist Club, claimed that the central problem facing the African population was the land question. This was 'the alpha and the omega' of the struggle in South Africa, and the WP put their stress on the rural situation. The Communist League (later the Fourth International Organization of South Africa — FIOSA) denied the centrality of the land question, and claimed that revolutionaries had to concentrate on organizing the urban proletariat — black and white. The WP also believed that all revolutionary activity should be clandestine, and that open work should be done under cover of other organizations. This was vehemently denied by the League. Finally, the League claimed that in the coming world war, the Afrikaners (as a people) would be anti-imperialist, and that sections could work with the left against foreign control.

The minority was led by Burlak, and among his supporters were the Taylors, Bodmer, Jayiya and Tabata, Kosten and Goodlatte, in the newly formed WPSA, but there is no information on the split in the letters to

Chapman — partly because Goodlatte would not have written about such matters to a non-member, and also because of Chapman's antipathy to socialism. On 2 September 1935 she said: 'I should love to send you a copy of our little *Spark* ... But it would annoy, although it would give you a deal of solid information'. Nevertheless, as a reflection of her new enthusiasm she also included a comment on the Cape Federation of Trades backing the stevedore's union 'in their refusal to load meat here for the Italian army. Of course it will be loaded somehow and somewhere, but the protest is good, and it is time that fatty-degenerated Federation showed a spark of fighting life.'

The Communist League issued the *Workers Voice*, an infrequent paper with little theory and no indication of practical activities. The WPSA claimed to be a mainly educational group, but it had lost much of its periphery when it withdrew from the Lenin Club, and remained a small group. Some members of the WPSA attended sessions of the newly formed All African Convention in 1935 and 1936, in the wake of the government's 'Native Bills', and were critical of its proceedings and its leadership. Articles by participants appeared in *Spark* and will be reprinted in a later issue of *Searchlight South Africa*.

Goodlatte was now preoccupied with producing the journal. She did much of the typing, and also translated material from the French (3 December 1935):

We shall print as soon as we get a reserve fund in hand, but printing will cost four times as much and we can't afford it just yet. Meanwhile we work like Trojans to get it all stencilled and run off and fastened together — not to mention the articles themselves which mean a good bit of knowledge and hard work (*ibid*).

*Spark* included articles on the history of working class struggles in South Africa, and the article on the 1922 general strike drew a rebuke from Chapman, with a claim that the men were mere riff-raff. In her answer of 1 February 1936, she said that he had not understood the importance of the struggle, and that Smuts, by bringing in the troops had understood the challenge to his government. Goodlatte also said that Club members were writing a history of the working-class movement that was long overdue. She continued:

I am still amazed by the length, and width, and depth of learning that the lifelong followers in the workers' movement possess. They have to survey the whole field of history from Britain to China and Japan and on

to America. It is a new book opened. And remember some (indeed *many*) great and learned men have written in it.

The letter was long, and indicated a hardening in attitudes. For the first time Goodlatte criticized Chapman, saying: 'frankly, I have *always* deplored your tone of contempt, of antagonism, towards your labourers'. And looking to the future said:

Perhaps in days to come, we shall have progressed so far and fast, that all will have a fuller life — whether in work of head and hand — and the opportunity to develop all powers and gifts to the utmost. Let's look forward to it. For I cannot tolerate a system where so many youngsters, white and non-white, never get a decent start in life. I must fight for something better — else why live at all?

The letter ended on a conciliatory note: 'Goodbye — forgive my enthusiasm, or, better, share it. Perhaps you do.' This was the last long letter to Chapman. There were two more in 1936, and December letters in 1938, 1939, and 1940. The letter of 1938 spoke of her despair at the maniacal outburst against Jews in Germany, and in 1940, Goodlatte said that she saw no signs of South Africa growing up — it was difficult she confided, to induce people to think seriously. More than that, she was tired.

In all her letters Goodlatte alluded only occasionally to illness. She had been afflicted by gout since 1925 or earlier, and doctors had not prescribed medicines to help her. She was determined not to give in to the pains, or the difficulties in walking — and she did not moan. If there were other maladies, they found no place in her letters, and she was determined to carry out the projects that had been placed in her hands. Otherwise, as she said, 'why live at all?' However, Clare Goodlatte was tired, and when *Spark* stopped publication in 1939, she was relieved of work she could no longer continue.

It is not certain when Goodlatte was appointed editor of *Spark*, either alone or with Paul Kosten, nor is it certain which articles she wrote, because only those written by Trotsky or US Trotskyists were signed. But whatever her role, she identified wholly with what was printed — and in the process rejected the ideas of Hutt, Strachey and Hindus, and others once so highly commended. The approach of the paper was so obviously different from that of Clare Goodlatte's sentiments in the letters to Chapman, that they represent a quantum jump in her appraisal of the world. How very different her views had become from the time she commended the work of Hutt can be seen in a short extract from the first issue of *Spark* in March 1935:

Accompanying the world depression and the disintegration of markets, the international financial crisis which brought about unprecedented gold prices has thereby led to the recent boom on the Rand. Increased goldmining activity with its stimulus to secondary industry, building etc., has produced an appreciable acceleration of industrial tempo, and this is hailed by bourgeois economists and politicians as 'returning prosperity'.

This 'prosperity', founded as it is upon international crisis and collapse, is the prosperity of undertakers in the plague ...

We reprint two articles from *Spark* in this issue, partly because they deserve reprinting in their own right, and also because they provide examples of the work in which she became involved.

## References

1. Documents were secured for me by Harriet Tunmer in Grahamstown, and by Miss M.F. Cartwright of the South African Library.

2. An organization launched in Cape Town in 1929 to oppose General Hertzog's threatened removal of the Cape African vote.

3. Information on Goodlatte's early life is drawn from the obituaries by H.O. and from the *Grahamstown Training College Magazine* in May 1942. There is also a section devoted to Goodlatte in the final commemorative issue of the magazine in 1975.

4. Prior to 1979 the South African Library had no reference to Miss Goodlatte. Then, on 15 October 1979, Miss Cartwright informed me that the library had received a collection of letters written by Goodlatte to Chapman, and copies were available for research purposes. It is not certain where Goodlatte taught John Chapman.

5. Oliver Cromwell Cox, *Caste, Class and Race*, MR Press, 1959, p.527, quotes from the article. Goodlatte had said that although treated humanely, 'in any other capacity than that of a docile servant we consider him intolerable.'

6. Members of the Joint Councils had started compiling 'budgets' of black families, in line with Booth and Rowntree in Britain, to press for the introduction of minimum wage packets.

7. See Eddie and Win Roux, *Rebel Pity*, Penguin, 1972, Chs 7, 8. During 1975-7 I spoke with Paul Kosten, Charlie van Gelderen, and Joe Urdang, and was told of some of the issues discussed at the time. The information differed on central issues, and I have checked against written documents where they exist, but quite obviously new information might require alterations to this account.