

SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

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Cover Picture: Käthe Kollwitz, Death Reaches out for Children

SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

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Rates can be found in the attached leaflet. Following other journals in South Africa we have taken account of the vast differentials in earnings in the country and are pitching our prices accordingly. We hope our readers understand the reasoning behind this decision.

Subscriptions can be sent to the Johannesburg or London address. That will enable our readers to send cheques or money orders in the currency they hold. We can only accept Rand or sterling. Unfortunately bank charges on \$US/Canadian are so high that they are unacceptable.

Announcing new Printing Arrangements.

As from this issue **Searchlight South Africa** is being printed and distributed from Johannesburg. By this means the editors hope to achieve several things. Firstly, we hope to avoid the endless interference with mail from abroad in South Africa. Secondly, we hope by this means to keep the sale price of the journal to a minimum in order to reach the largest possible readership. This is the only way in which we can cope with the extreme poverty of many potential readers in South Africa. In the process readers who could afford a higher price will benefit. We only hope that they will find their way clear to send us donations to recover some of our costs. Unfortunately we cannot lower the price outside South Africa, but at this juncture we are not raising our price to meet higher postage and other costs.

Otherwise there will be no changes in our policies and the editorial board will stay, at least for the present, in London. We also hope to appear more regularly and regret the long interval since issue No 7.

Notes to Contributors:

Articles and reviews, accompanied by IBM ASCII files on disk – if possible – should be submitted to the editors, typed or printed out, in one-and-a-half, or double spacing.

Articles should be between 4,000 and 7,000 words, but we will be flexible and will consider longer pieces. Short articles (other than letters) will only be accepted if they are of exceptional interest. Letters commenting on recent articles in **Searchlight South Africa**, or relating to current events in South Africa, will be printed as soon as possible. These contributions should not exceed 1,500 words and may be shortened to fit available space. If substantial alterations would improve an article or review, the editors will communicate with authors before proceeding with publication. The editors reserve the right to alter grammar, spelling, punctuation, or obvious errors in the text.

Footnotes and references should follow the practice of previous issues of the journal. These should be kept as short as possible, and notes should, where possible, be included in the text.

THE 'NEW WORLD ORDER' – AND 'OLD WORLD' DISORDER

Malevolence has been gratified by the errors they have committed, attributing that imperfection to the theory they adopted which was applicable only to the folly of their practice.

Mary Wollstonecraft*

The Betrayal of a Russian Dream

In the year 1992, when one-time Marxists are busy chasing their tails and claiming that their Gods have failed them, we must point again to that profound truth of Mary Wollstonecraft. Those who now repudiate the theories they once held as erroneous or imperfect, either misunderstood the Marxism they claimed to follow, or they deliberately perverted Marx's teachings. They altered the meaning of Marx and his close collaborators, they lied in order to justify the crimes of the USSR, and they assisted in preventing the development of socialism. Now, in an effort to resurrect their claim to honesty they shift the folly of their practice to the theory itself. It is only because some sections of the old Communist Party still have a grip on a section of the working class – and this is certainly the case in South Africa – that it is essential that their falsehoods be exposed. Also, it is still necessary to protect those who follow them unwittingly. In the short space available we offer this sketch of events over the past seventy years in the belief that there are still people who can hear and will listen.

Seventy four years ago the Bolshevik Party took power in Russia and set as its goal the establishment of an international socialist society. But that did not ensure stability. First they accepted the most humiliating terms and signed a peace treaty with Germany in order to extricate the state from a disastrous war. Then they routed armies financed by the capitalist west and tried to reach the German borders to win the western workers to their dream of a free society. Next they organized a Communist (or Third) International (Comintern) and a Red international of Labour Unions (Profintern), to unite the workers of the world in a revolutionary movement. Faced by their need to escape from isolation, and seeking support for their beleaguered state, the Bolsheviks extended the hand of friendship to the colonial people, to the workers, and to intellectuals everywhere.

Reality did not favour the Bolsheviks. Conditions inside the Soviet Union deteriorated. There was a cholera epidemic, drought and starvation. The Kronstadt sailors rose in rebellion and the command economy organized under war conditions was replaced, under duress, by a free market of farm produce. Nor did the international movement prosper: the communist regime in Hungary collapsed (and in this General Smuts had a role to play as an envoy of the western powers), and the German revolt of 1923 was misconceived and bungled. The Comintern never rallied large movements, the Profintern was always peripheral to the working class movement. Also, within a few years it became obvious that: The socialism of many Bolsheviks was not unalloyed with corruption; the Red army contained many careerists; the Comintern became a centre of intrigue. The Bol-

shevik party had failed to develop an active tradition of democratic dissent and after the death of Lenin the already fragile unity of the party was seen to have depended on the authority of one man. Without Lenin the party became increasingly narrow and restrictive; the tenuous practice of debate and discussion came to an end; and the purges got under way.

There were two distinct faces presented by the cabal that ruled the USSR in the late 1920s. The outside world saw a facade of socialism. The men and women of the 'socialist motherland' were happy and contented, building a new society, establishing a new 'proletarian' culture, and still finding time to sing the praises of the great father of the nation: Josef Stalin. This picture of great construction and achievement was accepted by sympathisers in five continents; by intellectuals and journalists; by trade union officials, by churchmen and by ambassadors.

Inside the USSR the situation was seen differently. Fear stalked the land as millions were uprooted in forced collectivisation, hounded or killed, arrested and never seen again. A new elite emerged, took government jobs, monopolised the scarce resources, and established their family's rights to education, health facilities or holiday homes. Not a bourgeoisie because the laws of capitalism did not operate, but a highly privileged set, claiming the legitimacy of a revolution they had destroyed. And yet this very elite was constantly shaken by fresh arrests, fresh trials and executions. While they survived they carried out central commands that reduced the population to servility: to a system of law that served out unjust sentences; to forced labour in the vast prison camps that became known to the world as the 'gulag'; to labour on the land and in the factories that paid subsistence wages; and to a system of deprivation that made a mockery of the word socialism. This was recorded in documents, histories and novels — but these were suppressed inside the USSR and, even when published abroad, ignored by friends of the Soviet Union and by the liberal establishment.

Yet, it was this gigantic lie that members of the communist parties, and of front organizations across the world celebrated, as the model of a 'New World' and as the defender of the rights of all humanity. In its name, men and women, some honestly, others falsely, claimed to represent socialism. And heaven help those who disagreed. Dissidents were hunted out, slandered, harassed and even killed.

This is not the place to chronicle seventy long years of increasing tyranny. What is surprising is not that it collapsed, but that it survived through to 1991. Even as it approached its end, after years in which it was widely known that the economy was collapsing, and that the USSR was unable to match the technological advances of the more advanced capitalist countries, the system survived. In the thirties and forties the Soviet state rallied international and local support because of the threat of fascism; in the fifties it appeared (falsely as we now know) to be the harassed victim of the 'cold war'; and even when it was exposed as a force of counter-revolution (e.g. in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968) the myth was maintained that the USSR was a socialist (or at least a workers' state), and its followers celebrated its 'great victories'. For those who realised what was happening the words 'communism', as associated with Stalinism and/or the USSR, was a degraded word.

Leon Trotsky, with the assistance of only a small band of followers, was exceptional in keeping alive the original message of the October revolution. His continued exposure of what was happening in the USSR, even when he erred, placed him high above others who remained silent or even lied about events in the USSR. The recent spate of confessions only help condemn them the more for their long silence.

The Calumny of the Capitalist world

Stalinism can only be understood as the collapse of the Soviet ideal before the counter-revolution in Europe in the early 1920s. The success of Bolshevism in Russia was fragile. This was a country that had been dragged into capitalist relations by the investment of finance capital in the large scale industries in a few cities and in the construction of a national railway system. But a large part of Russia was barely touched by the new economic relations. It was that which made it relatively easy for the Bolsheviks to take power in this state, but harder for it to build socialist society. Then after the shattering civil war of 1918–20 and the isolation of the USSR, the revolution was usurped by a party cabal. In condemning Stalin and the people who collaborated with him, we also condemn the western bourgeoisie who did their utmost to destroy the new Soviet Union. That, indeed, was their response to the first revolution that had firmly rejected capitalist relations.

Although it had struck a near-mortal blow at the young socialist state, western capitalism also went through its darkest hours in the 1920s and 1930s. While dominating the world and draining the resources of its dependencies, the ruling class presided over massive inflation; induced mass starvation in the heart of Europe and elsewhere, leading to the depression that spread across the world in the late 1920s; nurtured and extolled fascism and watched undisturbed over the rape of Ethiopia, the destruction of republican Spain, the onward march of Japan in the east and Nazism in Europe, and allowed or encouraged racism and xenophobia. The working class across five continents suffered mass unemployment and unbearable living conditions, seemingly unable to find the means to smash their oppressors.

Once again it was left to small bands of people to raise the banner of protest — against colonial degradation, against fascism and mass genocide, against immiseration and then mindless war. Socialists like Trotsky were unique in having warned against fascism in Germany or Italy, against the rising militarism of Japan, or against the tragic consequences of Comintern policy in China and in Spain. Perhaps he should have done even more. He failed to train a cadre able to add to the store of Marxist theory, and his own insights were dulled under the stress of Stalinist persecutions. Himself almost penniless, with no apparatus through which to reach the world, he and his comrades did enough to put the world to shame. If they were over optimistic in their predictions they must look partly to their own errors, but it must also be said in their defence that they were execrated and that their voices were dimmed by obstruction of the big battalions of Capital and of Stalinism.

Then came the war, starting in China in 1931, extending across Africa and Europe in 1935–38 and then spreading across the earth's surface in 1939–45. Whatever sins are laid at the feet of German, Italian and Japanese war lords, and for that they cannot be forgiven, the cowardice, the perfidy, and the treachery of the leaders of western Europe, the USA and the USSR, were necessary counterparts to fascist bestiality. It is doubtful whether we will ever know the cost in human lives. This was a nightmare that surpasses all previous wars with mass genocide, mindless destruction and the killing of millions. It was from this war that the world emerged with new masters: the two 'super-powers' USSR and USA; the satellite powers of western Europe (Britain and France); and the honorary position given to the China of Chiang Kai-Shek. Yet the war weakened the western victors and the USSR, sheltered behind the resources of its new satellite states in eastern Europe, seemed for a time to be one of the giants. In fact two new economic goliaths emerged: the two defeated nations — Japan and Germany. It is now the three financial giants, Japan, Germany and the USA that dominate the world's economy.

The balance of economic dominance had shifted but the rest of the world remained in penury. Even western Europe was on the dole and depended, at least initially, on US handouts. The one-time colonies, now 'liberated' politically, regressed economically, making little or no headway in developing their resources. Only a few centres on the Pacific rim (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore) were exceptions. But they were exceptions which thrived under US protection or because they had open markets to which they could export their goods. In general the rest of the world stagnated, or was dependent for brief bursts of economic development on the goodwill of their economic over-masters. That is, their advancement depended on foreign investment, on the availability of markets, and on the stability of the stock exchanges of Tokyo, Bonn and New York.

Of course this is not the complete story. There were exceptional regions of progress for at least some of the time, and in a few regions outside the most favoured regions. However, whatever successes there were — and there was a prolonged boom that lasted over twenty years after the end of the war — capitalism has not, and cannot overcome its inherent instabilities. There have been crises and recessions, major financial collapses and growing unemployment. The peace of the world has been shattered in local centres, eventuating in the war on Iraq, which demonstrated the killing power available to the armed forces. The world, in this one respect has not changed. What has altered has been the collapse of the USSR, now the USS (Union of Sovereign States) but destined to separate and become the new SS (Slav States). This is more than the kind of collapse the world experienced in the past, as national groups raise the old banners of intolerance: of national autarky, of religious sectarianism, of squabbles over borders and the levies of armed men. With modern armaments freely available, the destruction that can be wrought by the smallest armies can be devastating as is obvious from warring Yugoslavia, that one-time 'communist' state that formerly won the support of so many communists and trotskyists.

The greatest misfortune is undoubtedly the collapse of the international socialist movement and the failure of the working class to build effective organizations with which to counter the capitalist offensive. It is precisely this paralysis of the working class that gives the USA, Germany (and Japan?) a free hand to do as they like in imposing their will on the rest of the world. It was not only eastern Germany that was ingested by its richer neighbour. Capital stands by to take its pickings from the old eastern bloc.

This is the base of the 'New World Order' declared so casually by President Bush. It is a parody of the 'New World' that the Bolsheviks dreamt of in 1918. They won the right to this vision through the revolt of the workers and peasants: Bush drummed up his vision after sending his laser directed bombs against a petty (if nasty) dictator. Despite its relatively weakened world economic role, the phrase was his declaration of US hegemony. Its reality stems from the fact that there is no obvious rival to US military power. Here is the realization that the US has the force that can dictate terms to the recalcitrant or the unmoving. In the process a kind of peace can be established in southern Africa, in the Middle East, and also in other areas where the US needs an end of hostilities to regenerate trade and investments. Nor is this just griping. The peace that is being imposed is designed to stop real change in the troubled regions of the world.

The issue that socialists must face is the relative inability of the working class to oppose these events, even if this is only over the short term. Without a social force to back their demands, socialists remain impotent. All attempts at change seem to come from voluntarist groups; all large scale demands remain unanswered because the force that is required to give flesh to such demands remains inert.

If we believed that this was the 'end of history', we would quietly close up shop, and (for those of us who had the means) would 'eat drink and be merry...for tomorrow, (inevitably), we die'. Yet it must be declared: this is a passing phase. It might last over several years but cannot endure. The contradictions in capitalism will force new elements to rise. Perhaps not in the way expected over the past five decades, but rise they must. Meanwhile there are task for socialists that will demand all their resolve and energies.

The problem is not to find issues that must be taken up, but to single out the most important. If socialism has to take on new meaning and find an international response, there has to be fresh thinking about the tasks we set ourselves, and organizational approaches that reject the guru-led hierarchies of the past. Without at this stage trying to demarcate the most important tasks facing socialists everywhere, the following seem to be more than most small groups can achieve. But they must consider some of the following tasks:

There is the need to protest against further warfare – whether global, regional or local. There are human and civil rights that must be protected in the name of a democratic socialism that must incorporate the needs of the low, the poor, and the deprived. There is a continual struggle against racism and discrimination at the work place and in the community – and a renewed mobilisation against the rising groups of fascist thugs. There must be a struggle against unemployment, against

low wages and against labour discrimination. Added to these there are struggles in every country related to education, health, and discrimination of any description.

However, socialists in South Africa and elsewhere cannot conduct such a programme of demands unless they first set their own houses in order. There has to be an end to the organizational centralism that denied the membership the right to open dissent. There must be both socialist education and the encouragement of innovatory ideas. But above all there must be a condemnation of harrasment or witch-hunts inside socialist groups, whether on grounds of ethnicity or gender, and an end to dehumanizing practices. There cannot be, and must not be, any justification for imprisonment, torture or executions of members – either inside societies that claim to be socialist or in the movements that claim to be working for socialism. The violations of common justice that we have recorded in *Searchlight South Africa* in Swapo and in Umkhonto we Sizwe, and similar activities in the PAC that have still to be disclosed, involving the violation of democracy and of elementary human rights, are unacceptable. The failure of socialists to condemn these actions follows in the footsteps of those who remained silent over the crimes of Stalinism in the USSR.

It is with regret, if not anger, that we must condemn so many of the old organizations for framing grandiose programmes that they were incapable of pursuing. However, they are not as guilty as the communist parties that set out deliberately to lead the working class astray. Their programmes were criminal and left three or more generations without hope. It is now time to start again and prove afresh to millions of people that socialism is about human rights and transforming society, and that we have the ability to right the most serious wrongs. From that other matters can follow.

* *A historical and Moral Review of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution*, 1794.

CRITIQUE

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WITHIN THE SECRET STATE: THE DIRECTORATE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Paul Trewhela

Enter, Stage Right: Murderers

South Africa continues to produce the spectacle of the macabre. With morbid fascination, one observes that this is a society which always reveals a skull behind the apparent smooth face of the ordinary. This emerges from the 'Inkathagate' revelations, so-called because they concern state funding, training and arming of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (*Inkatha yenKuhuleko yeSizwe*) and its supporters. The decisive features of 'Inkathagate', however, lie not in Inkatha, nor in secret police operations, but in the terror arm of the South African Defence Force (SADF) whose crucial body, the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), functioned through the 1980s as the perpetrator of massacres in nearby African countries, of individual assassinations and destabilization of whole states. In so far as the state, in Engels' phrase, consists in the last resort of bodies of armed men, the South African state in the era of P W Botha and of F W de Klerk operated in essence through the DMI. Acting with exceptional ruthlessness and operational freedom, with a vast secret budget, officered by whites and manned by a multilingual collection of black desperadoes from across the sub-continent, this force of corsairs was the heart of the South African state.

The DMI in its personnel resembles nothing so much as the punishment battalions of the German army in the Soviet Union in World War II. The criminal, the psychopath, the captured guerrilla faced with the alternative of hanging or becoming a murderer-in-state: this was the material, drawn from a sub-continent in civil war, out of which the drafters of South African policy drew their unmentionable but indispensable executors. For bloody operations in Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, Namibia and all the front-line states, the DMI was to the South African government what James Bond was to British fiction in the 1950s.

This monster acquired a life of its own. In its special zones of operation, it was South Africa's arm of government, to which the Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, related as ambassador at large. Whatever appeared in the clauses of agreements between the South African government and neighbouring states had absolutely no reference to this secret body of armed men, who operate as though specifically excluded from the provisions of international law, the Geneva Convention and the rules of war. The DMI was in addition the real agent of coercion lying behind the Crocker diplomacy of the Reagan and Bush administrations in the entire southern African theatre. Its three ranking officials, including its chief, General Pieter van der Westhuizen, visited Washington for top-level discussions in March 1981, less than two months after the Reagan administration took office. (Leonard, p 129)

The DMI was born out of the experience in 1975-76, when the SADF backed by the CIA cut through Angola to topple the new MPLA government. Forced to

retreat after the intervention of Cuban troops and a reversal of US policy, the SADF generals considered themselves betrayed. This was crucial. An SADF White Paper of 1977, envisaged a single integrated state command — in acquisition of information, in planning and in execution — under its own dictation. This was placed under the control of military intelligence, greatly expanded. It outlasted, and saw out, Soviet generals, Cuban tank gunners and East German secret police administrators. South of the equator it was, and has remained, the living representative of western control in Africa and the guarantor of President Bush's 'new world order'.

Not only did the DMI organize massacres, it ran political parties and its own multifarious press. The insidious arts of 'psy-ops', of 'winning hearts and minds' — allegedly cheaper than filling them with bullets — brought into being the strange species of the SADF political agent. Out of the military trunk grew the most intricate political and literary foliage. It is worthwhile to trace at least one line of development of this reclusive botanical type.

South Africa has a history of more than seven decades of police spying. In the mid-1960s, the evidence of a Security Police lieutenant and phoney journalist, Gerard Ludi, who had infiltrated the underground South African Communist Party (SACP), helped convict members up to the level of the central committee. Gordon Winter, doyen of the corps of sleaze of the South African press of the time, later surfaced as a material witness to the murder of a white businessman in the Transvaal by members of a London criminal gang and as the confidential agent of the head of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), Major General Hendrik van den Bergh. Later, in the 1980, it was revealed that Craig Williamson (subsequently, Major), of the South African secret police had infiltrated the National Union of South African Students in Johannesburg and then the International University Exchange Fund, in Geneva. His wife, also in the state security service worked in, and kept an eye on, the World Health Organization, Geneva. This was preceded by the 'Infogate' or 'Muldergate' scandal of the late seventies, when it was revealed that state funds had for years been poured through a secret conduit to manipulate both local and foreign media, to the greater glory of the South African regime.

These operations, mounted by personnel of the ministry of police and (in the media scandal of the seventies) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were minuscule in scope and in effect by comparison with what took place when the SADF became the decisive arm of state, at the time of transition from the police regime of B J Vorster to the military regime of P W Botha.¹ Murders by the state then multiplied in scale from retail to wholesale, while destabilization of organizations gave way to destabilization of a whole sub-continent.

With battle honours acquired between 5 and 15 degrees south of the equator in Angola, drawing on world resources of modern 'counter-insurgency' warfare in addition to its nuclear and artillery technology, the SADF became a political power in itself during the 1980s. To some extent it is *the* political power. The trajectory from the Boer commando, as the Afrikaner citizenry in arms, to the juggernaut of the modern security state is the history of the 20th century inscribed on the tip of Africa. Whatever the changes brought about by the current negotiating

process, it is a historical result that will not go away. To imagine that this monster of aggression is to be ‘democratized’ is the most fanciful of illusions. Ranked beside this political army, with its secret budget, its Military Psychological Institute, its press corps, its foreign and local auxiliaries and its Civil Co-operation Bureau, the military-political role of the ANC army Umkhonto we Sizwe was insignificant.

This is an army that had foreign politics as its theatre of operations, a phenomenon not seen in South Africa since the campaign of General Smuts against von Lettow-Vorbeck in east Africa in World War I and of the South African army against Rommel in the northern desert in World War II. The notion of Clausewitz, that war is the continuation of politics ‘by other means’, was its first article of faith. Thus the rhetorical statement (derived from Churchill) by its guiding genius, the former Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, shortly after assuming office in 1980:

You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word – victory. Victory at all costs. Victory in spite of [or by means of – PT] all terror. Victory however long and hard the road may be. For without victory there is no survival. (*Independent*, 12 June 1990)

From this followed war in Angola under the flag of South Africa and of Unita on and off from 1975 to 1989; the sacking of Mozambique, through the proxy terror of Renamo; the reduction of northern Namibia to a free-fire zone; assassinations carried out at will, from the frontline states to France; direct rule by the military of the South African townships and southern Natal in periodic states of emergency; and the making and unmaking of governments. If one sought to study the role of force in history, in order to comprehend the nature of the beast, it would be well to focus one’s attention here. It is this body of highly politicized armed men that lies behind the strategy of the so-called Christian Democratic Alliance, aimed to seal together in an electoral union the ruling National Party, the Zulu nationalist party Inkatha, conservative Asian and mixedrace groupings, the leaders of black Bantustan regimes and the conservative black churches, in opposition to the alliance of the ANC, the SACP, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and their newest ally, the Pan Africanist Congress. The figure of Malan in the cabinet, a career general during the invasion of Angola in 1975, personified this domination by the military.

A Friend of Human Rights

One of the brightest stars in this military-political firmament, and the first to expose its operations to public gaze, was a former SADF major, Nico Basson. At the age of 34 already a veteran of the murky realm of South Africa’s defence ‘spooks’, Basson is the survivor of four assaults on his person, all probably from his former colleagues in the special services department of the SADF. When he did his ‘national service’ (compulsory for white males only) in 1975 – that year of destiny, in which the SADF invaded Angola – Basson served as driver to General Malan, then embarking on the fateful step to his career as the Napoleon of southern Africa. It is in the nature of this species of

political warfare that after military service Basson obtained a BA in psychology and a post-graduate diploma in 'communications'. This academic qualification is interesting, since the political manipulation of arms, of mass murders, of media and of politics by the DMI was carried out through its secret Communications Operations department ('Comm Ops').

In 1980, with his military service, his degree and his diploma, Basson became assistant director of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in Johannesburg. Thus did the masters of war, its psychology and communications run the principal state organ of propaganda. In rapid succession he then acquired experience 'in the business world' as managing director of a marketing company, became a journalist, then news editor on a Pretoria newspaper, and later became editor of the official newspaper of the SADF, *Uniform*. Back in uniform in the SADF from 1983 to 1987, Basson rose to the rank of major and became the public relations officer and right-hand man of General Jannie Geldenhuys, then chief of the army and later head of the SADF.

In January 1987 he resigned from the SADF 'to enlarge his business interests and to concentrate on further studies', as he states in a curriculum vitae in a book edited by him for his work in Comm Ops. Completing a further diploma in Small Business Management in 1988, he was ready for the call for further active service when I realignments of the great powers dictated that Namibia would have elections to a constituent assembly in November 1989. As a volunteer member of the Citizen Force (the army reserve), he was summoned to Namibia in January 1989 and in March he founded African Communication Projects Ltd in Windhoek, 'to establish his business interests on an international level'. (*Call Them Spies*, 'About the Editors') This international business empire was established with SADF funds, giving him a personal income of 64,000 rand (about £14,000) a month, on orders from his superiors in Comm Ops. As a specialist in the arcane lore of communications, Basson now lent his talents and his funds to the venal and the despairing. Long before the final agreements were signed in the chancelleries, the DMI had its plan to win the peace just as it had aimed to win the war: and by the same means.

In 1989 the objective of the DMI in Namibia was to preserve for the South African state maximum freedom of operation. It sought to do so by denying to its main political rival, the South West Africa People's Organization, (Swapo), which the SADF had combated in the field for over 20 years, an overwhelming majority in the polls. According to arrangements drawn up under UN Security Council Resolution 435, which governed transition to independence in Namibia, if Swapo (recognised by the UN as 'sole and authentic representative' of all Namibians) were to get a two-thirds majority in elections to the Constituent Assembly, it would have had the right to produce its own constitution without reference to any other political body. The fact that Swapo ran a carnivorous one-party state in exile, in which even potential dissenters were destroyed by its security police, did not inhibit the architects of UN policy from this drastic possible result. Just as Swapo aimed to replicate within Namibia the totalitarian regime it had administered over more than 60,000 Namibians abroad, so it was the principal pur-

pose of the DMI, as representative of the totalitarian interests of the old order inside Namibia, to thwart this.

Between the Elephants

An old Sotho proverb says that when two elephants fight, the grass gets trampled. In Namibia, the fighting of the elephants in the run-up to the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1989 permitted strangely enough a little grass to grow. In the contest Swapo, funded massively by supporting states and international agencies abroad, faced a wide range of its electoral opponents funded through the South African state. Having manipulated the anti-Swapo fight within Namibia for many years with a heavy hand, this was nothing new. What was new was the mission of Basson, the confidential agent, into the realm of human rights, just as his SADF colleagues were engaged in setting a trap that sprang on 300 or more returning Swapo troops massacred in northernmost Namibia at the beginning of April 1989: the first days of the ill-named 'peace process'. The massacre in northern Ovambo together with the political intrigues of Basson in Windhoek were forerunners to the state-organized massacres alongside the negotiating process now under way in South Africa. In Basson's words, the Namibian scenario ('Operation Agree') was devised as a 'dress rehearsal' or 'trial run' for the real thing, the constitutional readjustment now taking place in South Africa. (*Independent*, 11 June 1991) It followed the well-worn process (initiated by the Rhodesians) in the financing and arming of Renamo in Mozambique while presidents Samora Machel and P W Botha chatted peace, commerce and constitutionalism at Nkomati in March 1984.

Through his shell company, African Communication Projects — more communication! — Basson appears to have funded or assisted a variety of organisations opposed to Swapo during 1989. These were: the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance or DTA (the most important political grouping opposed to Swapo, which had previously administered Namibia on behalf of the South African regime); the paper most closely identified with the DTA, the *Times of Namibia*; editing and publishing with former Swapo detainee, Ben Motinga, of *Call Them Spies*, a book of documents concerning Swapo's repressions abroad; some of the activities of the Political Consultative Committee of Ex-Swapo Detainees (PCC), the general representative body of the returned victims; the Parents Committee of Namibia (PC), led by Stella-Maria Boois, one of two groupings which had campaigned within Namibia since the mid-1980s for the release of Swapo's prisoners; and a small political party, the Patriotic Unity Movement (PUM), composed largely of a section of returned prisoners, drawn mainly from former senior officials of Swapo. The PUM was one of four small parties that contested the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November under the umbrella name of the United Democratic Front, securing the fourth largest number of votes and election of a former Swapo prisoner (and central committee member), Eric Biwa.

The manner of Basson's operation needs pointing out. *Call Them Spies*, which he published immediately ahead of the November elections, contains over 200

pages. Except for a single page introduction, five paragraphs of acknowledgements and a single page foreword by Basson stating how he 'got involved with the PC, PCC and PUM', plus two short biographical sketches of himself and Motinga, the book consists entirely of documents either deposited by former Swapo prisoners, or arising out of the campaign to bring about their release, or copies of press reports concerning the issue. There has been no tampering with primary source material. Many documents are reproductions from an earlier book, *Namibia: A Struggle Betrayed*, (Rehoboth, 1986). Others can be compared with photocopies of their originals (a good number in my possession). Former detainees, and former Swapo members within Namibia who initiated the campaign for their release are satisfied with the authenticity of the material.

The book will continue to serve as an indispensable source for historians, irrespective of the motive of its publisher. To suggest, as has been done, that documents published in the book should not be used because Basson's purpose was 'lying disinformation' entirely miss the point. On this issue, in order to advance their interests, the South African regime and its operative, Basson, had no need of lies. The truth was damning enough. They had merely to provide the facility for the truth to appear. In so far as Swapo was deprived of its two thirds electoral majority in part through such means, it had principally only itself and its atrocious treatment of loyal members to blame. The situation was not unprecedented. When in 1943 the Nazi propaganda service trumpeted the discovery of the mass graves of 15,000 Polish officers murdered by Stalin's secret police in the woods at Katyn, near Smolensk in the USSR, it was unfortunately no 'disinformation', and those who rejected the information as it became revealed because of its source, or because it was expedient, did so at the expense not only of the truth but also of humanity. There are times, such as this, when truth served Dr Goebbels better than the 'Big Lie'. It was as an artist in 'communications' that Major Basson proved his expertise. In the interest of the South African regime's 'total strategy', he published verifiable documents that would otherwise have remained unknown.²

The same applies to reports of statements about and by the recently released detainees in the *Times of Namibia*, by far the most accessible of local newspapers to them. A study of articles on the subject printed by this newspaper shows once again that factual reporting on this issue was all that the DMI required. Similarly, whatever the nature of Basson's services to the PCC, this does not alter the authenticity of statements and allegations made by former detainees themselves. The integrity of these accounts is not in question. There is no conflict, between documentation released by the PCC and the report on Namibia by Amnesty International, released in August 1990. As for the PUM and the PC, the most critical grouping in the campaign in defence of the former prisoners, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Namibia, received no funds from Basson despite participating in an electoral alliance with the PUM; and its leading members had in any case severed relations with the PC in 1987, because members of the latter had co-operated with the International Society for Human Rights, based in Frankfurt. In so far as ex-detainees fell subject to the objectives of the DMI's dirty tricks campaign against Swapo, this was principally the outcome of Swapo's criminal actions.

A Very Political Beast

Basson first revealed his role in a 'scoop' interview published in a newspaper close to the leadership of Swapo, the *Namibian*, edited by Gwen Lister, on 3 May 1991. This was ostensibly under impact of the accumulating horrors in South Africa, which he ascribed to the work of his DMI colleagues. He also spoke of collaboration with advocate Anton Lubowski, the leading Swapo member killed in a political assassination in Windhoek in September 1989. In an open letter to the editor of the *Namibian* in June, a group of 'Vexed Ex-detainees' noted that in a subsequent radio interview Basson had 'said Swapo was among his clients and that's why he had intimate links with Anton Lubowski'. Basson's communicative skills appear to have been spread widely.³ Having blown his cover in Namibia, he later revealed in South Africa that he had placed military agents 'in key positions in Namibian newspapers'. At the same time he

identified three aspects of Operation Agree which he believed were successful: exploitation of the scandal over the torture by Swapo of its own members [this torture is no longer questioned as a reality in even what was previously the most pro-Swapo press]; whipping up of anti-Swapo sentiment over the incursion into Namibia of Swapo guerrillas in April 1989 [really, a massacre set up by the DMI, as Basson indicates]; and building up the credibility of the DTA. (*Guardian*, 11 June 1991)

His revelations concerning Namibia were as nothing, however, compared with his information concerning South Africa itself, which emerged most fully in interviews during June with the *New Nation* and the *Independent*. Operation Agree, he said, had been devised at the end of 1988 by the Minister of Defence, Malan, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha. Throughout all stages the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked hand in glove with the SADF. The aim was to control not only the electoral process in Namibia, but above all in South Africa itself and also the elections due in Angola in 1992.

Basson provided a wealth of detail about Operation Agree, including 'names of senior military officers, names of alleged SADF front companies in and out of South Africa, and names of individuals allegedly running those companies'. (*Independent*, 11 June) The moving spirits behind his own manipulation of information in Namibia were the former head of the SADF, General Jannie Geldenhuys, and the present head, General A J 'Kat' Liebenberg.⁴ The strategy of the SADF was to ensure that the present political and economic power structure in South Africa remained 'essentially the same after the apartheid laws have gone, following democratic elections'. (*Independent*, 12 June) Basson's stated that, 'The SADF is buying AK-47 rifles on a large scale, notably from Mozambique, and supplying these weapons to Inkatha'. The violence around Johannesburg, in which Inkatha supporters were centrally involved, and in which some 1,500 people had died in the previous nine months, had been deliberately orchestrated by the SADF. 'They could stop it immediately if they wished'. (*Independent*, 11 June)

The DMI strategy of 'winning hearts and minds' (WHAM), through deliberate selective violence combined with manipulation of public perceptions, described by Basson, was designed specifically for 'post-apartheid' conditions, in which the major black organizations are nominally free to organize.⁵ According to the *Independent* correspondent, John Carlin, Basson said

it was only now, when apartheid was going and 'non-racial' elections were in the offing, that SADF strategists were beginning to see the prospect of a comprehensive WHAM success...

The end of the violence [in the townships, orchestrated by the SADF] has not been to destroy property or to kill — that has only been a means. The political objectives have all been directed towards the eventual goal of securing white control in the post-apartheid set-up...

The end goal is a divided and undermined ANC, and an alliance of the ruling National Party, Inkatha and other 'moderate' black organizations, which will sweep 'legitimately' to power, with the SADF's own power structure remaining intact.⁶

Intermediary goals were the weakening of the ANC and its capacity to organize, the strengthening of Inkatha as a political force and the division of blacks along ethnic lines, especially between Zulus and Xhosas, the two most numerous linguistic groups. To this end Comm Ops, the section of DMI running WHAM operations, had an officer in every SADF unit and had infiltrated the South African media across the board. Though the SADF was the 'engine' behind the strategy, it was coordinated between key sectors of the state. 'That's the whole thing about South Africa', Mr Basson said. 'It's run in secret and *in camera*'. (*Independent*, 13 June)

What Basson revealed was, in essence, a strategy not utterly unlike that by which power was retained in the old slave-owning South of the United States after its defeat in the civil war and the ending of slavery. The means by which the raised political power of the formerly subordinate blacks, and of white political sympathisers, was put down successfully for almost a century was the violence of the Ku Klux Klan. Under its white sheets, the vanquished Confederacy retained economic and political power in the hands of those who had been threatened to lose it. Thus too in South Africa the killing of blacks, both mass and indiscriminate, as well as individual and selective, by the secret state.

On the Soweto Express

In the month after Basson's revelations came more specific confirmation came about DMI orchestration of Inkatha violence around Johannesburg. A former sergeant in the SADF, a Mozambican, Felix Isaias Ndimene — again in interviews with Carlin of the *Independent* and with the *New Nation* — provided detailed proof of the exact mechanism. Ndimene's information pinpointed One Commando of Five Reconnaissance Regiment ('Five Recce'), crack troops of the SADF's 'Special Forces' — the operational arm of the DMI — as the perpetrators of perhaps the most notorious of these massacres, the killing of 26 people on board a commuter train heading for Soweto at

Jeppe Station, Johannesburg, on 13 September 1990. The regime's assassination bureau, the now disbanded Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), had previously also been a unit of the approximately 5,000 strong Special Forces, falling under the general command of the DMI along with Five Recce, 32 'Buffel' Battalion (used extensively in Angola) and other more covert units.⁷

Ndimene said he had served from 1983 to 31 January 1991 in Five Recce, after having been kidnapped from Mozambique by an SADF commando in August 1982. Participants in the train massacre, 'my friends', told him what had happened in the tea room at Five Recce's base at Phalaborwa in the north-eastern Transvaal, near the Mozambique border, after returning from their assassins' tour of duty. The day after the massacre, Nelson Mandela had stated that the attacks were not the work of amateurs – that is, in this case, not the work of ordinary supporters of Inkatha – but of highly professional and well-trained killers. Support for this argument came from the manner in which the killers had used their AK-47s; the way in which one detachment had set an ambush on the platform at the same time as another carried out its appalling work on board the moving train; and the strange phenomenon that all the killers preserved scrupulous silence throughout. Ndimene's account satisfied all queries. In his own words,

They got on the train with pangas [machetes] and AK-47s and they were using the name of Inkatha. They shot the people and killed them with the AK-47s. They say they were not allowed to speak during that attack because most of the people were Namibian and could not speak Zulu. (*Independent*, 19 July)

Numerous reports from township residents had mentioned the presence of black men speaking non-South African languages, and with non-South African features, at the scenes of killings, as well as in the single men's compounds which have become strongholds of Inkatha. These were the malignant waste of South Africa's continental wars: Namibians, Mozambicans, Angolans, Zambians, Zimbabweans, even Zaireans, as well as Australians and Irish mercenaries employed for counter-insurgency operations and for cross-border raids against ANC bases, now brought home to roost and concentrated against the defenceless population of the industrial heartland, instruments of a one-sided war let loose by the state against its subjects (or in government calculations, objects).

The white commanding officers of Five Recce were quite explicit about this, in their frank assertion that the ANC was 'still the enemy'. These officers 'used to say that we are not going to fight the same war we fight in Angola...so we started a new training in urban warfare'. An interesting concept of urban warfare, with seasoned counter-insurgency troops deployed against commuters. As Carlin pointed out after a journey on this death railway nearly fourteen months after the Jeppe massacre, South Africa 'must be the only place where people who travel to work by train worry not about arriving on time, but about arriving alive'. The rush-hour commuters at Nancefield station, Soweto, where gunmen from a nearby Inkatha hostel killed eight people two weeks previously, 'conjured up Second World War images of people about to board a train to a Nazi death camp'. (*Independent*, 9 November) Given the degree of unemployment in the Johannesburg-Soweto

area, and the pressure on wage-earners to keep their jobs, plus the hegemonic role of this single line of rail in transport, the precision with which the designers of 'psy-ops' pin-pointed this crucial channel in the total social metabolism is obvious.

For this kind of statecraft, the white commanders of Five Recce had the appropriate categories of academic political science. 'They told us we are not here to defend the government', Ndimene explained. 'We are here to defend the state'. His words confirmed information given to the press two years ago by a friend in Five Recce, Mervyn Malan, now living in the Netherlands. Since Ndimene's testimony, train massacres along the line of rail in the southern Transvaal have continued without pause. That state-organized massacres should focus on the Soweto-Johannesburg link carries a grim symbolism.

According to Ndimene, this trained cadre of homeless political assassins was used as the organizational backbone of mass killings directed against communities supportive of the ANC across the country. He said about 120 Five Recce soldiers based at Phalaborwa had been used in attacks in Alexandra, outside Johannesburg, and in the Pietermaritzburg region of Natal, the seed-bed of constant killings involving supporters of Inkatha and the ANC for the last six years. 'People who went to Natal in March came back in June and told me they were tired of killing children and women'. Added to this, Ndimene provided names of a colonel, a commandant and a sergeant-major in Five Recce, and the names of six soldiers who took part in the Jeppe train massacre. It is not surprising that in the course of weekly political meetings, in which commanders spoke favourably of Inkatha, these multi-lingual assault troops were instructed to learn Zulu: a provocation directed as much against Zulu-speakers as against non-Zulu speakers.

The month after Ndimene's evidence, Martin Dolinck, a former high level operative of the NIS, revealed that the DMI had provided training in guerrilla warfare to 150 members of the Inkatha Youth Brigade in the Caprivi Strip in northern Namibia, contrary to President de Klerk's bland assurance that this was merely training in 'VIP protection' (*Independent*, 2 August).⁸ Much of this training was carried out by Ndimene's unit.⁹

Death-squads and Elections

On the same day as Ndimene's story became public the *Weekly Mail* in South Africa and the *Guardian* in Britain provided documentary proof that the government had funded an Inkatha rally in Durban addressed by the Chief Minister of KwaZulu and leader of Inkatha, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, in the month after Mandela's release from prison. In the immediate aftermath of the rally on 25 March, which was funded in cash by the Security Police through at least one payment of R150,000 (£30,000), there followed a week of strife in which 160 people were killed and more than 20,000 – mainly ANC supporters – made homeless. At the same time, documentary proof showed that large sums of money, eventually acknowledged to be more than R1.5 million (over a third of a million pounds), had been paid in the same way over a number of years to help establish and run the United Workers Union of South Africa (Uwusa) the trade union arm of Inkatha, a dummy organisation set up

to rival Cosatu, which had come into being six months previously in May 1986. The formation of Uwusa — set up with the help of the security police under 'Project Omega' in the manner of the Zubatov unions in tsarist Russia — was followed by a horrific wave of violence on the shop floor, directed against members of Cosatu.¹⁰ The government's auditor-general later acknowledged that President de Klerk had signed the audit authorising the transfer of these funds to Inkatha, out of a secret 'slush fund' held by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The local and international outcry that followed these revelations compelled the demotion to less senior government posts at the end of July of the police minister, Adriaan Vlok, together with the grandfather of WHAM and 'total strategy', the Defence Minister, General Malan. A growing weight of evidence, too vast to document here, reveals the interconnection between the DMI and the security police. This includes the command and funding role of either or both in relation to Inkatha, sanctioned at the highest level of government, as well as to a series of other organisations; the direct use of soldiers and security police in massacres and assassinations; and the existence of a whole battery of bodies of armed men controlled by the state and functioning as licensed killers, ranging from a black criminal gang (the amaSinyora) to the racist white Orde Boerevolk (Order of the Boer Nation), responsible for the fatal bombing of blacks at a taxi rank in Pretoria.

This militarization of a whole society, on the principle of the predation of the state on its subjects, finds expression in the military command structure of the police, with its 48 police generals, its direction by present or former security policemen and the integration of the whole force into structures presided over by the DMI. (Similarly the military command structure of the prisons). It is most probable also that the state-run arms company, Armscor — the subject of an indictment in November before a grand jury in Philadelphia, on charges of evading US sanctions on supply of US weapons and technology to Pretoria — was subject to the global outreach of the DMI. In hearings into the crash of a South African Airways jumbo jet SA Helderberg in November 1987, and in documents available to the *Guardian* (8 and 9 November) and the *Weekly Mail*, it emerged that SAA was routinely used to smuggle military materiel to South Africa, including lethal volatile chemicals. This kind of operation was entirely in the remit of the DMI.

The result of the DMI's grand strategy, as Carlin wrote, was a 'general numbness' throughout the whole society, following the killing of over 3,000 blacks in the previous 15 months, with not one person convicted; and the deliberate assassination of more than 60 activists, nearly all members of the ANC, since its unbanning. (*Independent*, 15 October) In Carlin's judgement, the violence had

disastrously undermined the ANC's capacity to organize, not least as it becomes increasingly high-risk to be identified with the ANC; and it has undermined the ANC's image among black people as the all-conquering, all-powerful redeemer.

That is to say, the strategy of the DMI has so far been a considerable success. This judgement is supported by the experience of the most senior organiser of kill-

ings to speak so far, Captain Dirk Coetzee, former commander at the farm 'Vlakplaas', near Pretoria, operational base of the DMI selective assassination corps, the now defunct CCB. On the run from his former colleagues since he was panicked into revealing his own role — after a confession on death-row by a subordinate in the CCB, Butana Almond Nofomela — Coetzee has been protected by his former targets in the ANC in a succession of safe houses in Lusaka and London, and has survived at least one assassination attempt.¹¹ Coetzee sees in these revelations a single strategy that 'falls into one piece, like a puzzle', with overall direction having been agreed at the top, in the cabinet. In his own words, 'They did not unban the ANC without deciding that they would be able to steer the course: the outcome of the eventual elections, as in Namibia.' (*Guardian*, 5 August)

As Coetzee argued in this interview with the *Guardian* correspondent, David Beresford, the cabinet would not necessarily be party to the 'dirty work' on the ground — 'they would not say OK, we'll slaughter people on the trains with AK-47s' — but they were prisoners of the generals where carrying out the strategy was concerned. His conclusion was that:

The security clique, the security culture, controls not only the South African police force, they also control the South African cabinet.

The ministers have to depend on their generals. What does Hermanus Kriel [the new Minister of Law and Order, with responsibility for police] know? He has never been in a charge office in his life, except perhaps to lay a complaint. He has to rely on this clique, this rotten clique.

Confirmation of Coetzee's basilisk eye view of current South African conditions came in July with an interview with another former member of the CCB, Jacques van der Merwe, who said he had participated in 'taking out' (killing) four people in Namibia during the election campaign. The officer who had 'handled' him in Namibia, a colonel in the DMI, working at army headquarters at Voortrekkerhoogte in Pretoria, had attempted on four occasions — most recently in June — to recruit him for similar 'work' in Natal. In an interview with Carlin broadcast on BBC radio and described in the *Independent*, van der Merwe said that the colonel, whom he named, travelled two or three times a week between Pretoria and Natal (the main scene of Inkatha-ANC killings) to 'organize [the] disinformation campaign, propaganda campaign and even the hit-squads in Natal'. ('File on Four', BBC Radio 4, 23 July)

Supposedly closed down after criticism by the (very tame) Harms Commission, the CCB had merely had its operations redistributed. The means by which the CCB survived its dissolution suggests comparison with the experience of Namibia, where strange military personnel surfaced in various positions in the university (the Academy) in Windhoek in early 1990, to the discomfiture of academic staff. According to van der Merwe,

The CCB has officially been disbanded, but it has been given a new structure whereby these people that were in military positions have been infiltrated into semi-state, parastatal departments such as nature conservation, Escom

[the Electricity Supply Commission], agricultural unions and that. So in essence the CCB still exists, though in name it has been disbanded. (Carlin, BBC)

It is as easy to murder a political figure in South Africa as to buy an ice cream. Shortly before the statement by van der Merwe, Sipho Madlala, in hiding for the previous two months, said that he had 'worked for military intelligence in Natal, that he had been seconded to the security police and that he had taken part in hit-squad killings of senior ANC officials'. (*Independent*, 23 July) On the day after the massive two-day political general strike in early November, organised by Cosatu, the ANC and the SACP against the imposition of value-added tax (VAT) on basic consumer goods, two ANC members were shot dead while entering ANC offices in Johannesburg, 12 hours after a prominent ANC activist, Phumzile Mbatha, was shot dead in Tokoza township. The previous Sunday, the chairman of the ANC's Johannesburg regional branch, Mosima 'Tokyo' Sexwale — a long-term veteran of Robben Island and a former Umkhonto commander — survived an attempted assassination when one of three men in a car aimed a shotgun at him. (*Independent*, 7 November) Not long previously, a notorious camp commander at Quatro prison who had recently returned to South Africa, Sizwe Mkhonto (an Umkhonto 'travelling name'), was also the victim of a violent attack by unknown men. (*Independent*, 18 October)¹² It would be very surprising if certain former Umkhonto members in exile, now Askaris, were not an integral part of the DMI strategy of selective assassination of ANC leaders at middle level and at base.

In the Web of 'Psy-ops'

This is an issue which enormously complicates the issue of the gulag penal system of the ANC in exile, run by individuals such as Sizwe Mkhonto. It is in the interest of those who operated this system to describe the ANC mutineers who rebelled against this system as 'enemy agents'; more specifically, as 'Askaris'. As in Namibia, in an effort to publicize their cruel experiences it is probable that a section of the returned victims of the ANC's prison camps has fallen into the net of DMI 'psy-ops'. A crucial distinction needs to be made between these people, however misguided, and former Umkhonto members turned Askaris, such as Nofomela.

The story was told in *Searchlight South Africa* No 6 of a group of former participants in the mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1984 who went through the ordeal of Quatro prison in northern Angola, were released in November 1988, integrated into ANC political structures at Dakawa Development Centre in Tanzania and again suppressed in late 1989 after two former mutineers were elected to the highest positions among ANC exiles in Tanzania. In fear of re-arrest by the ANC security department, this group of eight people fled south through Malawi where they were imprisoned, interviewed by South African security personnel and transported to South Africa in April 1990. The day after their release three weeks later, on 15 May, they gave a factual account of their experiences at a press conference in Johannesburg in the presence of a conservative black priest, Reverend Malamb, and an anti-ANC political commentator from the SABC, Cliff

Saunders. Within two months, one of their number, Siphon Phungulwa, was shot dead in a blatant political assassination after leaving the ANC offices in Umtata in the Transkei. (Trehela, 1991) At the time of writing, no one has yet been arrested for this murder, despite identification of the killers by a survivor. Former prison victims of Quatro are convinced that members of the ANC carried out this murder. Phungulwa had previously been bodyguard in Lesotho to the present Umkhonto chief of staff, Chris Hani, a leading figure in the crushing of the mutiny and subsequent repressions, now general secretary of the SACP.

Shortly after Phungulwa's murder, this group — fearful for their lives, and after considerable harassment — formed the Returned Exiles Coordinating Committee (Recoc) and began to contact parents and relatives of ANC members killed or imprisoned by the security apparatus, Mbokodo, in exile. Recoc's most important publicity effort was to provide detailed information to a veteran white South African journalist, Aida Parker, resulting in publication of an 8-page *Fact Sheet* derived from the *Aida Parker Newsletter* No 141, under the title 'ANC Hell Camps'. Parker has a long history as a publicist close to the South African political structure and hostile to the ANC. The fact sheet includes a brief resume of the history of the mutiny, of the formation of Recoc and the killing of Phungulwa. It contains a 'Preliminary List' of over 200 names of members of Umkhonto who had been killed, tortured, imprisoned or were otherwise believed missing in exile. The most striking feature, however, is 51 photographs — obviously police mug-shots — of Umkhonto members, most of whom had died in exile, many at the hands of the ANC security department. The real names of the people in the photographs is provided. This is important, because members of Umkhonto received 'travelling names' (*noms de guerre*) after going into exile. Their real names were unknown to the main body of ANC exiles, and in most cases would not have been known to members of the Recoc group from their experience in exile. The photographs and the accurate identification of names suggests to other participants in the mutiny, not members of Recoc, that these must have come from DMI or NIS sources. The photographs would have been obtained from the state security forces in frontline states, where South African refugees were registered, photographed and processed on arrival. Such photographs and biographical information routinely (and immediately) became available to the 'Securocrats' in Pretoria.

While these brief biographical notes seem generally accurate, at least one of the individuals whose photograph and name appear in this *Fact Sheet* is regarded by ex-mutineers as actually having been a South African government agent (probably working for the DMI). He was known in Umkhonto as 'Justice', one of the most highly regarded trainees of the generation of 1976 and believed responsible for a mass 'Black September' poisoning of ANC troops at Novo Katenga camp in Angola in 1978, prior to what was later expected to have been an SADF air strike. (The poisoned troops were saved by Cuban doctors. A Cuban military cordon around the camp prevented the supposed agent from signalling to the SADF to launch the air strike, according to ex-mutineers. When the camp was bombed, on 14 March 1979, the troops were not prostrate as planned).¹³

After the revelations about state funding at the highest level for Inkatha, President de Klerk acknowledged in a television address on 30 July that the government had funded also two other black groups: a township body called the Eagles, and an organisation composed largely of (state-appointed) black township officials, the Federated Independent Democratic Alliance (Fida). The Recoc group used Fida's premises as an office. (*Independent*, 22 August) It would have been utterly uncharacteristic for the DMI not to have promoted the accusations of the prison victims of the ANC's security department — the truth of these accusations is not in question — in a manner similar to its operation in Namibia. This does not at all mean that the state has used members of the Recoc group as assassins.

None of the authors of the article on the history of the mutiny in *Searchlight South Africa* No 5 has joined Recoc. One of them in fact travelled to Johannesburg in March to urge leaders of Recoc to disband, because of widespread unease among returned exiles at its relation to the state. While still in Nairobi as refugees from the ANC, the authors of the history of the mutiny had helped to establish another organisation of South African exiles, the South African Returnees Association (Sara). Formed by exiles with a background in different political organisations (including the PAC), the members of Sara drafted a constitution and a manifesto with a strong emphasis on the right to political differentiation and on human rights. Lack of funds, the struggle to exist under conditions of appalling unemployment and the dispersal of members across South Africa prevented these former victims of the ANC security apparatus from keeping Sara in existence, as a forum uncontaminated with supposed association with the state.

While other victims of Quatro strongly oppose Recoc's supposed relation to the state — and have made their views plain to its leading members — the same criterion applies to former mutineers in Recoc as to the former inmates of Swapo's pits in Angola. Primary responsibility for creating conditions so serviceable to state propaganda lies with the ANC. This applies as much to literature deriving from Recoc as to a documentary presented on television by the SABC in the late 1980s, *MK, Disgrace of the Nation*, containing an interview with a former commander of Quatro prison known as Miki, who had been captured in South Africa following a shoot-out with state forces. In South Africa, too, the organizers of state massacres appear also as apostles of human rights.

By now it is clear that despite the evidence of mass support affirmed by the two-day general strike in November, the ANC stands in an even weaker position relative to the state than it did two years ago, at the time of its unbanning. Since then the world has lurched firmly to the right. Racist attacks and anti-immigrant legislation in Europe — barring even seekers of political asylum — are complemented by the appearance in the United States, in election for state governor, of a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan garbed in the business suit of an ordinary Republican Party reptile. These adverse world conditions (for the ANC) enormously strengthen the freedom of the DMI, and its sibling, the NIS, to murder at will in order to carve by force the 'new South Africa' according to the template of the old. President de Klerk, by this interpretation, is merely the constitutional voice of unrestrained violence organized by the state. The monstrous forms of the

DMI are to continue as the centrepiece of South African political life, like the Ku Klux Klan in the post-bellum South, for perhaps decades to come. Apartheid legislation goes; the apartheid state remains.

In exile, the stifling of political discussion within the ANC over three decades, and the police regime instituted over its own members, replicated these conditions, facilitating a profoundly undemocratic political process within South Africa itself. It is a crucial question whether those who fought the South African state from exile with the method of the prison camp can adequately lead the battle for democracy in the 1990s, and beyond. In their open letter to Nelson Mandela of 14 April 1990, the authors of the history of the mutiny in the ANC expressed their view that the yearning for justice in South Africa could only be competently secured by a 'morally clean leadership'. (Ketelo et al, p 67)¹⁴ Beyond constitutions, and beyond the parliamentary fractions of the future, the legacy of the past within the 'new South Africa' — represented most brutally by the DMI — points to the need for a new form of politics. To expunge this terrible history will take a new generation suckled on a different milk.

Notes

1. In South Africa the military is 'positioned at the centre of state decision-making'. (Cock, 'Introduction', p 8) Testimony to this power-shift is provided by Colonel 'Mad Mike' Hoare, the mercenary commander of the failed coup carried out by the South African regime on the Seychelle islands in November 1981. Initial preparations were in the hands of the security police, the National Intelligence Service (NIS), renamed from its previous incarnation as Bureau of State Security. In late September 1979, Hoare was informed by his controller, J Y Claasens, whom he describes as second-in-command of NIS: 'By order of the Prime Minister we [the NIS] have got to back out of this and hand everything over to the Defence Force'. Hoare adds:

It was common knowledge in [security] circles that the Defence Force and the State Security department were deadly enemies, had been for years. It was one of the wounds which it was hoped Prime Minister P W Botha, himself an 'army' man and previously Minister of Defence, would heal. The order was, in effect, a sort of capitulation. (p 78)

Hoare testified to this in a South African court in 1982. Swilling and Phillips report that the secretariat of the State Security Council (SSC) — the super-cabinet that ran affairs under Botha — was drawn 70 percent from the SADF, 20 percent from the NIS and 10 percent from Foreign Affairs. (1989a, p 15) From 1985, the head of the secretariat was General Pieter van der Westhuizen.

2. Even a cursory reading of Basson's biography printed in *Call Them Spies*, from which details in this article are taken, shows the likelihood of SADF funding of the book; and it was for this reason that I stated in *Searchlight South Africa* No 7 that it was 'probable' Basson's SADF connections had 'made publication possible'. (p 84)

3. On 27 February 1989, General Malan described Lubowski as a paid agent of South African military intelligence (ie, the DMI). The Harms Commission, appointed to inquire into assassinations by the state, stated later that Lubowski had received two cheques from SADF sources. (*Libération*, 4 July 1991)

4. When a bank of documents was captured at Renamo headquarters at Gorongosa in Mozambique in August 1985, Liebenberg, then General Officer Commanding Special Forces, was one of a number of very senior SADF figures — mainly in military intelligence — shown to be in direct liaison, either through meetings or messages, with Renamo. (Davies, p 105) Another was General van der Westhuizen, then Chief of Staff (Intelligence), now head of the secretariat of the SSC (see note 1). The DMI controlled Renamo from Phalaborwa in eastern Transvaal.

5. The strategy of WHAM is examined in Oswin (1989). Further examination of the role of the state in organizing massacres can be found in 'The Dogs of War', *Searchlight South Africa* No 7, July 1991. Swilling and Phillips argue that in the South African evolution of the doctrine of WHAM, the

'idealism' of the French general André Beaufré has been 'replaced by the Machiavellian materialism' of the US colonel, John J McCuen, with its emphasis on counter-guerrilla, counter-terror and counter-organizational tactics. (1989b, p 144)

6. In his articles on the DMI, as in his reporting on the trial of Winnie Mandela, and before that on the allegations of the ex-Swapo detainees in Namibia, Carlin was the most consistent and well informed correspondent appearing in the press in Britain.

7. Colonel Jan Breytenbach, the founding commander of 32 Battalion, 'used the well documented experiences and doctrines of the US Special Forces' when he began the unit in August 1975, specifically for intervention in Angola. He used classified US training manuals obtained through 'various contacts I had nurtured over the years and from a course I had attended in the US in my younger days.' (p 13) After an initial career in tanks in the SADF he joined the Fleet Air Arm of the British Royal Navy, taking part in the Suez landings in 1956. Prior to forming 32 Battalion he was founding commander of 1 Reconnaissance Commando, 'the mother unit of Special Forces'. (p 12) In the early 1980s the Special Forces received training in Israel. (*Independent*, 11 November) The horrors of the past few years had an international incubation. General Malan – son of a National Party speaker in the House of Assembly who was also chairman of Volkskas bank – was attached to the French army in Algeria in the early sixties and took the regular command and General Staff Officers Course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1963. (Leonard, p 199)

8. Dolinchek had been seconded by NIS to Hoare's failed coup attempt in the Seychelles. Captured on the islands, he succumbed to the blandishments of his captors and later gave his services to the ANC in Zambia.

9. According to Hoare, about half the men in the Seychelles coup attempt (all white) were

members of the Recce Commando, an elite unit which has a reputation in South Africa equivalent to the Green Berets in America or the SAS in Britain. They were highly experienced in combat and many of them had taken part, they told me, in clandestine operations in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia. But what surprised me most was their high standard of education. The majority of them were university students or were employed in executive positions...These men were politically aware and anxious to help their country in any way they could. (pp 95–96)

They are believed to have been members of Five Recce based at Phalaborwa, the same formation as the full-time, mainly black unit to which Ndimene belonged, though the relation between these highly trained part-time white commandos of 1981 and black soldiers such as Ndimene ten years later is not clear. There were six Recce regiments. The whole Seychelles plot fell under the DMI.

10. For an account of murders of trade unionists in 1986 and 1987 by members of Uwusa, drawn from legal affidavits, see Mzala (ch 9). John Bhekuyise Ntshangase, the official for Natal of the National Union of Mineworkers, was murdered in his union office.

11. Nofomela was a former guerrilla in Umkhonto. To prevent defections back to the ANC from captured guerrillas, who joined the forces of the state when faced with the alternative of death, they were required by the CCB to undergo an initiation: the murder of ANC members or supporters. The psychology is quintessential to the DMI. Use of former ANC 'Askaris' in this fashion derives from British army use of 'pseudo-gangs' against members of the Land and Freedom Army in Kenya in the 1950s, and before that from methods developed in Malaya. In Namibia, the ferocious Koevoet likewise had its fraction of 'turned' former Swapo guerrillas.

12. Mkhonto's 'travelling name' is given slightly inaccurately in the report (by Carlin) as 'Mkhonza'. Described in the history of the mutiny as a 'GDR–Soviet trained intelligence officer and former political student at the Moscow Party Institution', he was camp commander at Quatro during its worst period from 1979 to 1982. (Ketelo et al, p 55) A number of prisoners died under his stewardship. Despite Mandela's assurance in April 1990 that those responsible for abuses had been disciplined by the ANC, Mkhonto held a senior security post over ANC members in Britain before returning to South Africa. He was present at a press conference held by Mandela in London during April. His role in the ANC security department of course in no way justifies an assassination bid on him by operatives of the DMI, or anyone else.

13. The 'Black September' incident is mentioned in a forthcoming book on the relation between the SACP and the ANC by Stephen Ellis, the former editor of the London-based newssheet, *Africa Confidential*. In 1988 Ellis published perhaps the earliest account of the mutiny in Angola. (Vol 29, No 24)

14. At the national consultative conference of the ANC in Durban in July, the retiring president, Oliver Tambo, ritualistically abused 'enemy agents' for the mutiny in Umkhonto in 1984. (*Sunday Star*, 21 July) In August, Mandela met 17 former prisoners released by the ANC from its prison at Mbarara in southern Uganda, whom he described by contrast as 'genuine comrades'. He stated that the ANC had undertaken to investigate every complaint made by its dissenting former members — 'the allegations which were made against them, how they were detained, their treatment in prison, the allegation that they were assaulted, (and) that their property was taken away from them'. He stated: 'We are going to go into all those issues, and every single case is going to be thoroughly investigated'. (*Natal Witness*, 30 August) Within a fortnight he announced the formation of a commission of inquiry to investigate these matters, made up of three jurists: Thembile Louis Skweyiya, SC, Bridget Mabandla and Charles Nupen. (*Business Day*, 11 September) At the time of writing the commission appears not to have functioned. Its terms of reference are not known. Political observers and victims of the ANC security apparatus alike expect nothing to come of it.

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DOCUMENTS OF THE EXILE

ANC support for the invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968.

It is well known that the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 by Warsaw Pact forces was lauded by the SACP as displaying 'superb planning and staff work', in that so huge a force was moved 'with such speed, efficiency and security' in so short a time. (*African Communist* No 36, fourth quarter 1968) What is less well known is that this invasion, expressing for the SACP the internationalist duty of the 'forces of socialism and human liberation', was endorsed by the ANC, in a statement signed by its then secretary-general in exile, Duma Nokwe. (*African Communist*, No 36, reprinted below) At the same time the ANC prison camps, had already come into being in Tanzania to cope with democratic dissent.

Statement by the ANC on the situation in Czechoslovakia.

The Socialist countries are great supporters of the liberation struggle throughout the world and we are confident that their unity and joint might will remain unimpaired by recent events in Czechoslovakia.

The recent statement by Mr Cernic, Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, on the dangerous situation which developed in the country and which was deliberately engineered by right-wing counter-revolutionaries with the support of imperialism, throws further light and justification for the steps taken by the Warsaw Pact countries.

The gravity of the situation which faced the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia and the other socialist states is revealed in the following extract from the Prime Minister's speech to the Prague Parliament reported in the *Dar Es Salaam Standard* of September 14th, 1968:

We did not manage to analyse trends affecting both the internal political arrangement of the country and its consequences for our international position.

...the serious danger from the right led to the conclusion that there was an actual danger to the interests of all socialist countries.

The normalization of the situation in Czechoslovakia is the concern of the family of socialist countries and the peoples of the world.

The fraternal negotiations between the USSR and the Czechoslovak government, and the implementation of the agreements reached, we believe, will solve the problem and thus maintain their unity which will protect and consolidate the achievements of their revolutions and make them continue to march arm-in-arm to fulfil the objectives of international socialism.

September 19th, 1968

D. NOKWE – Secretary-General.

Two letters to Nelson Mandela from the former Umkhonto soldier Olefile Samuel Mngqibisa

written in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 1991.

Searchlight South Africa No7 (July 1991) published a letter of resignation from the ANC by Samuel Mngqibisa (travelling name: Elty Mhlekezi), explaining the character of his imprisonment by the ANC security department in Tanzania in January 1991. Further letters give a picture of the political climate in the ANC camps during the exile. The second, in particular, with its revelation about the prison at Nampundwe in Zambia run by the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (Zapu, then in alliance with the ANC), indicates the manner in which loyal guerrilla fighters such as Mngqibisa were abused.

Mngqibisa's colleague Barney Molokoane, who narrowly avoided sharing the same fate in Zambia, is remembered as a respected guerrilla commanders in Umkhonto. Coming from Soweto, Molokoane was aged 18 in 1976, the year of the Soweto school students revolt. He took a leading part in the sabotage strike at the Sasolburg oil-from-coal plant in 1980, participated in the bombing of the SADF headquarters at Voortrekkerhoogte, Pretoria, and was killed in an attack, launched from Mozambique, on the fuel depot and military base at Secunda in the eastern Transvaal. His other colleague, Krustchev (also known in Umkhonto as Jeremiah Mlonzi), was killed in a skirmish with South African state forces in the western Transvaal, in an operation mounted from Botswana.

Deputy President,
ANC of South Africa.
2nd March 1991.

Re: OLEFILE SAMUEL MNGQIBISA

I, the above mentioned, wish to inform the leadership of the ANC of the problem which led to my sudden resignation from the ANC on 07/02/1991. I took this decision in order to save my life from the two thugs in our Security Department, namely Daffter and Cliff. I am still regarding myself as a full member of the ANC.

I must point out that I didn't really resign, but was sidestepping thugs who wanted to swallow me alive. I am ready and prepared to explain my problem to the ANC, in the near future inside the country, where I will be free from physical and psychological harassment. I would like the two thugs in my presence to prove to the ANC, about their allegations and malicious propaganda against me.

I must highlight to you, Baba Mandela, that there has never been 'Freedom of Speech' inside the ANC for all the years we spent in exile. We have been living under a state of emergency throughout, because of these thugs. For instance, during my interrogation I was told to explain what was the reaction of the Dakawa community when I allegedly addressed them, telling them that the leaders were 'Sell-outs'. This was one of the five questions I was told to write on what they termed 'my own confession'. I wrote anything near because I was afraid of torture.

If we were in our country, I was going to take legal steps against them. I doubt that some of the Security members are really serving the ANC. The moment of listening to the rank and file is fast approaching and one day the truth will break through. Every member of the ANC who was in exile must be ready for accountability. Our parents love us and our people in general would like us to tell them more about what is the ANC.

I must also inform you, Baba, that I never forwarded my resignation copy to the British Embassy as shown on paper. I devised this tactic so that these thugs must never think of kidnapping me when I move around Dar Es Salaam. Anyway, if I had given that embassy a copy, that was the only way to secure my life from those barbarians. I am aware that they are going to shoot me inside the country to suppress information I will be bringing forward to the people. But I will rest in peace because my parents will know who took away my life.

We all have a task to scrutinize every member of the Security to prove if they are for the ANC. Some four-five years back, a Tanzanian government representative in Mazimbu discovered one comrade being tortured to death by three Security thugs named Stalin, Vusi and Lancaster. The court of law sentenced them to four years imprisonment. Stalin used to be boastful, saying they do this to defend the ANC.

Some Security members crossed the floor over to the regime after victimizing lots of comrades here. I can quote one named Miki, who was a warder in our notorious prison [Quatro] in Angola. I was with Miki in Lusaka in 1984 before he left for Lesotho on a mission. Later we learned that he surrendered to the regime just after entering the country. Now, can we say that such people are defending the ANC? NO!

The two thugs in Dakawa have put me in a very bad position. I am fortunate because I married a Tanzanian woman. Her two sisters have offered me a room to sleep in. They feed me and help me financially.

Thank you so much.

Yours in the struggle.

Forward to the National Conference.

O.S. Mngqibisa

**Baba Nelson Mandela,
Republic of South Africa.
April 11th, 1991.**

Dear Father,

I hope and believe that you received a letter I wrote to you on 02/03/1991, concerning my resignation from the ANC. I also copied you my resignation letter I wrote to the ANC's chief representative in Dar Es Salaam, plus a copy of the letter I wrote to the young devil in Dakawa, named Jackie Morake, who is a coordinator there.

I want to categorically stress that I took this extreme decision because my life was in a serious danger. I was shot passport photos a week after my detention at Dakawa prison. Those Security hooligans wanted to smuggle me 'officially' to the ANC's second-most notorious prison in Mbarara, Uganda, for crucifixion. Unfortunately for them, I could not give myself up like Jesus gave himself up to the Jews. I am an MK cadre, know my Movement and have had a bitter experience in the ANC.

I was first detained in the ANC in Lusaka in December 1978 after a hot debate with four ANC/MK so-called commanders in our residence (Yellow House) in Lusaka. This took place in a meeting we cadres had requested with those civilian, but maybe educated, commanders. I refer to Keith Mokoape and Snooky. They reinforced themselves with the late Mfundisi and Solly Simelane, because they could not argue with us militarily. The meeting was held in Yellow House and the aim was to come and iron out problems we faced by then.

You will recall that we were just fresh from a very tough military survival course in one of Zapu's camps outside Lusaka. Some comrades amongst us were survivors of Ian Smith's military raids on a Zapu camp named FC (a former Frelimo camp). There were comrades with serious injuries from that raid. Yellow House was a transit for trained cadres in a last preparation for infiltration into the country, to carry out urban guerrilla warfare attacks. As stated, the cadres requested the meeting to solve problems, being lack of medical treatment for the injured comrades and also shortage of foodstuffs.

The course we underwent explains itself: 'survival course'. Zapu camps had insufficient food supplies, and the course rations your meal or you sometimes don't eat at all. So the policy in MK is that after that training, you are well fed to recover strength. Our complaint was for enough food and medical care for the comrades. I was one of the speakers in the meeting and spoke like a soldier. I shaked, shocked the desk commanders with my heavy voice. They saw me to be arrogant and called me sorts of names.

The following morning Solly lied and said I am wanted at the office. We drove to town and later to Zimbabwe House, which served as Zapu offices. He parked the car inside the yard and rushed to the offices. Whilst waiting for him, two wrongly informed Zipra cadres [troops of the Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Army, Zapu's military wing] approached and ordered me out of the car. One armed with an AK47, the other with a light machine gun (LMG), they sandwiched and escorted me to the offices. Later Solly said, 'You will stay here until further notice'. Further notice meant fourteen months behind bars. I was kept in isolation ('Kulukudu') for two days at the backyard.

Zimbabwe House served two purposes, an office and a police station. After two days I was transferred to a bigger cell where Zipra cadres were packed like sardine fishes. Everybody slept on his side and there was no breathing space. A week later I was transferred to Nampundwe, an area situated about 30-40 kilometres west of Lusaka. The place seemed an old farm with a dilapidated house. It had a square high fence and barbed wire on top. I was in a state of panic, because that was a period

when Ian Smith was attacking Zambia almost weekly. I was interrogated by three heavily armed Zipra Forces officers in a tent and two others standing guard at the door.

I tasted prison for the first time in the ANC. Back home I never even entered a police station cell. My parents are also shocked and surprised at the state of affairs I find myself in. Many parents in South Africa will be disappointed to find out that their loved ones were and are still detained by the organisation they support so much. I also support the idea that an independent commission of inquiry be set up, although I was in Zambia when the mutiny 'Mkatashingo' took place in Angola in 1984. If the soldiers were wrong, as alleged by the military officials, the investigation will prove that.

In February 1979 at about 2.00 pm Nampundwe Camp was raided by three Rhodesian Air Force jets. The prisoners' house was the first target, as the camp commander had dispersed other soldiers except the prisoners. It was traditional for Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation to announce whenever Smith was to attack. So, when everybody dispersed, Zipra cadres informed us about the raid which was about to take place that day. Before the raid, the camp commander passed by and said to us, 'Today you are going to die, you Selous Scouts' (meaning traitors).

We were 79 in number, and I was the only MK member in there. That day the gate was tightened with a thick electrical cable and to our surprise, for the first time a man was standing guard at the gate with an LMG. Three jets bombarded the house. Fortunately the pilot of the jet carrying bombs miscalculated and the bomb landed outside the yard. Another jet had a machine gun and the other one was carrying napalm. There was confusion and screaming in the yard and I managed to escape with some light injuries. Lots of Zapu cadres were badly injured, some with serious napalm burns.

I was one of the first to jump into an oncoming ambulance. Two Cuban medical officers armed with AK47s were escorting the ambulance. We were rushed to University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka. Some comrades died the following morning at the hospital. I was discharged the following morning and discharged to Zapu's Makeni Clinic for further treatment. After a few days I went to Yellow House and spent one night there.

The following morning Keith Mokoape came and drove me to Zimbabwe House again. There he said to me, 'I don't have powers to release you, the only person who can release you is Joe Modise'. Anyway, the day they attended our meeting at Yellow House, they told us they were delegated by Joe Modise to come and listen to our complaints. So it was clear that Joe Modise authorised my detention. He is known as the mastermind of ANC prisons. I was not his favourite and I was not easily manipulated.

I was later transferred to Zapu's main prison in Mboroma No.2 in the north part of Zambia. My three comrades who were also vocal in our meeting at Yellow House — the late comrades Barney Molokoane and Krustchev, and Ace (who is studying in one of the Scandinavian countries) — were all sent to Angola for punishment. Mind you, we were labelled enemy agents because of our talking too much. But we proved them wrong by continuously carrying out tasks of the ANC. I was released in February 1980 and my two comrades fell in battle inside the country.

Joe Modise later sent me to Tanzania in 1984 because I was a nuisance in front of him. My crime in the ANC was: (1) To point out wrongs I see; (2) I was accused of being friendly to comrades who took part in the mutiny in 1984. After their arrival in Dakawa in 1988 from prison in Angola, Alfred Nzo addressed the community and said his words: 'The comrades should be integrated and have a right to participate in all ANC structures, including political ones'. (3) My third crime was to be friendly to white volunteers/expatriates within our community.

For example I had two British friends who were instructors at our Vocational Training Centre in Dakawa. One of them was my plumbing instructor, and during my interrogation I was asked why was I too close to them. I failed to answer that stupid question. In the ANC we were discouraged to study in western countries, because it was said the CIA would swallow us. But leaders' sons and daughters studied and are studying there. Our Security Department has tarnished the name of the ANC.

I conclude by saying, Tyranny is tyranny, we must expose it to the international community. Thanks.

Yours in the struggle.

O.S. Mngqibisa

cc. Walter Sisulu, SA.

cc. To my Father, SA.

cc. Chief Representative, ANC of South Africa, Dar Es Salaam.

NB I shortened my bitter story.

Chauvinistic harassment of Zulu-speakers in ANC camps in Tanzania in 1991, following the township slaughters on the Witwatersrand.

As early as the 1960s there were reports of ethnic conflicts in the ANC camps in Tanzania. During the 1970s and 1980s misgivings were frequently expressed among exiles that privileges tended to accrue to Xhosa-speakers. In this respect, the feared security chief Mzwandile Piliso was regarded as particularly culpable. A major theme in the mutiny in Umkhonto in Angola in 1984, however, was the prominent place among the mutineers of young Xhosa-speaking soldiers who were strongly critical of all forms of corruption, including ethnic favouritism. (Four of the five authors of the history of the mutiny in *Searchlight South Africa* No 5 are Xhosa-speakers). The following press release from the British-based pressure group Justice for Southern Africa indicates how far ethnic hostilities had deteriorated in the camps by mid-year. Ten Zulu-speaking members of Umkhonto were imprisoned in June, apparently following the non-fatal stabbing of an ANC member, Martin, at Mazimbu at night-time. Although subjected to brutal abuse by Tanzanian forces, they were not charged by Tanzanian courts. Eventually, after an intensive campaign led by Mrs Linda Ntshangase, her husband Bongani Ntshangase and four others were released at the Tanzanian Prime Minister's office on 1 August, where they were also informed that they had been expelled from the ANC. The demand throughout of Mrs Ntshangase was that her husband be charged or released.

Bongani and Linda Ntshangase later fled to Kenya, following threats from Tanzanian officials that Mrs Ntshangase had embarrassed the state. At the request of Mrs Ntshangase, the campaign Justice for Southern Africa had appealed on behalf of the arrested men to the British Foreign Office, the Tanzanian High Commission, Amnesty International and the ANC secretary general. An account of the arrests was broadcast on the BBC World Service on 17 August. As late as the end of September, however — long after statements by ANC leaders Nelson Mandela, Pallo Jordan and others that all ANC prisoners in exile had been released — there was information that the following ANC members remained in prison at Ruth First prison (Plot 18), Dakawa, in Tanzania: Justice Gumbi (Monde Masike), Albert Bhengu (Vuma Mbhele), Terror Wonder (Shabalala Bra Bhengu), Schaft Lwane Khoza, George Kitseng and Vusi.

By October, it appeared that ethnic-related violence in the camps had sharply increased, leading to real terror and one death. It was also suspected that prisoners continued to be held at a Ugandan Air force base in the Luwero region of Uganda.

JUSTICE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

Press Release 22 August 1991

A Purge of Zulu-speakers in ANC Camps in Tanzania?

A purge appears to be taking place in the ANC refugee camps at Mazimbu and Dakawa, south of Dar Es Salaam, organised by the ANC security department 'Mbokodo' with the assistance of the Tanzanian government. This involves the arrest, and detention without trial, in June of ten Zulu-speaking members of the ANC at the *Ruth First* prison at Plot 18 in Dakawa.

Following representations by the pressure group *Justice for Southern Africa* to the British Foreign Office, the Tanzanian High Commission, the ANC chief representative in Tanzania and the ANC leadership in South Africa, five of the ten were released in the office of the Prime Minister in Dar Es Salaam on 1 August. One of them, Bekezela Lungisani Mabaso, had reportedly been beaten while in detention with a steel rod by a member of the ANC security department, assisted by Tanzanian security guards (letter from Tanzania, 12 August 1991).

A letter of protest has been sent by Mr Mabaso and another of the prisoners, Mr Bongani Ntshangase, to Nelson Mandela. In the letter they state:

We, Zulu-speaking members of the ANC, have all along been called funny names like S'qhaze, Drum 10, Manpower and worst of all Inkatha bandits. When the young lions came back from the [Umkhonto we Sizwe military training] camps [at Iringa in Tanzania], they got furious because they had left the country because of Inkatha.

In a further letter (dated 15 August), the two men state that Zulu-speaking members of the ANC were especially angry at being called Inkatha bandits 'because they had left South Africa as a result of Inkatha harassing and killing innocent people'.

Dismissals at Somafco

The purge has extended to one of the best known ANC educators abroad, the Zulu-speaker Mr Zakahle Zindela, known to hundreds of ANC exiles (now both inside and outside South Africa) as 'Uncle Slim'. Mr Zindela was dismissed from his job as deputy principal at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (Somafco) at Mazimbu — the main ANC secondary school in exile — together with the head of the department of English, Mr Mandla Khuzwayo, also a Zulu-speaker. In the letter to Mr Mandela, Mr Ntshangase and Mr Mabaso state that the dismissals of Messrs Zindela and Khuzwayo took place 'because they are allegedly Zulu instigators' and in order for the 'authorities to justify their false allegations against Zulus'.

Mr Zindela a founder of Somafco in 1979, negotiated an agreement with Unesco in 1990, by which it undertook to pay the salaries of teachers at Somafco. News of his dismissal and the alleged charges against him shocked ANC members in Britain who had known him in Tanzania. In his letter to Mr Mandela, Mr Ntshangase, a former teacher in South Africa and a teacher at Somafco, accused four ANC officials in Tanzania as well as the 'ANC security of East Africa' of being responsible for 'degrading malpractices' against him.

One of the four he accused of malpractice is Mr Don Ngakane, the principal of Somafco, who worked there as a teacher under the direction of Mr Zindela from 1980 to 1987. Mr Ngakane was promoted as principal over the head of Mr Zindela in 1989 when the previous head of Somafco, Mr Andrew Masondo — accused of serious human rights abuses by ANC members in exile — was appointed ANC chief representative in Uganda in 1989. ANC members state that Ngakane is close to Masondo and the security apparatus.

Disturbing Questions

Disturbing questions are raised by the arrest of the ten Zulu-speaking members of the ANC and the dismissals of Mr Zindela and Mr Khuzwayo. Somafco is funded by semi-official agencies responsible to the governments of countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Germany. Teachers' salaries are funded by Unesco.

To what extent were the dismissals of Mr Zindela (as well as those of Mr Khuzwayo and Mr Ntshangase) made on the base of non-educational criteria? What implications could such an act have for political manipulation of teachers in South

Africa in the future? In a letter dated 14 August, Mrs Linda Ntshangase states that her husband's salary cheques for May and June (paid by Unesco) had been seized by the ANC authorities at Mazimbu. Her husband and the other ex-detainees are now destitute. What kind of responsibility is exercised by semi-governmental donor agencies for ensuring that funds going to ANC educational projects at Mazimbu and Dakawa are not abused?

Further questions are raised concerning the apparent connivance of Tanzanian authorities in malpractices by the ANC security department. In their letter to Mr Mandela, Mr Ntshangase and Mr Mabaso state that they are 'now living under fear both from Tanzanians as well as ANC security in East Africa'.

In her letter, Mrs Linda Ntshangase calls for 'fast action' to assist her and her husband and Mr Mabaso because 'the Tanzanian government...is harrassing us' as well as the ANC authorities. She writes that fellow Zulu-speakers in exile in Tanzania, who assisted her, are also 'in peril concerning this case both from the ANC and the Tanzanian government'. She states that she feels 'absolutely insecure' and fears returning to Mazimbu at the end of the month, in order to collect her and her husband's belongings, 'because I might be assassinated'.

The Role of the Tanzanian Government

First reports of the arrests indicated that the ten Zulu-speakers had been arrested on 10 June by the Tanzanian Field Force Unit (FFU), a para-military unit, following the non-fatal stabbing of an ANC member at Dakawa. In a letter to the British Foreign Office of 7 July, a representative of the campaign *Justice for Southern Africa* stated that the ten men had reportedly been arrested and locked up by the FFU, and beaten up. The men had later been released by the Tanzanian military authorities into the hands of the ANC security department.

Mr Mabaso was then allegedly beaten by Tanzanian security guards, as well as by ANC security officials, while held in the ANC prison at Dakawa. According to Mrs Ntshangase, her husband and a colleague were released at the Prime Minister's office in Dar Es Salaam on 1 August. In the presence of a member of the ANC security department ('Comrade George'), her husband was told by an official of the Tanzanian government ('Comrade Alex') that he was 'no more a member of the ANC, from now he will be a normal refugee'. When Mrs Ntshangase asked for an official expulsion letter, she was told by Comrade Alex that it was at the Home Affairs ministry.

Mrs Ntshangase writes that she and her husband were then told by this Tanzanian official that she had 'provoked the Tanzanian government because I've exposed secrets and I'm helping an enemy by so doing'. She continues:

The Prime Minister's Office is a mouthpiece. Presently they [her husband and his friends] have nowhere to stay and no money for food after being detained without trial for 51 days, being tortured by the FFU and the ANC.

Now we do not know what to do. We are absolutely dissatisfied about this decision since they [the ANC and the Tanzanian government] have refused to take this case to the Tanzanian courts and get a fair trial.

From the time that her husband and others were arrested, Mrs Ntshangase consistently called on the Tanzanian government to place the case under its own judicial authority. As *Justice for Southern Africa* stated in its letter to the British Foreign Office of 7 July, Mrs Ntshangase 'called for the matter to go before the Tanzanian courts in the normal way'. This request has not been met. Five of the original ten Zulu-speakers who were arrested in June are still held by unknown people at an unknown place — almost certainly, by the ANC security department — in an arbitrary fashion, with the apparent connivance of the Tanzanian Prime Minister's Office.

The ANC and its Constitution

A further disturbing element in this matter concerns apparent violation by the ANC authorities in Tanzania of the organization's own constitution. In his letter to Mr Mandela, Mr Ntshangase states:

Presently I am staying with Tanzanians because I have been expelled from the ANC, together with Lungisani Mabaso. We were expelled by the Chief Rep [Manala Manzini, since moved to Britain for study] and his deputy [Henry Chiliza]. The Chief Rep refused to show me or give us the expulsion letters. I am therefore dissatisfied because the ANC security had detained and tortured us for two months without trial. According to the ANC code of conduct, I ought to have been charged and tried for what I had allegedly done.

According to the code of conduct, I was expecting the tribunal to have tried us and recommended to the Secretary General for our expulsion. The SG should have suspended us pending the seating of the National Conference which has powers to expel a member from the movement. It is therefore my sincere belief that the President [Mr Mandela] and the NEC will make an impartial investigation to our case and see to it that justice is done in the ANC.

Manzini and Chiliza are among the four ANC officials accused by Mr Ntshangase of being responsible for 'degrading malpractices' against him. The third is the principal of Somafco, Mr Ngakane. The fourth, Mr Moffat Monakgotha, is described by ANC members as an official of the ANC security department (Mbokodo) working in the office of the director of Somafco.

Apart from the anomaly of the ANC having apparently violated its own constitution while preparing to negotiate a new constitution for South Africa, the inter-connection between education and political police in the school system of the ANC in exile must be brought to an end, along with its prisons for political critics.

Up till the time of the letter by Mr Ntshangase and Mr Mabaso of 15 August, it seems likely that five Zulu-speakers continue to be detained by the ANC without trial. The recent statement by the ANC that the release of all its prisoners was complete (*Financial Times*, 19 August) appears less than candid.

JUSTICE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

Acting Secretary: Bill McElroy, 17 Tudor Court, Tudor Grove, London E9 7QS

RETURN OF AN EXILE: SEPTEMBER 1991

Baruch Hirson

[In December 1973 I left South Africa on an exit permit after completing a prison sentence of nine years. Return was not permitted, but following announcements that exiles would be allowed to return, a visa was requested. This was granted but only for two months, with no right to reentry. In September 1991 I visited South Africa. There I talked to academics, students, trade unionists and political activists, to friends and chance contacts, and followed the local press, TV and radio programmes. I have not named my informants or provided details of some of these discussions lest the persons concerned are embarrassed by such disclosures, but I use the information they kindly provided in writing this account. Without claiming to have seen more than a small part of the country, this essay (written in November 1991) is an account of what events two years after the unbanning of proscribed organizations].

A Changed Society?

I was asked what I thought about the changes occurring in South Africa after I had been in the country for six hours. The same question was asked repeatedly during my six weeks stay. Some used this approach as a step towards starting a conversation, but in many cases there was a desire to probe below the surface, to seek an answer to what was happening. There was a mixture of optimism and also of fear; of hope that at last there might be meaningful change, but also doubt whether the political organizations had the will or the desire to transform the country.

I could not answer the questions posed so starkly at first but as the days passed I grew more confident of my replies. I was asked to talk on the subject on several of the campuses I visited: there was change, I said, but there was certainly no transformation. But, as obvious as that observation was, I was not yet able to get to grips with past theories about the process of change in South Africa, so many of which had been nullified by the events of the past two years. Gone at a stroke was the Stalinist claim that South Africa was an example of 'Colonialism of a Special Type' (or CST as its advocates called it. Equally obvious was the demise of the interpretation the South African Trotskyists had given to the theory of 'permanent revolution'.¹ The contention that only the working class, in its struggle against capitalism, would sweep away segregation (or *apartheid*) was obviously untenable: equally untenable, in view of recent events, was the contention that the central issue in the country was the land question. Theory, as interpreted and espoused by several political groups, had been held up to the harsh reality of events and had been found wanting. What then was the socialist answer to be?

Change without Transformation

In his novel *The Leopard*, set in Sicily when Garibaldi's troops seemed about to sweep away the feudal past and unify Italy, Giuseppe di Lampedusa had the local feudal lord advise his retinue that: 'For things to remain the same, things must change'. This piece of political wisdom has still to be absorbed by political analysts

who fail to understand the adaptability of the ruling classes when they can find no other way out of their difficulties. Changes might not be welcome to the governments of the day — smug in their belief that 'there is no alternative' — but ultimately they do find a way out when faced with the collapse of the system they control. Then change becomes the order of the day, provided only that the basic elements of the society they control can be preserved.

There are obvious changes in South Africa, some of them quite radical. The external signs of apartheid have gone — and the forced separation of peoples has vanished. The separate queues at official institutions, the exclusion of blacks (and this means people once classified as Indians or Asians, Coloureds and Africans) from places of leisure or entertainment, the tight residential exclusiveness, have gone or been altered significantly. Many practices, once illegal and subject to imprisonment, are now tolerated if not approved. People of different colour and ethnicity can now walk together unhindered, frequent cafes and theatres, bathe on the same seafront; sit together at lecture benches in the universities. Couples of mixed ethnicity live together legally. Black security guards, rifles over shoulder, or guns in holster, are everywhere — in the army, the police force or privately employed. Occupations, once confined to whites under job reservation, are now open to all — from telephonists to air hostesses, shop assistants, factory operatives, and even foremen and some managers. In fact, from one vantage point, the country is almost 'normal'. Almost, but not quite.

The open colour bar has gone, but has been replaced by a poverty line that is not very distant from the colour line that once controlled South African life. Beaches are no longer officially segregated, but patrons at some resorts must now pay an entrance fee — and that keeps out most 'uppity' blacks; some schools, particularly the private schools, are open, but formerly white government schools have quotas for black enrolment. However, most schools are situated in the townships, and those are segregated in line with the overall housing in the country. In fact, except for the privileged few, and that includes some professional men, business men and politicians, blacks still live in the old townships — if they are fortunate. Some people do have amenities like electricity, or even water-borne sewage. Most still use candle-light and outdoor bucket latrines. Others live in shantytowns that proliferate in the towns. It is said that there are some six million without houses in the towns and several housing schemes that are underway are in fact replications of the old segregated locations with site-and-service structures. That is, shacks built in districts in which standpipe water and bucket latrines are provided. And they still pack into overcrowded trains to get to and from work, if they can find jobs

Finding employment is a job in itself. Few blacks have qualifications for skilled or even semiskilled work, most are entirely unskilled. In a country in which the number of unemployed is anything from 5.5–8 million (and there are no accurate statistics), this leaves large numbers destitute. The unemployed obviously fill the shantytowns, but many with work remain without houses.

The traveller who dares wander out of the white suburbs in Johannesburg — those fortified areas where houses have high walls, burglar-proofed windows and doors, and electronic alarms — will soon come across custombuilt slum areas.

Yet, let it be repeated. This is a great change from the regime of yesteryear. Even the grimmest remains of segregation have softened at the edges. And for the richer blacks there are new privileges and new comforts. One report has it that the highest concentration of black servants is no longer in the white suburbs, but in the wealthier regions of black townships. Without the new black petty bourgeoisie, the unemployment among servants would be truly alarming.

This is change, and the change is noticeable. The former lily-white centres of big towns, and Johannesburg is probably the biggest, are now filled with black stall holders, black vendors and black customers, where once the whites swept all before them. Swept, that is, all but the plastic and paper rubbish before them. Now the dirt piles up to show that there are new occupants and that there is little money for the cleaners who once kept the streets clean for the whites who patronised those shops. Furthermore the buses that once plied between the town centre and the townships have disappeared. In their place stands rows of taxis, each one of which takes ten or more commuters, each competing for custom. Big business has moved in and the intense rivalry has produced open warfare: with taxis being put to the torch or, if less lucky, destroyed in a hail of gunshot. But then, as champions of the free market should note: progress through the market does have its 'ups and downs'.

The roots of despair — and of fury

The sights, smells and sounds are the first indications of change in South Africa. But obviously these changes are relative and many of the most obnoxious features of the 'old regime' still survive. The shantytowns are the worst. The townships, the wealthier regions notwithstanding, are next. And in gradations, the suburbs get cleaner as the wealthier areas are reached. In Zimbabwe, where the word township is no longer acceptable under Robert Mugabe, the word is no longer used: these slum areas are now designated 'high density' as distinct from 'low density' (for the select white suburbs). South Africa has not yet altered sufficiently for the verbal upgrading of townships to 'high density areas'.

Amenities in the townships are sparse or non-existent. Housing has improved only marginally, only a few main roads are tarred; electricity where provided, is often disconnected because payments are behindhand. The schools in the townships, where they operate at all, are as disreputable as the areas in which they stand. The buildings are unsuitable for teaching, the toilet facilities are barely usable, and the classrooms are grossly overcrowded. However the people have in some regions spilt out of the townships into areas that are described as 'grey'. That is, some of the once white suburbs have now been taken over by peoples of all ethnic groups. For some, this has led to a share of the facilities once available only to whites: for others it has only meant a move to new degrading conditions, to overcrowded buildings and outhouses, vacated by those whites who would no longer live in such dilapidated areas. Ethnicity is no longer the sole criterion for privilege. The country is approaching the Brazilian model where colour is less significant than the size of the purse. As is said in that country: the rich, no matter what the colour of the skin, are obviously 'white', the poor are even more obviously 'black'.

However, even this is only part of the story and does not reflect conditions in the rural areas. Large parts of the country have now suffered several years of drought. Many white farmers have been driven to bankruptcy and some have been forced to sell their land. They usually find the means to survive: their onetime black farmhands are destitute and starving. Some white farmers even get loans — if they belong to the rightwing political groups. In the black rural 'homelands' of the Transkei and Ciskei, the fields are parched, the livestock decimated and the crops destroyed. These people get no loans and have no obvious means of survival. Furthermore, where once the black rural population could offer some shelter or support for the townsfolk, however limited, that buffer has disappeared. Neither rural nor urban poor can hope for succour from their kinsmen.

Despite all the changes, the Bantustans still exist. They still have a nominal independence, with a homemade officialdom and bureaucracy, police force and army. These employees still draw their fat salaries, and in most cases, act as satraps of the central government. In a few exceptional cases the governments of the day seem to exercise some care for their populations. In general, however, the Bantustan leaders form the ancillary force behind which the government still manipulates power. As every observer is fully aware, after the disclosure of government funding to the KwaZulu Inkatha Freedom Party, the Bantustans provide launching-pads for the destabilisation of the country.

Crime, Murder and Gang-Warfare

The daily (English medium) press in South Africa is both parochial and trivialising. It offers its readers a diet of sex, scandal and crime — and tucked away, usually in its inner pages, there are some references to affairs abroad. The newspapers are also provincially focused, reflecting the historical differences in a country where unity has been honoured in the breach. Events in Natal, say, important as they might be for noting trends in the country, are not necessarily reported in other provinces. However, this does not seem to bother the average reader. The sports news, and all the juicier bits of scandal, receive national coverage.

At first glance it is possible to believe, in the same way as the yellow press everywhere, that sex and crime get the main headlines because it is these stories that are the mainstay of the commercial press. In fact, much of the criminal activity in the country is underreported. The activities of marauding vigilante gangs, the warring taxi-companies, the arson and murder in the townships, the hijacking of cars (which requires passengers in moving cars to keep their doors locked), the burglaries, muggings and rapes, are only covered when they are more than usually sensational.

Some of these nefarious activities are ascribable to criminal gangs, and social conditions in the townships makes some of this explicable. The misery of people who drifted into the towns without any hope of homes or jobs, the wide-spread unemployment and the social dislocation in the townships, must be added to the climate of lawlessness after years of revolt, and of contempt for the police and the army. This is the road to nihilism. What else can be expected of a generation, with little formal education after years of school boycotts, with no hope of securing

employment or of occupying houses by legal means. Youth with this background have terrorised whole communities (including the necklacing of opponents), or been guilty of mindless gang activity.

Yet this is a smaller part of the terror that has spread through the black communities. The mayhem that dominates so many of the townships is masterminded by the state. It repeats the terror unleashed previously on the populations of Namibia and the states bordering South Africa and, more particularly, of the gangsters who lead Renamo in Mozambique. The deliberate destabilisation programme that the South African state orchestrated for so many years beyond its borders has turned inwards. The armed thugs who rampage through the trains killing at random, the sharpshooters who pick out political leaders, or the men who toss grenades into political gatherings, are part of a vast plot to deflect political energy and bring the political parties into disrepute. These acts are also the fruits of dehumanizing segregation: *the blacks who were recruited into the armed forces of the state have proved to be the most ruthless killers in the country.*

The actions of the groups that perpetrate these terrorist acts, whether co-ordinated or not, have been perfected by the internal security apparatus of the state. There are times when it manipulates the antagonism between political groups to its own end, using, for example, the Inkatha Freedom Party, in its attacks on the ANC, while not hesitating, when convenient, to mount attacks on Inkatha members in acts of political provocation. Using the divisions inside the communities, the state has revived its former 'Total Strategy' (described in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 2), using its institutions of control and destruction to undermine its political opponents. Just prior to my arrival in South Africa it was estimated that in the 12 months till the end of June 1991 3,180 people died, 6,855 were injured (some seriously), and 8,211 persons arrested in politically motivated clashes.² There was no indication throughout my stay that the level of violence had abated.

Mingled with the stories of township brutality, and of marauding killers on commuter trains, the newspapers reported clashes between members of the ANC and Inkatha. There were photographs of hostel dwellers carrying so-called 'cultural' weapons as they marched down the township streets, and counter pictures of ANC gatherings. But there was nothing to suggest that either party was involved in the shoot-ups, or in fact with the random killings: of grenades tossed into gatherings, or of the shooting of leaders of Civic Associations, or indeed of the crowd that gathered at funerals of those shot down. There were also disclosures of *koevoet* troops ('crowbar' troops — trained by the South African army to shoot down members of Swapo in Namibia before it achieved political independence) encamped in the Northern Transvaal, and there were disclosures of covert action by special squads attached to the police or the army. It was these men, it was suggested, who were behind the spate of township killings. Although this was not definitely established, for lack of direct proof, this was the view accepted in movements opposed to de Klerk's government, and responsibility was laid at the door of the security apparatus for the killings.

It was against this background of township mayhem that a meeting to sign a 'Peace Accord' was announced. After three days of meetings an accord was

signed. From the outset there appeared to be problems. Members of Inkatha, all clutching their 'cultural' weapons, filled the street outside the meeting and gave no appearance of wanting peace or the accord. Then it was leaked to the press that Chief Buthelezi, the head of the KwaZulu government and leader of Inkatha, had to be cajoled to appear at the signing ceremony. Cars were rushed to Natal to persuade the leader to come — and he was obviously a reluctant signatory. Several days later an 'explanation' was offered: Chief Buthelezi had mislaid his glasses and had first to acquire new ones. I was told that what was not leaked was the fact that Mr Mandela also was a reluctant signatory. He said that he had a previous engagement and had to be persuaded that signing the accord required that this be given priority. Or did he know that the accord was meaningless and sought a way out?

The question of Inkatha members carrying 'cultural' weapons was also discussed at the meeting. First the government spokesmen claimed that the weapons could not be banned by regulation but had to wait for the next parliamentary session when legislation could be tabled. Only investigation by Cosatu delegates showed that this was not true — after which, it appears, the government declared that they could not ban Inkatha followers carrying weapons while the ANC refused to disband its armed force: Umkhonto we Sizwe. On that issue the discussion on weaponry was blocked.

In terms of the Accord a set of supervisory bodies were to be established to bring peace to the townships. This would be a slow process and in the interim period there were appeals for peace in the townships. Few people with whom I talked believed this would work, and indeed the killings continued as before. There were no obvious calls for political work in the townships to stop the violence, no signs of work by the political groups to persuade the communities to end the conflicts, and no evidence that people in the communities were being taught how to protect each other. Little could be expected from Inkatha, but the ANC and with it Cosatu and the SACP have not been conspicuous in organizing action in the communities. All initiative seems to have been surrendered after a miserable piece of paper was signed.

The meeting to draft a Peace Accord is significant, not in what it achieved, but in the pattern that has emerged over the months. The leadership has set itself the task of negotiating (on which, more below). In the process it has failed to consult with the membership, has ignored the need to explain what is happening to the people who support the organisation, and have continued with a process that it has appropriated to itself.³ Nor have any of the other organizations taken up the issue, instructed its members on what to do when confronted by killers (or hemmed in by police). While the leadership directs itself to talks and negotiations it has elected to ignore its constituency. And when, ultimately, just before I returned to London, commuters on a train disarmed two members of a gang that was killing passengers indiscriminately, their action was spontaneous and surprised the ANC as much as it surprised the public at large.

The Conference on Marxism

A conference on Marxism in South Africa was mooted over a year ago by the convenors of the Marxist Theory Seminar that was inaugurated in August 1988 at the University of the Western Cape. Originally conducted by a small group of lecturers and students, the meetings had grown in size and were attended at times by audiences of 200–300. The response to the seminar led to a suggestion that a Conference on Marxism be convened in September 1991. Trade unions, socialist groups (including the Communist Party), university departments and all interested persons were invited to attend. It was the prospect of attending this conference that decided the date of my visit to South Africa.

The granting of a visa was delayed and I had almost given up hope of making the trip when it finally arrived. With less than a fortnight to arrange my departure and write a paper, I was asked to open the proceedings, because Angela Davis, leading member of the US Communist Party, who had agreed to speak, suddenly found that she would not be in Cape Town on the day of the opening. There was no satisfactory explanation for her non-attendance, nor was any excuse provided for the absence of the entire leadership of the SACP. The executive of the SACP had ignored all notifications about the convening of the conference, despite the fact that the venue (the University of the Western Cape) was said to be a stronghold of the ANC and of the SACP. Perhaps it was also not accidental that no leading members of the ANC (many of whom are known to be in the SACP), or the PAC and Azapo, (many of whom also claim to be Marxists) attended the conference. Pallo Jordan, who writes as a Marxist, and is a leading member of the ANC, did submit the draft outline of a paper but, he too, claimed that illness in his family demanded that he be elsewhere.

The absence of the SACP leadership was no loss. Their claims to Marxism were never creditable and, in the light of the confusion over events in Moscow, it is doubtful whether they could have answered any of the criticism that was levelled against the communists in the USSR, or contributed to the discussions in any meaningful way. What was significant was not their absence but the fact that such a conference could be convened: both because it would have been inconceivable before February 1990, and because so many people were prepared to attend.

It was at the conference that I obtained my first direct meeting with persons who were prepared to state openly that they were interested in Marxism. Furthermore, among the 300 (or more) who attended there were rank-and-file members of the ANC, of the SACP, of Cosatu, and also of smaller political groups of the left. It was this conference that I addressed in the opening session.

By coincidence the conference met just after the failed coup in Moscow. It would have been absurd to speak without commenting on the events in Moscow, of the banning of the Russian Communist Party, on the toppling of statues of Lenin and of other Bolsheviks throughout the USSR and eastern Europe. I spoke of the importance of the collapse of Stalinism in allowing Marxists to rescue the theory that had been bowdlerized over the past seven decades. I did this in part by tracing the impact of Russia on the progress of the left in South Africa — from inspiration

through to degradation as the CPSA (as it was known before 1950) uncritically accepted whatever happened in the USSR.⁴

I felt an antipathy in the hall. The university was a stronghold of the ANC and the SACP and, despite the disquiet over what had been happening in the USSR, or perhaps because of what had been happening in eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, such public declamations were not welcome. But I had not yet finished. I proceeded to discuss the use of Stalinist methods in the ANC, referring specifically to the tortures and executions of mutineers in *Umkhonto we Sizwe* in the Angolan camps in 1984. There could be no democracy in South Africa, I said, if such methods were used against critics.

Some delegates were delighted others were discomfited and others again were angry. Among the latter were members of the ANC and also of the small Trotskyist factions, particularly as I had said that they were irrelevant in the current situation.

It was an acerbic address, reflecting what I saw as the crisis in the world working class movement. The incubus of Stalinism that had all but overwhelmed the socialist movement had to be excised and to have kept silent would have been inexcusable. Nonetheless delegates were reportedly saying, as similar audiences had said over decades when confronted by the crimes done in the name of socialism in the USSR: 'that now was not the time to speak of such matters'. This is a view with which I could not agree. Over the decades socialists had been urged to stay silent over the crimes in the USSR, in eastern Europe, in China and in South East Asia. Critics had even been urged to remain silent about events in Cambodia, where Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge had murdered millions of innocent victims. This had not saved the left from universal condemnation but had left the socialist movement without the moral base to condemn what was obviously indefensible.

It was apparent that I was probably the only one present who would have raised the issue of the ANC mutiny and linked it with Stalinist influences. Yet, in view of the massive cover up of those events it was crucial that the issue be raised — both for the sake of the victims of that repression, and for the protection of future generations whose right to dissent has to be protected. Furthermore, the entire question of democracy within socialism, posed so urgently by the events in eastern Europe, needed discussion. Contrary to what was said, there was in my opinion, 'no other alternative'. For that I had no need to recant or apologise.⁵

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the topics presented over the weekend. Like all conferences the papers reflected the preoccupations of the authors and this produced a number of contributions that reflected a headlong flight from Marxism. The God in Moscow had failed, eastern Europe had fallen apart and territories in Africa that had been upheld as foci of socialism had all but collapsed. Instead of subjecting this brand of 'socialism' to scrutiny — with all the problems that would be encountered by former protagonists of Soviet policy — there was a retreat to the panacea of the 'free market'. Much that had once appeared in Marxist texts, including the centrality of the working class in restructuring society, was expunged.

The arguments were a rehash of old ideas, set in a new world situation. We were informed that there would be no investment coming from the major powers and

the old eastern bloc, itself in great difficulty, would not be able to supply any aid. Therefore the ANC (as the presumed next government) would have to enlarge the field of trade and commerce by embracing all of southern Africa. This was the only way forward: for the enlargement of capital, and of capital accumulation. This was the path to restructuring South Africa through the good offices of the ANC (and its partners, the communists). All this in the name of bringing Marxism up to date.⁶

The paper by Hillel Ticktin was unique in setting out the problems that had confronted the USSR and eastern Europe.⁷ It was even more exceptional in view of the poverty of theory displayed in so many of those who spoke over the weekend. Yet, the history of socialism during the 20th century has been dominated by the October revolution, and knowledge of what happened in Russia should be mandatory for all who speak as Marxists.

Perhaps it is better to skip over the papers offered up to an audience that had come to learn, but went away disappointed in the fare. However it is necessary to comment on the activities of small groups who came to harangue and to win members. It is standard practice for leftwing groups to use conferences to find possible sympathizers. On that score there can be no complaint. But it is painful to be subjected to soapbox hectoring at session after session. Many of these small factions had little to contribute by way of theory. They seemed to believe that by proclaiming again and again the truth that capitalism was in crisis, that they had said something real or significant. Or so it seemed when I listened to one lengthy presentation from a member of the Marxist Workers Tendency (MWT) proclaiming his fraction's position that the ANC would be transformed to become the instrument of socialist reconstruction. This was a point of view that not even the most ardent follower of the ANC (the MWT excluded) would have endorsed. But they were indefatigable — and capable of boring any audience to tears. What the audience did not know was that the mother body of the MWT in Britain, the Militant tendency, had just resolved to drop the entryist tactic after spending forty fruitless years in the Labour Party having failed to transform it into an instrument for 'socialist reconstruction'.

The Political Opposition in South Africa

There can be no prescription on what should or should not be discussed at a conference on Marxism. However, it is less than strange that there were no papers defending the theory of 'colonialism of a special type' and no papers on the theory of permanent revolution. It was even more remarkable that there were no papers on the nature of socialist democracy, and no serious discussion of the relationship between Marxism and nationalism. Given the obvious appeal to large sections of the population of the ANC, of Inkatha, and of several smaller organizations like the Pan Africanist Congress, the Azanian People's Organization, the New Unity Movement — all of them nationalist or sympathetic to nationalism — this was a major problem that should needed discussion. It was not on the agenda, although it is this that divided many socialist groups and needed appraisal. The history of left groups has been littered with attempts to deal with this problem, and most have been shown by

events to be empty of content. The editors of this journal have consistently claimed that Marxists have an obligation to protect the national movements from persecution by the government, and can, on specific issues, co-operate with such bodies. However, we have said, Marxist organizations have to proclaim their independence from such bodies, and oppose them when their actions are detrimental to the interests of the working class. The subject needs airing and continued debate. To ignore it, particularly in the South African arena, is to be blind to what is happening in the country.

Wherever I went in the country it was quite obvious that most persons who wanted change looked to the ANC as the next government. Some might have said so regretfully, but the majority believed that the ANC would be the governing body by right. As so many said: 'there is no alternative'. Together with this view, most expressed the view that the ANC (together with the SACP) would usher in a democratic regime, based on the magic formula of one person one vote. The franchise and a democratic assembly were thereby elevated to a social ideal that was divorced from the material base of the society that was to be formed: as if democratic forms under capitalism have been anything else than a cover for ruthless exploitation.

Surveying the political field, the only force able to stop the ANC (by fair or foul methods) is the present government. Short of de Klerk manipulating events to achieve that end, there is no obvious alternative to the ANC dominating, or having sufficient strength, to form an electorally backed government. Yet, despite this one obvious fact, stories about the ANC did not show that the confidence of its supporters was backed by either political adroitness or by organizational efficiency.

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive account of the state of the ANC, both because conditions across the country varied so much, and also because information was so uneven and even contradictory. Membership of the ANC is stated to be just above or below half a million: much less than targeted, but large by any standard. This does not provide any more than a bare statistic of recruitment: it says nothing about the functioning of the movement, nor of the membership. My information was mainly anecdotal, and that is not sufficient for analysis. But what I heard was not very impressive. In Soweto, I was told, the Congress Youth League had not been able to meet over the past five months because it could not get a quorum. On the other hand, the white dominated Braamfontein and Houghton branches functioned well. In the eastern Cape, I was informed by an ANC official, the organization had the support of every African. They were not necessarily politically educated, but they trusted the leadership and were completely loyal. But another informant said that the membership in Grahamstown had little faith in the ability of the leadership to achieve anything and they had been contemplating alternative organisational methods. In Durban, where many referred to a 'cabal' which dominated the organization, there was little doubt that the SACP played a significant backroom role in directing activity. But even they differed with Harry Gwala, hard-line Stalinist, who publicly supported the coup in August, and who controlled the activities of local *Umkhonto we Sizwe* activists to the north of Durban. The stories I heard were contradictory, and even when my informant did

admit that there were serious internal weaknesses in the organization of the ANC, this was excused on the grounds of past harassment.

There were many stories about the ANC that obviously needed more probing. The ANC has bought and occupied the former headquarters of Shell. This provided it with a central office with all the space it could need. However, this has not converted the ANC into an efficient, or indeed, an effective organization. It has not led to a body able to organize effectively or campaign around the many serious problems facing local communities, nor produce guidelines for future social construction. Instead, it seems, the leaders react to issues on an *ad hoc* basis, without seriously considering the effects of what they say. In October there were two major statements on economics: one by Mandela, who apparently stated that the mines and finance houses would be nationalised by the ANC, and one by Ramaphosa who said that loans made to the existing government would not necessarily be honoured by a future (ANC) government. Both statements were made without consulting the National Executive Council, both were repudiated, restated, and then disappeared into oblivion.

It was also not possible to find out more about the ANC finances. It was reported to the July conference that over six hundred million Rand had been collected from foreign powers.⁸ But it appears that some of the money has disappeared. Land, bought in the name of private persons in Zimbabwe or Zambia (for security reasons) is no longer available. There is little accounting for assets in the ANC. For example, the printing presses purchased in Europe are said to have 'disappeared' and the ANC does not have a local press at its disposal.

Despite the report on assets, there were contradictory reports emanating from ANC quarters. During September it was announced that recruiting by *Umkhonto we Sizwe* was to cease because there were no further funds. During the following week two events followed in rapid succession: first Winnie Mandela declared that Umkhonto was being built up to become the future army of South Africa, and then, in Durban, returned members of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* took control of the ANC offices, demanding their promised but still unpaid allowances of R2000. Unconfirmed reports in Durban said that the men had taken hostages in the offices in order to secure the money. They were persuaded to leave. It was reported that no monies had been paid since the middle of June because funds were exhausted, but it was hoped to secure additional money with which to honour the promise.

The other nationalist organizations (Inkatha excepted) have meagre resources, small premises, and little organizational presence outside a few localities. I was unable to obtain membership figures, and stories of their meetings did not inspire confidence. If correct, the account of the chanting at PAC meetings was bizarre and absurd. The members met the call of the meeting's leader with the chant:

One settler, one bullet,

One bullet, one settler.

Ten settlers, one machine gun,

One machine gun, ten settlers.

A hundred settlers, one bazooka,

One bazooka, a hundred settlers.

... and so on.

There are variations on this theme at different meetings and in PAC publications. But they are all of the same standard. Yet, in popular parlance, the PAC is to the left of the ANC! Perhaps it is fortunate that those who chanted had never held a rifle in their hands.

The SACP is different. It too has few resources, its office space is modest — and the collapse of the eastern European regimes has left them in serious difficulty. It claims 15–20,000 members, but it is not certain whether this is a nominal, or a real, tally. The party is no longer the monolithic movement that it used to be. It is split on several issues, including its appraisal of the coup; it no longer had a clear external policy; and it is not unanimous on the decision to remain wedded to the ANC. In one Cape Town branch those who supported the coup tended to be Africans, while the anti-coup group was keenly aware of the ethnic division. The chairperson apparently declared that she had no intention of being bound by what was said at the meeting. The more the party changes, the more it remains the same.

According to its pre-conference claims the SACP believes in a multi-party state, does not claim to be the exclusive representative of the working class and is prepared to debate issues. This does not stand up to scrutiny and was negated by non-appearance at the Conference on Marxism where its democratic pretensions could have been tested. Furthermore there were several reports of the SACP's determination to gain controlling positions inside the ANC — either through the omnipresent 'cabal', or by manipulating positions inside the National Executive Committee of the ANC. Whatever the current position, there is little evidence that the SACP has learnt how to conduct affairs openly and democratically. Precisely what turns will be decided at its conference in December is uncertain, but turn it will if it seems likely to win it more converts.

Finally, only when the SACP openly declares its membership, acts as an independent organization and enters into open public debate can its claims to openness be accepted. I had no reason to believe that it had altered its character, nor that individuals hardened inside its Stalinist shell could be transformed. Their new tactics and methods showed no transformation, no real rejection of, and in fact no ability to understand, what had happened in the past.

Meeting New Challenges

Again and again it was apparent that the major political groups had no programme with which to lead the majority of the population. Other bodies are equally inflexible. They hold on to old formulae and speak the language of the 1950s. They mistake faith in old slogans for principles, and offer no new analyses to meet current problems. This has led them into sectarian politics with little to offer the population. Most bodies had spent decades fighting against apartheid as a thing-in-itself, and they were unable to alter course. Their ideologies had become encrusted with old generalisations and they could not meet new demands. The ANC was torn between becoming a politi-

cal organization, and acting (as it has claimed) of being 'a government in waiting'. If it is to become a party it has still to demonstrate its ability to campaign on behalf of its constituents.

The ANC is further torn between its natural inclination to work in the African townships and the need to satisfy the aspirations of other sections of the population. This has led it in contradictory directions: calling for ethnic leadership in the western Cape (where Mandela called for greater representation of Coloureds in the Congress leadership) and spending excessive energy trying to assure whites of its good intentions. In turning to the rural areas the ANC has adopted the easiest line of working alongside Homelands leader's, or of encouraging Chiefs to believe that their position will be secure inside an ANC led country. Perhaps that is the ANC policy, but it provides little confidence of social change under its leadership. Yet part of the problem lies in the failure to change the nature of the movement. Instead of becoming a party and campaigning on behalf of its constituents, there is the continued insistence that it is really the government-to-be, and that excuses it from taking up the many problems that must be confronted if change is even to seem meaningful.

Workers and Workers' Organization

The one body that I have not discussed thus far are the trade union federations that claims a membership of nearly three quarters of a million, mainly black, workers. By far the most important of these is Cosatu, although no doubt attention should be paid to the smaller body known as Nactu and those smaller unaffiliated unions. However, because I only saw members of Cosatu, I will restrict my comments to this one body.

Firstly, it became obvious that in the absence of a socialist movement, the only organization that could claim to speak for the workers was the trade union movement. This was problematical. The trade unions only represented a portion of the working class, excluded important sections of the labour force, and had little presence in the rural areas (despite new attempts at such organisation). Furthermore the unions had not organized the unemployed, had no strategy for approaching that important element of the workforce and no means of knowing whether they could succeed where so many had tried, and failed, before.

The problem was exacerbated by the high rate of redundancies as businesses either went out of existence, or trimmed their workforce to survive. It is said that over 1,300 workers are being made redundant every day of the year. In the one industry that once employed over 600,000 workers, the mines, the number of workers has been drastically reduced and is likely to drop even further. The number of workers in this once strategic industry is now nearer 350,000 and must go down even more drastically unless the price of gold goes up appreciably. There is now one full time official whose sole task is to find employment, or some occupation, for the tens of thousands of workers who have been dismissed. The situation in other industries, although not so severe, indicates that the trade unions will lose

a considerable section of their membership in the coming months. An economic revival will lead to a reversal of current trends, but that is still some way off.

Given the very best of conditions, in which the trade unions could spread to areas in which they had not yet contacted their potential membership, it is not certain that the unions could act as the vanguard of the working class. The task of the trade unions, no matter how earnestly they try, remains reformist. The unions have to improve wages, improve work conditions, and also stop unwarranted dismissals. Given the high rate of inflation (running at about 15%) the unions have to achieve the near impossible just to stop the conditions of the workers from deteriorating.

In so far as the unions are fighting to maintain their members at work, and keeping their wages intact, they perform an invaluable task. Also, these unions offer a training ground for organization for their members, and help instil a sense of purpose and confidence in the workplace. This is not the same as acting as political organizers. Cosatu has followed the ANC (usually uncritically) in tactics and in programme ever since it adopted the Freedom Charter in 1985, and that has led to innumerable difficulties. The trade unions have enrolled workers at the workplace irrespective of their political affiliation. Initially this was not a problem but it seems to have led to the alienation of hostel dwellers (among others) who owed allegiance to Inkatha. Cosatu has also provided the ANC with a radical cloak — one which has only helped conceal the supine nature of the national movement. I have referred above to the role of Cosatu in getting the Peace Accord signed. Its leaders, trained in bargaining, will become the instrument for achieving concessions in the pre-negotiating talks and in the actual negotiations. In that case it is most likely that all credit will go to the ANC and its political allies — and failures will be laid at the door of the trade union movement.

The trade union movement has other more urgent tasks. Nationally it has to prepare a programme to maintain its independence in whatever new system is installed. It has to build workers' councils to allow the workers a direct say in whatever is decided in the talks with the government. It has to act, not as a cover for the nationalist movements, but as the organizer of the working class in the struggle against capitalism, and it has to build international contacts with radical trade union movements in Latin America, Asia and other regions of the world.

Just before I left South Africa the new VAT was implemented. For months Cosatu, together with the ANC, had demanded the withdrawal of some of the new taxes: in particular to those on basic foods, medicines and medical services. Despite all protests, the government only made minimal amendments to its list of taxable goods and services. On the day that the taxes were introduced there were demonstrations across the country and some towns were reduced to a near standstill. A committee against the tax, led by the ANC and Cosatu called a two day general strike (later renamed a stay at home) for the 4–5th of November. As I write it is obvious that there was massive support for the demonstration. As an act of support for the ANC and Cosatu the action was obviously significant. Yet there seems to have been a waste of energy in the event. After the two days, in which some workers were victimised, it was back to normal with little or nothing gained.

Further details of what happened in the country, and information about individual communities, is only now becoming available: but one matter was clear from the outset — the stayaway was conceived as a backing to the coming negotiations with the government. The action did nothing to assert working class rights or advance their struggle. Once again the workers were taken up the hill and then marched down again.

I left the country convinced of the need: firstly, for a civil rights movement to protect people from the present security apparatus, and also from an unrepentant ANC that refuses to acknowledge the enormity of its crimes in the mutiny of 1984. Secondly, the need for a revolutionary socialist movement, associated with the trade union movement, able to take its place as an independent force in advancing the cause of democratic socialism and as the guarantor of civil liberties. Taking cognizance of the absolute weakness and disunity of socialist forces, the way forward will probably be through the linking of existing groups to foster informed discussion: both of theory and of practical problems. Only through such co-operation, which must avoid any suspicion of poaching or of forced unity, can a socialist movement be launched. To wait any longer, when the way seems open for a working class movement with a clear socialist programme seems absurd. This places a severe burden on those many small groups that all declared the need for a nation wide movement, but it is a burden they must assume.

Notes

1. See appendix on CST and the permanent revolution
2. This is described in part by the **Human Rights Commission** (SA), in its special report of August 1991.
3. A similar point is made by a member of the ANC, Yunus Carrim, in **Liberation Movement and Beyond: Challenges for the ANC** (1991), Catholic Institute for International Relations, London, in his discussion of the negotiations between the government and the ANC.
4. The text of my address appears on p 56 of this issue.
5. I spoke or lectured at eight campuses. The only talk that 'could not find a slot' on the timetable, and never eventuated, was a proposed lecture at the University of the Witwatersrand on the factors that lay behind the mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe'.
6. A new essay, by Robert Davies (1991), **South Africa in the Region: A Post Apartheid Future**, Catholic Institute for International Relations, London, spells out this policy in some detail.
7. In this issue we print an article in which the conflict between the market and planning is shown to have been central to the discussions within the left opposition in the USSR in the 1920s. This sets the problem, that seemed to be unexplored by delegates at the conference, within the framework of Marxist theory.
8. This included the US, Australia, Sweden and other European states. The current rate of exchange is R5 to the pound sterling.

Appendix**COLONIALISM OF A SPECIAL TYPE AND THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION****A Theory of a Very Special Type?**

During the 1950s and 1960s theoreticians of the South African Communist Party (SACP) described the social formation of South Africa as being one of 'internal colonialism'. This has always remained a description, or perhaps a rationalisation, rather than a theory, because it provided no base for understanding the relations of production in South Africa, yet it persisted, at least until recently, in the canons of the SACP. As time went on the description was rechristened 'colonialism of a special type' and that in turn was shortened to 'CST'. The description was not universally accepted inside the party and some preferred not to use it or, not having realized its significance in party theory, gave it little prominence. Among the latter was Francis Meli, who paid little attention to the concept in his book, *South Africa Belongs to Us*, which purports to tell the story of the ANC. Harold Wolpe,¹ on the other hand, examined the concept and found that it was only of significance in highlighting the cheap reproduction of black workers in the reserves. For this he was roundly condemned by party apparatchiks. But in all the heat of polemic little was done to provide flesh to the concept. I do not know where that description has advanced since February 1990. Perhaps it lurks in party literature, waiting to be revived if conditions make it necessary.

The 'theory', if it can be elevated to the realm of theory, was imposed on the CPSA at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1928. Although I dealt with this in some detail in past copies of this journal, I summarize the salient points made there.² In 1928 the cabal that ruled in Moscow announced that the global class struggle was to be intensified. The workers were about to confront capitalism in a final set of battles, leading to the victory of socialism. The factors that led to that conclusion were complex, but were not connected with the situation in South Africa.³ Nonetheless, the CPSA was instructed to drop its stress on the class struggle and work under the banner of an 'Independent Native Republic'. To justify the decision South Africa was defined as a country that stood midway between advanced capitalism and semi-colonial status. The African people, whose land had been seized by settlers, existed under conditions of semi-slavery. The task of the communists was to organize the 'native toiling masses' and participate in 'the embryonic national organizations, such as the ANC' which should be transformed 'into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organ'.

The adoption of this policy was a step backward into the debates in Russia before 1917. The stage theory that had once been the hallmark of the reformist wing of the Social Democratic movement was restored in its pristine glory in South Africa. The class struggle was jettisoned in favour of a bourgeois democratic or 'liberation' struggle and the 'two-stage' theory of revolution became the hallmark of Stalinism in South Africa. The CPSA was torn apart. Leading members were

denigrated, maligned, expelled and driven into isolation. The rank and file, dispirited and exhausted by the internal struggle, dropped out of politics.

In CPSA was almost extinguished: in other regions of the world the policies pursued by communists led to disaster. In Germany it led directly to the Nazis seizing power. This led to another violent U-turn. Every communist party was instructed to call for a 'Popular Front' against fascism. In South Africa the 'Independent Native Republic' was pigeonholed. The CPSA now sought allies among liberal or even right wing politicians. These were all white and, even though few if any would campaign with the communists, the party ceased talking about a Black Republic.

It was only in 1940 when the CPSA turned again to 'revolutionary' politics in its brief anti-war period. This time the fullblown 'Native Republic' slogan was not employed, but the old analysis was resurrected. South Africa it was said 'is at one time an exploiting imperialism and a semi-colony'.⁴ Under these conditions, quite obviously, the CPSA opposed the war. Forgetting all about the Popular Front, and its previous anti-fascist slogans, the party saw merit in the Molotov-Ribbentrop peace accord, and called for the end of the war.

Perhaps the CPSA was not altogether convinced by its own propaganda, although its members managed to say remarkable things at its 1940 conference. Sam Kahn, a leading member, suggested that

Those Afrikaners whose sympathies seemed to lie with Nazi Germany, must view more sympathetically the communists: if it is possible for Hitler to cooperate with Russia, so it must affect the people here whose sympathies were with Hitler. We will be able to get more readily the ear of the Afrikaners to the line of the CP.⁵

This was political venality, born of opportunism if not ignorance. The Jewish lawyer, Kahn, wanting to put out his hand to rabid home-grown Nazis. Did he not know what Hitler was about? And how did this fit with a so-called Black Republic? Were the South African stormtroopers about to be convinced that a Black Republic was a desirable goal?

It did not matter. In August 1941 Germany invaded the USSR and everything was overturned again. The government, so recently lambasted for its participation in 'a terrible and disastrous imperialist war', was now to be supported.⁶ The party journals carried articles calling on the workers 'to become the driving force behind the wholehearted war effort, and its most vigilant guarantors'.⁷ Despite the indifference of the African people the CPSA backed the government, being critical only of its failure to arm black volunteers. Leading party members spoke confidently of great changes that would be introduced when the war ended. When the war was coming to a close a section that followed the US party leader, Earl Browder, called for the dissolution of the CPSA. In terms not very different from that of Kahn, Browder argued that if Stalin could sit down with Roosevelt at Yalta, then communists could sit down with capitalists in the US and plan a better society. In South Africa, no doubt, communists could also play the game of musical chairs. Yesterday they spoke of sitting down with the pro-Nazi Nationalists: tomorrow,

they would sit down with Smuts and Oppenheimer. The Independent Native Republic was a thing of the past, best buried and forgotten.

Policy took another turn when Churchill, in a declaration of war on communism, raised the spectre of the Iron Curtain descending on Europe. Also, in South Africa, with the victory of the National Party at the polls in 1948, there were fears of a government offensive against the CPSA. At the National Conference in 1950, party members returned to the notion of 'internal colonialism' in stating that:

The distinguishing feature of South Africa is that it combines the characteristic of both an imperialist state and a colony within a single, indivisible, geographical, political and economic entity. To the British, French, Belgian and Dutch imperialists, the colony is a territory some thousands of miles away, inhabited by an alien, non-white people of a different culture, who can be subjected to a system of exploitation and governed by autocratic methods that would not be tolerated in the home countries (*sic*). In South Africa, the Non-European population, while reduced to the status of a colonial people, has no territory of its own, no independent existence, but is almost wholly integrated in the political and economic institutions of the ruling class.⁸

The Black Republic was once again a convenient slogan to hold aloft. There is little purpose in recording successive statements on 'internal colonialism' in the speeches and writings of members of the CPSA (or the resurrected SACP), and its evolution into 'Colonialism of a special type'. The pattern is clear. When the occasion demanded it, the dual nature of South Africa was trotted out and from this, the two stage theory of change in South Africa was justified. However there was also an urgency in the way the slogan was formulated. After the party was banned in 1950 the formula provided a convenient justification for entering and working within the Congress movement⁹

Yet, after all these years the CPSA had not been able to encapsulate the notion of 'internal colonialism' in any theoretical statement. Nor had it been able to resurrect the 'Independent Native Republic' slogan in full. In fact, when its former members participated in the Congress of the People in 1956, they balked at an 'Africa for the Africans' type approach, and that cleared the ground for the Africanists to adopt the slogan as their own. The compromise programme, called the Freedom Charter, was couched in the mildest of liberal terms — and stood as a second plank in the armoury of the SACP. For the external world, and particularly the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Freedom Charter was displayed as the objective of the 'liberation movement'. The reborn SACP had a reborn policy, now to be known as 'Colonialism of a Special Type', carrying with it the added, if unspoken, connotation of a Black Republic. These implications have never been spelt out — but that will undoubtedly happen if the SACP survives the current crisis in the Stalinist movement and requires a revamped programme.

The Theory of Permanent Revolution

The distinguishing feature of the Trotskyist groups in South Africa has been their adherence to the theory of 'permanent revolution', first enunciated by

Leon Trotsky in 1904–1906. From his analysis of capitalist investment in Russia by foreign finance capital, and the highly concentrated working class in large-scale industrial plants, Trotsky maintained that the workers would provide the leadership in the forthcoming revolution that would topple the Tsar, fulfilling the task that the bourgeoisie was incapable of completing. The revolution would be made continuous (or ‘permanent’) by the workers who would take power in alliance with the peasants. Crudely called the one-stage theory, this conception of the revolution was always associated with Trotsky’s name.

There were two additional points that are seemingly less well known. Firstly, Trotsky believed that the workers would have to transform themselves after the seizure of power, if a socialist society was to become a reality. Secondly, as an internationalist, Trotsky never conceived of socialism being established in one country, and most certainly not in a backward country like Russia. The workers of Russia could seize power but, for a socialist society to come into being, the revolution had to be extended to the more advanced countries of Europe. It was this appraisal of the revolution in Russia that led to a convergence of interests between Lenin and Trotsky in 1917. They worked together to seize power in the name of the working class, and they proclaimed their belief in the international solidarity of the proletariat.

It was only in later formulations of the permanent revolution that its scope was extended to cover the struggles in the colonial countries. Unlike his earlier work, in which he provided an analysis of the impact of foreign capital on the Russian social formation, Trotsky never gave much attention to the political economy, or to the class forces, in the individual colonies. He maintained that only a working class revolution could lead those countries to freedom, and in the process they, and they alone would solve the social problems left by a parasitic imperialism.

This was not borne out in practice. Nonetheless large sections of the left, without ever adhering to the Trotskyist position, believed that the communists in China, Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia had moved in one continuous process to the establishment of socialist societies. They never queried the claims that Mao, Ho Chi Minh and even Pol Pot were building socialist countries. They had moved so far from Marxism that they failed to ask why the proletariat took no part in establishing the new societies, nor why the workers took no part in controlling these so-called socialist states. Quite obviously they never raised the question of internationalism. Consequently, the belief that socialism could be established through guerilla armies, and that the working class could be bypassed in the process, exercised a powerful grip on many socialist groups.

The Trotskyists went through paroxysms of anguish in trying to determine what had happened. They got it wrong all too often, but failed to ask why Trotsky had erred in his writings on the colonial question. What indeed came of his predictions, for example, that India could not achieve independence but would be subjected to ever greater exploitation after the war?¹⁰ Like automatons they either tried to justify his statements, or to reinterpret them. In the process critical judgment became impossible.

The Theory in South Africa

It is not certain whether the many fractions within the Trotskyist movement had or have a consistent line on the Black Republic. The first left oppositionists in the country, in Johannesburg and in Cape Town, opposed the Comintern's resolutions of 1928 vigorously. The 'Independent Native Republic' slogan was condemned, and the theses drawn up in Cape Town by the group that became the Worker's Party of South Africa (WPSA) rejected it out of hand. However Trotsky, whose approval had been sought, declared in his reply that it was wrong to reject the Black Republic. He said that the blacks might wish to form their own separate state and that revolutionaries had to support the right of oppressed nationalities of self-determination, including the right of separation. Also, in his letter his formulations were close to that of the Comintern. For example when he claimed that:

The South African possessions of Great Britain form a dominion only from the point of a view of the white minority. From the point of view of the black majority South Africa is a Slave Colony.¹¹

Trotsky had said that he knew little about the local situation and was incorrect in his analysis. He was equally wrong when, in a parallel discussion, he approved of the Comintern's proposal that the blacks in the USA should be granted the right to form a republic of their own. However his position differed from that of the Comintern: firstly in saying that the struggle against national subordination could only be consummated through a proletarian revolution, and secondly that the support given to oppressed nationalities was the only effective way in which the revolution in South Africa could be brought to fruition. Looking back at Comintern policy he was of the opinion that:

The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the class struggle. The Comintern, beginning in 1924, transformed the programme of national liberation of colonial people into an empty democratic abstraction which it elevated above the reality of the class relations.¹²

The WPSA accepted Trotsky's criticism, agreeing that they had been over-polemical in rejecting the Black Republic, but they never used the slogan in their publication. Despite this a significant section of the group inclined increasingly to nationalist politics and they assumed the leadership of the Non-European Unity Movement at its inception in 1943. They never spoke of blacks forming a separate state, ignored the slogan calling for the right of self-determination, but nevertheless acted in the spirit of Trotsky's position paper. They put their emphasis on the land question (as had the Worker's Party in its main thesis), ignored the working class, and their pronouncements were little different from those of the CPSA during the height of the 'third period'. The only exception before 1940 was the small section working in Johannesburg, and Max Gordon in particular, who set out to organize the African working class.¹³ Gordon gave lip service to the WPSA thesis but in effect he ignored its implications. He concentrated on work in the trade unions and could be criticized only in being over immersed in economic activity.

The Fourth International Organization of South Africa (FIOSA), while accepting Trotsky's arguments, rejected the Black Republic slogan. They said of the WPSA that the logical development of their stress on the land question should have led them to an acceptance of that slogan. They ascribed Trotsky's position to the misleading facts provided by the WPSA in their thesis. The problems raised by this polemic were never resolved, partly because such discussions did not seem relevant during the war years. The Workers International League (WIL) in the Transvaal, after 1944, was involved in trade union and black community struggles. It affiliated with the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), but this was of little consequence because that movement never established itself in the Transvaal.

In so far as policies can be discerned, members of the WIL followed the first formulation of the permanent revolution, as stated by Trotsky in 1904–06. That is, in the absence of a black bourgeoisie, the democratic struggle could only be concluded by the black working class. This, they said, had to be in alliance with the white workers, who would ultimately place class allegiance above ethnic domination.¹⁴ The Worker's Party chose to work underground and no more was heard about it as an organization after 1939. Its members only appeared openly as founders of the NEUM, and there they acted as leaders of a nationalist movement. They claimed to be more revolutionary, at least in policy, than the ANC, but they stayed aloof from active campaigns. In their propaganda there was no trace of Trotsky's policies, either in respect to the permanent revolution or the Black Republic. Only FIOSA operated openly in Cape Town, mainly as a propaganda group: they affiliated with the NEUM and, although they put work in the national movement as central to their activities, that involved little more than attendance at annual conferences.

The WIL in Johannesburg imploded in early 1946, and FIOSA dissolved itself in 1948 or 1949. Thereafter, outside the Unity Movement, which vigorously denied its Trotskyist connection, the tradition of the old left opposition was carried by small groups in Cape Town and Johannesburg.¹⁵

It is no longer clear who is, or claims to be, Trotskyists in South Africa. In line with events in Europe and the US, the followers of Trotsky have splintered. Most tendencies adhere to the theory of 'permanent revolution', although interpretations vary from group to group. The Marxist Workers Tendency (MWT), whose members claim to work inside the ANC, although it was expelled from that body many years ago, has a position that is not very different from that of third-period Stalinism. As quoted above, the CPSA claimed that the ANC would be transformed 'into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organ'. The MWT advances the same notion today. Other tendencies are more circumspect although most operate inside the ANC, overtly or covertly.

However, the facts contradict, or call for the modification of, almost all the old theories, whether emanating from Stalinist or Trotskyist groups. The current situation is one in which legislative apartheid is all but dead, and the ANC/SACP/PAC alliance intends negotiating with the government over the constitution of a bourgeois democratic state. This implies: inside a state that all recognize as being

unitary, Colonialism of a Special Type has no further currency; that the establishment of an Independent Native Republic will not take place; and that the removal of formal colour discrimination has not been brought about by a proletarian revolution.

Yet the situation is still explosive, and the basic transformation of South Africa has not taken place. Apartheid is dead, but colour differences still divide the country as solidly as ever before. Except that now the division is more obviously a class division, even though aspects of ethnic domination are still in place. If the permanent revolution has any meaning today it rests not on an analysis of the forces capable of transforming South Africa. That task clearly rests with the working class. Nor is it a matter of stages: that argument is dead. The one factor that asserts itself even more than ever, and divides Trotskyism from Stalinism is the understanding that socialism cannot be built in one country. Only through the spreading of the revolution to the advanced countries is there any hope for socialism in South Africa.

The internationalisation of socialism is a necessary condition: only that will ensure that there are enough goods available to satisfy the needs of the population. And only by that means will it be possible to stop the spread of subversion by the forces of counter-revolution. But it will not be sufficient. The socialist movement, if it is to be involved in building a world in which new values prevail will have to be the guardian of a socialist democracy in which the methods of Stalinism are finally rooted out. There can be no one-party state, no secret 'security department', no police or armed force that is the exclusive property of the government that takes power, no central control that denies small groups the right to self direction. That has never been achieved under capitalism. Methods of working class control will have to be discovered which will offer the producers ways through which they can innovate while providing the basic needs of the society of which they are an integral part. Finally, as long as government continues, and until methods of central control can be abolished, ways will have to be found to protect the rights of every individual from the tyranny of cabals, sects, groups and parties.

These were problems to which the Conference on Marxism should have given more time. The fact that so little attention was paid to them indicates that Marxists have not come to grips with the theoretical and practical problems that need understanding before there can be any thought of transforming society.

Notes

1. See Wolpe (1975).
2. See *Searchlight South Africa*, Nos 3 and 4, for a discussion of the Black Republic slogan.
3. The factors leading to the adoption of the new Comintern policy included: the need to explain away the massacre of the communists in China, the fight against the left opposition in the USSR and the resolution of the faction struggle in the CP of the USA. South Africa would have been involved willy-nilly, but was specifically affected by events in the committee that decided the policy for the CPUSA.
4. 'The Communist Party's Policy on the War Now!', a statement of the Political Bureau of the CPSA, 1940, reprinted in Brian Bunting (ed) (1981), *South African Communists Speak*, London., p 160.
5. This statement taken from the unpublished minutes of the 1940 CPSA conference, is quoted in B Hirson (1989), *Yours for the Union*, p 80. Other pronouncements were almost equally bizarre.

6. Ibid, p 84.
7. Ray Alexander (Simons), 'On the Production Front: Winning the Workers for an All-in Effort', *Freedom*, No 9, April 1942.
8. Printed in Bunting, op cit, p 201. There are many similarities between my account and that of Dirk Kotzé, 'Revisiting Colonialism of a Special Type'.
9. There was an added factor in the early 1950s when Moscow changed its line on the national leaders in Asia. This coincided with the imminent calling of the Bandung Conference in 1955, when the Cominform (that is, the Communist Information Bureau) sought allies among the former colonial people in the Cold War. This is documented in Fine and Davis (1991), but their 'discovery' that the slogan had its origins in a speech by Michael Harmel in 1953 is obviously incorrect.
10. See B Hirson, 'Colonialism and Imperialism', *Searchlight South Africa*, No 7, for further details.
11. Reprinted in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 4, February 1990.
12. But see Mick Cox, 'The National and Colonial Question: The First Five Years of the Comintern, 1919-24', in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 4. He suggests that the errors on the National Question in the colonies can be traced back to the early days of the Comintern and not after 1924. However, the rest of the quotation is not invalidated by this fact.
13. See Hirson, *Yours for the Union*.
14. I quote here from memory.
15. In Cape Town the group that was probably closest to Trotskyism was the Forum Club. In the Transvaal the tradition was ultimately carried by the Socialist League of Africa.

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THE CONFERENCE ON MARXISM: SEPTEMBER 1991

Opening Address by Baruch Hirson*

First of all let me say how appropriate this conference is, and how two years ago it would have been unthinkable. Changes which have taken place, and there have been changes if there has been no transformation, have allowed this conference [to convene]. Secondly I suspect that the organisers of this conference could not have realized how appropriate [it would be] to call this particular gathering together within a fortnight of the banning of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It seems to me appropriate that I should try to trace, partly as an historian, and partly as an activist, the relationship of what I call the Russian connection with South Africa. I can hardly call it a Soviet link because I do not know where the Soviets are any more.

In trying to decide how to approach the subject it seemed to me appropriate to recall that over the last five decades at which I have spoken to various audiences about Marxism, ranging from the City Hall steps of Johannesburg to [students] at many universities, I have told my audiences 'please separate out what I am saying about Marxism and what you have heard about the Soviet Union'. At long last I no longer have to say that, it is absolutely obvious. In talking about Marxism I am not talking about the experience of the Soviet Union, I am talking about the ideas of Karl Marx, and I am talking about working class struggles.

That is only one of many threads that I thought I should mention, but there are so many threads that I am not certain that I know how to weave them together to make a whole cloth.

The Russian Connection

Looking at the local connections with Russia...the very first of the socialist groups I know of in South Africa were those of Russian exiles long before the revolution [of 1917], who believed devoutly that the struggle in Russia against the Tsarist regime was one of the most important of the struggles in which they could help and participate. They met in small little conclaves, they spoke Yiddish, and in that they paralleled little groups who spoke in German or in Italian. They were groups of exiles, people who had fled from Europe who brought with them their conception of socialism and the hope that tyranny in Europe would be at last overthrown. The Voice of Labour, one of the very first of the socialist organs in this country, brought out by a semi-syndicalist group around [Archie] Crawford and Pickhandle Mary Fitzgerald, took up the matter of this Russian oppression, wrote about the secret police [the Okhrana], displayed their antagonism to the bastion of corruption, and prayed for the day...when that oppressive state would be destroyed. And that is why Benny Sachs, in his reminiscences, speaking of the events of February 1917, said that the Jews of Johannesburg danced in the streets. They were not all Jews and many of them did not dance for long, but some continued to

dance and they danced through October, and unfortunately they continued to dance to whatever tune came out [of Moscow] thereafter.

However, that aside, they did dance. It was a great event. This was something they had been looking forward to all their lives and to which they continued to look forward in exile. The fact that the revolution came first in Russia deserves serious discussion and serious investigation...but that is not my particular concern now. The point is that when that revolution did come, it did have people in the streets, and also in serious discussions, to determine what was happening and what its impact on South Africa might be.

In looking at the events of February 1917, one figure [in South Africa] stands out above all others in his understanding of events. It was a most peculiar understanding, because it came not from a deep knowledge of Marxism, but from a gut reaction as he observed what was happening in the world around him. I refer to that almost unknown person, David Ivon Jones, a Welshman who had come to South Africa in 1910 as a bible puncher and ended up as a Bolshevik...He was a devoutly religious person, looking for justice and he believed he had found it in the demands for peace, for better living conditions and in socialism. The new religion as he described it, seemed to have arisen in Russia and he devoted the rest of his life to that cause. I do not want to impinge on my conference paper on Jones, but it must be said of him that, having moved to a radical position because of the actions of the white workers [of South Africa] in the [general strikes] of 1913 and 1914, and having seen how they were mown down by Smuts, he adopted the most radical solution he could find: complete opposition to the government, complete opposition to the first World War, complete opposition to the collapse of the Second International. He wrote to the secretary of the International Socialist Bureau in London [in 1915] saying that the Second International had collapsed. In that letter he called for a new international, suggesting that it be led by [the German social democrat] Karl Liebknecht, to oppose the war...When the Russian revolution started in February, Jones responded with an amalgam of ideas that approximated to the permanent revolution, before most of the Bolsheviks came to that position. He greeted the revolution in March 1917 having only the accounts in the [local] newspapers. If I ask you to look at the *Star* or *Cape Times*, or *Cape Argus*, you will see what I mean when I say that he didn't have very much information to work on. Nonetheless he could say, within two weeks of the events being reported in the local press that, in this period of advanced capitalism, the Russian workers could not stop [after] the first hurdle, they would have to move on to a second revolutionary phase, and would have to take power. And please note: this was before Lenin had arrived back at St Petersburg; when the Bolsheviks were in disarray and not sure whether they should support Kerensky or not; and when Trotsky had not yet returned to Russia. At this time Ivon Jones was already proclaiming the need for the Russian workers to continue their revolution. In some sense he advanced South African socialist ideas to the very centre of world events.

In looking at what was happening, Ivon Jones had no concept of one-stage or two-stage revolutions: that is a later invention of the Comintern [Third Interna-

tional], as copied by many who should know better. He saw revolution as a continuous process in which the workers having moved, would move again, because they would not stop before they took power. His concept of the permanent revolution, as I understand it, was absolutely accurate. He believed from the beginning that the Russian workers had entered into the world socialist movement, and they would help to liberate all mankind from...capitalism. He was an internationalist to the core. Not for one moment did he think of socialism in one country, never mind in South Africa. Except for one thing, that having seen the possibility of revolution in Europe, he then said that the South African workers could obviously take power because he believed they could link up with socialists elsewhere and that was essential to his entire understanding of socialism.

That was the message of Jones, and it was not accidental therefore that he was involved in the first anti-communist trial in this country, in 1919, in Pietermaritzburg, something that tends to be forgotten. Jones [and L H H Green] were tried after they issued a leaflet entitled 'The Bolsheviks are Coming'. Not coming from Russia, but from within South Africa. Dragged out of a sanatorium, desperately ill, Jones was given a jail sentence. [The case was based on a technicality – on whether the censorship laws had been broken, but the trial centred on the ideas of communism]. Only the appeal court saved him from going to prison, and that probably saved his life. Jones, desperately ill as he was, did manage to get to Europe. He had gone home to die in his native town, Aberystwyth. But, persuaded to go to Moscow, had a new lease of life: as a propagandist for the Comintern; as a translator of Lenin into English; as an admirer of Lenin and Trotsky – and he did not separate them, because they were working together to create a socialist society in Russia. What would have happened to him if he had not died in 1924, and he was seriously ill and died naturally, is hard to say. I did speak with the Russian historian, Professor Davidson, and he agreed with me that had Jones lived, he would not have lived for very long. He would have fallen in the purges, because internationalist that he was, there was no way that he would have been tolerated in the Moscow regime that followed.

In talking about the Russian connection, I want to repeat the complaint of S P Bunting, in Moscow, in 1928: that is, that the Comintern and fellow communist parties gave no advice to the SACP. When the British seamen's strike took place in 1925, and it took place mainly in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand...members of the SACP formed the core of the support committees in South Africa. They waited for some kind of message from Moscow, on how they might proceed. No message ever came. Was this because South Africa was thought of as an outpost, not recognized for what it was – a centre of world capital because it was the producer of gold?

There was no support for the communists, and no advancement of theory for the South Africans from the Communist International. It was not necessary in most cases for the South African party to get instructions from Moscow, the Russians had only to wink and the local party members blinked furiously. Whatever happened in Russia – understandably at the beginning – was followed so automatically when news came through that instructions were not needed. That is, until it

came to a political situation when our comrades of that time did not know how to proceed.

Bunting complained bitterly in 1928, but in fact it came too late: the Comintern was about to instruct. When the line was class struggle before 1928 the local party followed, because they were in tune with Moscow. When that was reversed and the new line called for a 'Black Republic', then, come what may, object as they may, the new line was 'Black Republic'. When it was 'popular front', whether they objected or not – and by this time they had stopped objecting – it was 'popular front'. When Moscow said 'anti-war', it was anti-war; when that was reversed and became 'pro-war', it was pro-war, and when it was pro-war again, need I say, it was pro-war again, the communists in South Africa [knew the time had come to change tack]. They did their patriotic duty: I remember how they sat playing poker every Sunday night with a kitty for *Medical Aid for Russia*. It was a patriotic effort on their part... Whatever was demanded of the party followed suit.

Let me say that I am sorry that I have to talk in this way. I should be the impartial opener of the conference, and I am sure that many people might be uncomfortable. I hope that we might discuss some of these things as the conference proceeds and we will see how some of these issues will emerge, but whatever might be said of the communists or the left opposition, they always followed a Russian model. Those who were expelled from the party because of genuine distress at the way the Soviet Union conducted its policies, if they stayed in politics, still followed the Russian model. This time it was Trotsky's model. There was hardly anything these people would do unless they got the support of Leon Trotsky. I think that Trotsky was a great man, but I do not think that any group can dare to say that will follow a policy because one man somewhere lays down the line. Trotsky made a really disastrous mistake in the way he advised the left opposition in South Africa in his letter of 1935. I think that by agreeing with them that they centre their work on the land question, and urging them to accept the Black Republic slogan, Trotsky was horribly wrong. I think that in this he did a real disservice to the left opposition in South Africa. Please note the way he dominated the left opposition in those days: whether it was by writing the forward to the Afrikaans edition of the *Communist Manifesto* to commemorate ninety years of that pamphlet, or whether it was to advise on the programme of the party that was formed. He did a further disservice by calling that monstrous state a 'deformed worker's state'... Yes it was degenerate – but it is doubtful whether it was a worker's state. Many continued to accept Trotsky's description of the USSR as a deformed or degenerate state. Hopefully recent events will persuade people that such a description is no longer valid.

The War, the USSR and the Communist Party

The view taken towards the USSR affected the entire attitude towards the war. The CPSA was confused, some Trotskyist groups resolved the problem by dissolving themselves. It is not possible to understand how they could have done that: it was inexcusable. Only two small groups, one in the Cape, and the other in Johannesburg functioned openly: and they adopted an anti-war position. Whether that attitude was correct needs serious discussion and serious

debate. But it was not central to the politics of the time. The black working class did not give a damn about the war: they were interested in day-to-day issues. That emerged clearly from the documents I found when I came to write my last book. The Africans were concerned about their working and living conditions; about the right to form trade unions and to strike, and whether their community problems could be solved. That is why they boycotted the buses or demanded more houses. [Their actions ignored appeals by communists and the nationalist movements, among others, that they do not strike, or do not disrupt production].

The Post-war Era

It was after the war that the situation seemed to take a different turn. The Soviet Union was now the first among equals of those who had defeated Hitler. The reason for that victory (and that defeat) I still find unanalyzed in most of the books I read. But whatever the reasons for those events, the CPSA altered course after the war, both because of events overseas and locally. The party members were devastated by Churchill's speech at Fulton in 1946 where he said that an 'iron curtain' was descending on Europe, and this was followed by the Truman doctrine, which heralded the start of the cold war. However, just when they were about to alter course they were banned. The members of the CPSA went into the ANC and, whether they did this for good or bad reasons, they were able to establish themselves inside the nationalist movement in South Africa. They imported into the ANC a sense of organization, a certain backbone that must not be denied for one moment, and they also imported Stalinist methods.

After the banning of the ANC in 1960, its exile body became increasingly indistinguishable in form from Stalinism...A process of transformation that was helped on by support from eastern Europe with money, with publishing, with scholarships and with arms for struggle. The members of the ANC — and I do not know which were members of the SACP and which were not — they were indistinguishable — picked up the methods of the secret police: in East Germany, Cuba and the Soviet Union. In this way they conducted themselves in ways little different from the communist parties, so called, throughout Europe. It is this which laid its stamp on the High Command's actions in the mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1984: to the forms of interrogation, torture and killings. I am not concerned here with whether the people who conducted that mutiny were right or wrong in their appraisal of the military situation in Angola. I do know that most of them were not spies. I do know that most of them were not agents of the government, and I do know that they were brutally murdered by the security department of the ANC. And I do know that those methods have continued and still continue despite denials by the ANC. There are still members of the ANC in prison in Tanzania, who are being beaten with iron rods and mutilated. I do know that people are being accused falsely and being excluded for false reasons inside the Congress movement.

This is not, [I repeat], not the fight for democracy that we were told would come out of the ANC. This is a fight for the establishment of a kind of control which is

finally being buried in the Soviet Union — or hopefully it is being buried — but is still alive in the ranks of the ANC and the SACP.

Please do note, that whether you accept what I say or not, there are a whole series of questions that have to emerge from your deliberations, which must take these events into account. We have to understand the meaning of the Soviet Union's impact on South Africa, the way in which it affected our politics, yesterday, today and unfortunately still tomorrow. The way in which these ideas have been imported into the political movements of this country, the way in which they affect both those who were in the Communist Party, in the ANC, Azapo, the PAC, and in the little groups of the Trotskyist tendencies...the Marxist Workers Tendency, the SWP, the WRP, and so on — they too have to confront this issue and decide where they are in terms of the problems of what was represented not only by the Soviet Union, but the concept of revolution, the concept of socialism, the internationalizing of our struggle, so that Marxism can be revived and flourish, and play a really active part in the transformation of this country.

By that I do not mean through a market economy. I do not mean it through a mixed economy, or a social welfare state. I mean through the control of society, by the producers of that society, in an international movement which will transform not only South Africa but the world.

This is not going to take place immediately. It might only take place over ten, twenty or thirty years. We still have time to learn what the problems are so that we can play our real part when the time comes. I can only say that I hope that your deliberations, which might not be as partisan as mine has been, will at least be fruitful and that some ideas will come out of them.

* Although there was a prepared paper, the outline of which I followed, I did not read from it and preferred to ad lib. This allowed for spontaneity but also led to repetition and some slips of the tongue. The address has been shortened and corrected. Readers of *Searchlight South Africa* will recognize ideas elaborated in previous issues that had to be shortened to fit the time available for the address. Additions, inserted in the interest of clarification, are in square brackets — BH.

Review

A LITERATURE OF WOLVES

Paul Trehela

Inge Runge and Uwe Stelbrink (1990), *Markus Wolf: 'Ich bin kein Spion'*, Dietz, Berlin.

Markus Wolf (1989), *Die Troika*, Claassen, Dusseldorf.

I saw the infliction of pain broken away from the will that creates it...the Siberias of snow and gun...
— Nadine Gordimer, *Burger's Daughter* (1979).¹

The Spy-Chief as Author

Runge's and Stelbrink's book is the record of a series of interviews with Markus Wolf conducted in the summer of 1990, and published by a former East German state publishing house. This book directs an interesting light on the past and present of the South African Communist Party, and in particular on the training of the security apparatus of the ANC. Markus Wolf was, until 1987, a director of the security apparatus of the former German Democratic Republic, the Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit).

Before what Wolf calls 'die Wende' or turning-point of late 1989, the GDR was a crucial link in the international logistical network that upheld the exile operations of the ANC. East Germany was the base from which the SACP publication *The African Communist* and the ANC monthly *Sechaba* were published. It was also a major training base of cadres for Umkhonto we Sizwe. There, recruits in the June 16 Detachment, formed from the youth that went into exile after the 1976 school students rebellion, received political training from ANC luminaries such as Pallo Jordan (Secretary for Information and Publicity), Ronnie Kasrils (head of Military Intelligence)² and Alan Brooks. It was also a primary centre for training of the ANC security department, responsible for replicating the apparatus of totalitarian political control within the ANC in exile. Through nearly all the countries in Africa in which it had a base in exile, the ANC had alongside its political office...a prison. It is this institution of modern South African political life that the interview with Wolf helps illuminate.

Wolf's *curriculum vitae* are given as follows on the back of *Die Troika* (The Troika), an autobiographical account published by him in 1989:

born 1923 as son of the writer Friedrich Wolf. From 1933 to 1945, in exile in Moscow. From May 1945, editor and commentator with Berlin Radio. After that, special correspondent at the Nuremberg Trials. From 1949 to 1951, first counsellor in the diplomatic mission of the GDR in Moscow. From 1951 to 1987, worked in the Ministry for State Security [the Stasi], finally as director of the Intelligence Department [Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung] and as deputy Minister. Retired in 1987. (Translated)

Wolf's 11-year youthful exile in the Soviet Union under Stalin followed the route of the German stalinist emigration. His father was both a member of the German Communist Party and a Jew. When Wolf retired in 1987 as one of the most impor-

tant security functionaries of the entire bloc of stalinist states, his life was an epitome of two generations of stalinist politics. Lasting well over three decades, his career in the East German secret police began under Stalin and concluded under Gorbachev.

The agency he headed is credited with having penetrated the German Federal Republic with hundreds of agents, and probably several thousand more informants, so that 'at virtually every level of government, someone worked for the Stasi'. (*Independent on Sunday*, 19 May 1991) In the GDR itself 'Big Brother listened and watched in every factory, office and church...Stasi agents were present in every opposition group — in some cases, they formed a majority of founder members. The Stasi's role in training and sheltering Palestinian guerrillas and West German RAF [Red Army Fraction] terrorists was equally spectacular'.

In his extended interview with Runge and Stelbrink, Wolf acknowledges the role of the Stasi in training the security apparatus of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He remarks that PLO officers received training from the Stasi

fundamentally in the same way as contacts from Syria, Iraq, Egypt and South Yemen, where we had the strongest presence as an intelligence service, along with several African countries...These people came here and were trained. I think this consisted of training at the party political level, in the military field through the army, in the area of the Interior Ministry for 'internal' personnel and in the area of state security in the various departments. (pp 77–78 Translated)

He adds that individuals were trained in the general principles of intelligence work, in various sectors. Referring to Iraq in the early stages of the conflict over Kuwait, he notes that previously Iraq had been what he describes as 'a position in the Soviet foreign policy' ('dann war ja Irak eine Position in der sowjetischen Aussenpolitik').

Consequently it was given military support, delivery of weapons and so on. In this confrontational division of the world and through the existing collection of allies, the ruling principle was that each one which goes along with me is my ally and to it I give everything, and thus it is automatically the enemy of the other side. (p 81)

The same logic obtained in Stasi support for the ANC. The security apparatus of the ANC functioned no less as 'a position in Soviet foreign policy', along with the regimes of Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia. According to Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, it was the Stasi that built up the security apparatus in Angola and Mozambique, where it also set up a system of labour camps for 're-education'. (*KGB, The Inside Story of its Foreign Organisation from Lenin to Gorbachev*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1990, p464) Ryszard Kapuscinski has noted the crucial role of the Stasi in Brezhnevite Ethiopia, as the force that guarded the dictator Mengistu and 'managed his political militia'. (*Independent on Sunday*, 1 September 1991)

It is most probable that this experience was brought directly to bear on the setting up of the ANC prison camp, 'Quatro', in northern Angola in 1979, and of the ANC security department itself. The Stasi played a crucial role in Africa's ex-

perience with Stalinism, and it is essential for the future of southern Africa that the exact nature of this relationship, especially in the formation of an apparatus of coercion, becomes public knowledge.

With the Stasi in Africa

In 1990 Samir Al-Khalil noted that the 'methods, instruments and structures needed for effective torturing institutions in the Third World normally get imported from the outside', and that in Iraq these were provided by the Soviet Union and the GDR. (*Republic of Fear: Saddam's Iraq*, Hutchinson, p 66)

A first-hand account of the ANC prison camp Quatro was published in *Searchlight South Africa* No 5, July 1990. Procedure in the camp, according to a former prisoner, followed the same principles as in a security prison in East Germany, as shown in a recent TV documentary. The prison in the GDR had a system of red and green lights in the corridors to control the movement of prisoners, to prevent inmates whose identity was to be kept secret from being recognized by other inmates. At every corner in Quatro, inmates were strictly required to ask 'Permission to pass'. On the order 'Cover', ANC prisoners were required immediately to crouch close to the ground with their arms over their heads. (personal communication) Differences in procedure were mainly those appropriate to the different technical levels of East Germany and the north Angolan bush.

The stalinist states had a system of general training centres for 'third world' states and nationalist movements. Iraqi security officials and personnel from other countries were trained in the GDR at a Stasi school at Massow, near Berlin. (*Independent*, 30 January 1991) ANC security personnel studied in the GDR at Dieterhof. Towards the end of the 1980s, ANC security and prison staff were trained in Cuba (the last redoubt to which SACP political and military personnel continue to be sent). Training of military personnel above the rank of captain included the methodology of intelligence, and here all roads led to the KGB, which kept files on its pupils so as to monitor their careers.

In the Soviet Union, individuals from the military wing of the South West Africa Peoples Organization (Swapo) were trained in military intelligence at Simferopol in the Crimea — at 45 degrees north of the equator, one of the warmest areas of the Soviet Union — where they were taught methods of torture used by the partisans in the forests in the western areas of the Soviet Union in world war two. These were unsophisticated methods which did not require modern technical apparatus, and appear quite similar in character to those used by Swapo security in its purges in southern Angola from 1984 to 1989. The methods taught at Simferopol included:

- * suspension of a prisoner by his arms;
- * suffocation, by means of a plastic bag tied around the neck;
- * tightening of a rope tied around the prisoner's head, by means of a stick twisted in a tourniquet;
- * burning the body with live coals.

While Swapo military personnel at Simferopol were kept segregated from trainees from other parts of the world, they were aware that the base was being used at the same time for training of military personnel from other countries such as Nicaragua. (communication from former Swapo soldiers)

Wolf of course does not reveal such arcane secrets of his craft. Nevertheless, the interview is interesting, and not only for the implied relation of the Stasi to the training of the ANC security apparatus. Wolf reveals how little exceptional is the 'new thinking' of the SACP, summed up in the article by the party's former secretary-general, Joe Slovo, 'Has Socialism Failed?' The new turn by Slovo, chief of staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe at the time of the mutiny in 1984 and during the torture and imprisonment of dissidents at Quatro, is shown to be essentially the same as that of Wolf, the Stasi-chief over the same period. Slovo's generation of SACP leaders is steeped in the same process of cultural, political and historical formation as their German colleague, and in the changed currents of the 1990s follows the same route towards political self-preservation.

The old Stalinist Wolf cries *mea culpa* over the state system in which individuals such as he held the leading strings. Concerning that which 'wrecked our system', he pins the blame on: 'what one now — I long rejected this concept — describes as Stalinism or the consequences of Stalinism'. (p 12) Sir William Harcourt, one of the venerables of the old Liberal Party in Britain, was supposed to have stated that 'we are all socialists now', but it is left to the old apparatchiks Wolf and Slovo to inform us that we are all anti-Stalinists now.

Wolf adds flesh to these bare bones. He states that the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, at which Khrushchev delivered his secret speech denouncing Stalin, was 'naturally a point of intersection (Schnittpunkt) for me. From then on Stalin as a person was finished for me...Since the 20th Party congress, the question of crimes was clear cut for me, and also: that one had to do everything so that such things could not be repeated'. (p 41) This did not prevent the GDR from presiding, two decades later, over construction of a prison system in Africa borrowed by the ANC and the SACP from the crimes denounced by Khrushchev.

Wolf is nothing if not self-effacing. For a spy-chief this is doubtless a matter of habit. Reflecting on the changes of 1989, this life-long native son of the apparatus declares: 'I only know...that one must get rid of the apparatus'. (p 92)

Thirty years' opposition to the crimes of Stalin, at the head of the apparatus, do not prevent Wolf however from presenting only minimal information in his autobiography about the demise of Wilhelm Wloch, a German Comintern militant and father of his close friend Lothar Wloch (one of the 'troika' of Wolf's autobiography). Wilhelm Wloch perished in the Soviet Union in Stalin's purges of the 1930s, after which the Wloch family, long-standing socialists, returned...to Hitler's Germany. Wolf states only that Wloch, like others, was a victim of 'arbitrary, unprovable accusations'. To this (in words written before the downfall of his state) he adds the callous routine chorus:

His companions of fate, who survived, continued undiverted in the struggle against fascism, for the liberation of their fatherland and thereafter for the building of socialism. I am convinced that if Wilhelm Wloch were still alive, he would be among them and with us. (*Die Troika*, p 36)

Thus the Stasi-general lays claim to the memory of the victims of Stalinism, while at the same time training the modern Berias and Poskrebyshevs of southern Africa and the Middle East. This sickening literature, by death-bed converts from Stalinism, has a whole school of scribes busy with their word processors in South Africa. The tone of this literature is characterized by romantic *schmaltz* in the manner of Wolf's 'liberation of the fatherland', a liberal hand in the revising of history, sticky passages concerning the unfortunate Wilhelm Wlochs, dishonest protestations concerning democracy, and serene faith in the stupidity of the reader.

A Little Matter of Torture

At present our knowledge of who taught what to whom, and how, in the apparatus of torture is slight. Investigation into this sump of modern southern African history is at its merest beginnings. Outside the various intelligence agencies (not least, that of the ANC), which generally already know all there is to know, the present account — imperfect, allusive and tendential — is so far the most complete that exists. However, with a nationalist Ukrainian government having taken control over the training base at Simferopol in the Crimea, and as investigators plough through the relics of the Stasi training centres in the former GDR, a more complete picture relevant to southern Africa must emerge. Piece by piece, more will be learnt about the obscure past of many of the returned heroes of South Africa's political destiny.

In the 30-year history of the ANC in exile, it was the military discipline of the SACP that held the whole show together, especially in the leanest years. In this relation, the greatest strength of the SACP was its position in the military high command — in Umkhonto we Sizwe — crucially through its arterial role through which was pumped Soviet and East European military hardware, funds and training. In the military high command, it was ultimately the security department that had the decisive say; and in the security department, it was the apparatus of torture and imprisonment of dissent that assured the place of the SACP, and thus also the ANC, in present and future South African political life, in particular against the thought-currents of black consciousness and democratic debate that migrated north to the Angolan camps along with the generation of 1976.

In so far as its war against this unreliable climate of opinion (from the viewpoint of the SACP) was won in exile — and not for instance through the man-hunt of Azapo in the townships of South Africa, after the demonstrations against Senator Edward Kennedy in January 1985 — it must be understood that each and every member of the ANC abroad was prisoner of this security apparatus. Even in parliamentary and judicial Britain, with a free press and open political debate, ANC members had their passports kept under lock and key by the security department, operating out of the Chief Representative's office in London. This served as a war-

rant not only against defections to the South African state police, but still more as a means of thought-control. ANC members studying in Britain were under continuous threat of transfer of residence from a university or college to the university of pain at Quatro. A command system, with its local station chief from the security department, extended to every centre of ANC exiles abroad, no different in its internal distribution of authority from a Soviet or East German embassy. It still does.

All this while the ANC, through the left and the liberals active in the Anti-Apartheid Movement, was upheld within British intellectual life as an altar of democracy. A systemic corruption of concepts thus continued for decades, colouring southern African political life in an unwholesome dy, and with it the moral climate of political thinking in Britain and other countries, as well as the entire context of black politics internationally. It is a world where the major categories derive straight from Orwell's *1984* (incidentally, the year of rebellion against the rule of double-speak, in the mutiny among ANC troops in Angola).

Here is where torture, the gulag and the omnipotent rule of lies were in effect classified internationally as good, acceptable, justified, the lesser evil — as in Spain in the 1930s. A major corruption of discourse, continuing the worst of the 1930s, was thus preserved as an international norm of great obduracy through the late 20th century, mainly among the intelligentsia and trade union officialdom, but also in the churches, the political parties, the press and the schools. The effectiveness of this internal regimen of the ANC may be measured by the fact that almost total silence was preserved about it internationally until early 1990.

Markus Wolf was one of its most accomplished practitioners and educators. Thus his significance for southern Africa. This review has nothing to say about his personal fate after publication of his extended interview with Runge and Stelbrink, his journey to Canossa via Moscow and Austria and wherever else. The spy-chief will no doubt take care of himself. But how does one begin to take care of the heritage of Stasi and KGB thought-control in what is now the most important political organization in the sub-continent of Africa, in the principal industrial base of the continent as a whole? What kind of training for democracy was there, with the brutalism of the racist state confronted abroad by the more accomplished and hypocritical brutalism of the ANC security department? On this issue, in South Africa and abroad, the tongues are locked. Except a few marginalised pariahs, it is an issue on which no-one is prepared to speak. Wolf and his colleagues did their work well.

Notes

1. Nadine Gordimer (1980), *Burger's Daughter*, Penguin, p 208. The character around whom the novel revolves, a leader of the SACP who dies in prison in South Africa, is derived from the life and death of Bram Fischer, former chairman of the party and one of the founders of Umkhonto we Sizwe.
2. In addition to indigestible political poetry of 1930s vintage, written under the name 'ANC Kumalo', the intelligence chief Kasrils performed an interesting service to academic knowledge through his editing (with a fellow South African, Barry Feinberg, later director of International Defence and Aid) of various collections of trivia from the archives of the philosopher, Bertrand Russell. The first volume, *Dear Bertrand Russell*, appeared in 1969. Given Russell's relation to the movement against the war in Vietnam at this time (he died in 1970), this was an extraordinary relationship.

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TROTSKY'S POLITICAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE USSR: 1929-1940

H. H. Ticktin

Trotsky's political economy of the USSR remained incomplete. He provided an analysis which could be extended to provide a fuller political economy of Stalinism but, although this evolved over the period 1928-40, it remained incomplete. Furthermore it was internally inconsistent: always less than a theory and more a series of observations and insights. He saw the Stalinist elite as parasitic, but he also viewed it as a socioeconomic entity. Nonetheless, Trotsky (whose crucial concept was not that of a workers' state but of the transition period), did not theorize his own perception although logically he could have argued that the transition period had incorporated the effects of the October Revolution irrevocably. Yet, in 1940, his argument for the defence of the USSR no longer relied on that point.

Trotsky's Method

Trotsky's discussion on the nature of the USSR, unlike his political economy of capitalism or his history of Russia, was impressionistic. In particular *Revolution Betrayed* was originally written as a journalistic piece. To piece together his discussion of the political economy is difficult because his view was not consistent over time. Nonetheless, in his various writings he did capture the essence of the movement of the Soviet economy.

It was Preobrazhensky who described the laws of the political economy of the USSR in the twenties, and formulated the laws of the transition period, stressing the conflict between planning and the market¹. He was the most profound and courageous political economist of the Bolshevik Party and the left opposition but he lacked the subtlety of Trotsky, the historical understanding and the dialectical skill necessary to grasp the full nature of Stalinism. Trotsky, probably the most dialectical of all Marxist writers since Marx, also failed in this respect. In examining the interaction of socialist planning and market forces at work, he saw the forces of socialism fighting those of capitalism, that is, that there were two conflicting laws operating under the New Economic Policy (NEP). Yet, in referring to the contradiction between the forces of production and the bureaucratic relations, he failed to uncover the operation of the fundamental laws by not unravelling the political economy of the Soviet Union.

Consequently, neither Trotsky nor Preobrazhensky grasped the full nature of Stalinism. The problem is that the two laws of which Preobrazhensky speaks, that of planning and the market, did indeed interpenetrate and contradict each other, providing two poles of a new entity. Planning and the market stand in conflict, with the one necessarily squeezing the other out. In this Preobrazhensky provided an understanding of the dynamic of a genuine transition period². Despite this, these two theoreticians saw Stalin and the bureaucratic elite as centrist, standing be-

tween Bukharin, whose views led to capitalist restoration, and a proletarian revolution as propounded by the left opposition. They failed to see that the Stalinist road carved a path of its own: that is, it did not establish a mode of production but only a temporary system which had its own life and laws. It is that specificity and historical role which Trotsky did not understand.

On the other hand, Trotsky's work is full of insights, impressions and profound categorizations of the movement of Soviet reality. When he characterized Stalinism as worse politically than fascism it was an insight which was as profound as any. Only now are we beginning to learn of the depths of the brutality of Stalinism. But Trotsky's characterization was political, not social and economic.

There are three reasons for Trotsky's relatively limited understanding of the USSR. Firstly, when all information was so heavily controlled and, in exile, he lacked knowledge of the changes occurring in the USSR at the time. Secondly, although Trotsky saw that the USSR was unformed, he did not realise that it was the nature of the USSR to be unformed. He never understood that a society could come into being which never truly forms, that is, never establishes itself as a mode of production and swallows up its own population in the process.³

Thirdly, Trotsky's greatness derived from his presence in the specific political economic process in Russia. When exiled, and deprived of people with whom to discuss and interact, his abilities could only decline. Despite the profundity of his thoughts in his last years, they were below his previous best.

Trotsky's Problem

The overall outline of the USSR was already clear in theoretical terms by 1929. A new bureaucratic elite had taken power and was establishing its own system of control. A number of questions then arose. Where did this new group come from? What was the objective basis of this bureaucratic elite in Soviet society? What laws governed the operation of Soviet society and what was its nature? The answer to the latter question provided the basis for the determination of the longevity of the regime. Trotsky's answers were opaque. While pointing out that 'there still remains the character of the Soviet State, which does not remain at all unchangeable throughout the whole transitional epoch',⁴ he argued that the social democrats had rescued the bourgeoisie and consequently the period 'stretched out to a whole historical epoch'.⁵ He appeared to regard the bureaucracy as a subjective phenomenon born of objective circumstances saying: 'The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership'⁶. The problem is that the subjective/objective dialectic has to be formulated.

As Trotsky correctly saw, the epoch was one of transition in which the movement from capitalism to socialism involved a change towards a socialist form of planning. In the intermediate period the organization and administration of the economy and political life were bound to come to the fore. Hence, the subjective factor would play an increasing role in political life. But what role? Since there was neither planning nor the pristine spontaneous market, it was not at all clear.

Trotsky had asked in the late 1920s where the bureaucracy came from and his answer was two-fold. It was the organ of the world bourgeoisie, or, in other words,

the expression of the victory of the world bourgeoisie within the USSR, within the limits that were possible to the bourgeoisie.⁷ It was also the immediate expression of the interests of the apparatus which had come into being, under conditions of both scarcity and the market. Obviously, the combination of relatively well-paid non-Marxist specialists and party and state officials, who emerged in positions of privilege and authority, even if un-corrupted, was a conservative force. That is, as he saw it:

The Soviet bureaucracy, which represents an amalgam of the upper stratum of the victorious proletariat with broad strata of the overthrown classes, includes within itself a mighty agency of world capital⁸

This view, if pursued, should have led him to continue his analysis on an objective plane.

Rakovsky's Letter to Valentinov of 2 August 1928, which Trotsky found 'exceptionally interesting and significant', marked a new stage in the discussion and led logically to an analysis of the origin of the bureaucracy in terms of the market.⁹ In his analysis of the bureaucracy, which was novel, he claimed that this was a new social group. Rakovsky argued, firstly, that in taking power a section of the workers that ruled were corrupted, by the accession of material privileges (via the market), by the nobility, and by the corruption of power in itself. This Trotsky specifically termed 'superstructural'.¹⁰ Rakovsky then stressed the importance of educating the working class. The degeneration, said Rakovsky, could be mitigated through the correct leadership of the Communist Party, which was not forthcoming at the time. On the other hand he specifically argued that 'we should have been prepared for the nefarious influence of the NEP, against the temptations and ideology of the bourgeoisie'.¹¹

At the time the question of the source of the degeneration seemed unnecessary, since it was obvious that if the bureaucracy was the organ of the world bourgeoisie, it arose from the market.¹² Today, however, the question must be clearly posed. Even if Trotsky's view is clear, it has not been spelled out. What is needed is a discussion of the interaction between NEP and the origins of the bureaucratic elite. Trotsky does make it clear that the bureaucratic apparatus merged with the 'bourgeois elements'.¹³ Why then did it not introduce the market at the time? Trotsky said that it would have preferred to, but could not.¹⁴ That is, the conditions of the time acted as a constraint on the bureaucracy that prevented it introducing the market.

Trotsky's Critique

Trotsky's critique was composed of several elements. With respect to labour, he argued that the framework of the USSR remained nationalized property. This gave those who controlled the bureaucratic apparatus enormous strength based on their ability to direct labour in the economy. This insight has unfortunately been largely forgotten in the literature outside of the journal *Critique*. The stress on the control of an amorphous labour force goes straight to the heart of the matter.

Methodologically this went back to Marxist political economy and its starting point in human social labour and the specific form of that labour. Trotsky argued implicitly that human social labour in the USSR was not free but was controlled, and therefore the regime had enormous economic and social power. What he did not foresee was that the contradictions involved in such control would lead to the purges, the gulag and a grossly inefficient economy. He saw the advantages in terms of growth, and the disadvantages of lack of democracy in terms of waste ('bureaucratism as a system became the worst brake on the technical and cultural development of the country')¹⁵, but he did not perceive the scale of the killing and the enormity of the waste. The fundamental problem was that he anticipated the rapid end of the bureaucracy and so had no need to theorize the nature of its economy.¹⁶ The question of the contradictions of the system is discussed below.

In any social system labour has to have a form. Under feudalism it is subsistence labour combined with a direct extraction of the surplus product, under capitalism it is abstract labour, under socialism it is directly social labour. What is it under Stalinism? Implicitly I have already answered the question: it is the form of no form. Put differently, the question is one of extraction of the surplus product and the form under which it is taking place. It was clearly unique since it was neither capitalist nor socialist. In fact, it is because the extraction of the surplus product conflicts with the control over the labour process that the system malfunctions, is inefficient and gives rise to massive waste. This only states that there is no historical form of social labour but a stalemate between the social groups in the USSR and a historical stalemate between the classes in the world. Trotsky insisted on the crucial role of labour productivity, pointing out ceaselessly that as long as productivity was lower than the rest of the world, the USSR remained unstable.¹⁷

Trotsky's strength lay in his statements that the nature of the USSR was undetermined and his perception that it was the centralized control over labour which permitted the bureaucracy to rule. He specifically argued that 'The control of the surplus product opened the bureaucracy's road to power'.¹⁸ His weakness lay in his inability to take these points to their natural conclusion.

Trotsky's second point rose from his discussion of the gains of the October Revolution. Misled by optimism and poor information, he still placed hopes on the preservation of aspects of the revolution, leading to his formulation of the conflict in the USSR as lying between 'the social revolution still exist(ing) in property relations', and bourgeois norms of distribution.¹⁹ That such a conflict existed in the early days of the Lenin period was obvious but that a bureaucratic apparatus would necessarily appropriate as much control as possible to itself over the means of production did not enter Trotsky's discussion. To appropriate the surplus product the bureaucracy had to have control over the means of production and consequently over labour and its product. Then there is no longer a conflict between production and distribution. If, as Trotsky argued, the working class in some sense remained in power and the elite were confined by the structure itself he would have been correct. He maintained that: 'in spite of monstrous bureaucratic distortions, the class basis of the USSR remains proletarian',²⁰ but no elite could accept such structural control and would be bound to find ways of removing it.

The essence of the discussion, since the thirties, is about the nature of the structural control and how the elite liberated itself from the original form of the nationalized property. From one angle a division between production and appropriation is a nonsense but looked at historically it has its own justification. If the proletariat were in power but, lacking the skills and the experience, could not run its own economy, it would have to delegate authority to a bureaucratic apparatus. This is what Trotsky argued starting from the general principle that any transitional period involved a bourgeois state enforcing bourgeois norms of distribution on socialist property relations.²¹ However, was the working class still in power, in however attenuated a sense, in the thirties? Here Trotsky's political view of Stalinism as centrist (that is, standing between the left and capitalist restoration) was crucial. In that case Stalin still embodied, in however distorted a form, the spirit of the October Revolution. But, if Stalin represented a temporary but nonetheless systemic change in control, which completely dispossessed the working class then it could not be said that there was a difference between the form of control over the means of production and the form of distribution. They seemed, indeed, exactly suited.

The discussion on the nature of the USSR was derailed by the primitivism of the arguments of Bruno Rizzi, Max Shachtman and James Burnham. They simply asserted that the USSR was a new mode of production with classes. But they had no theory and could not provide the laws of motion of this new mode of production. Whereas Trotsky at least had some understanding of the society they only had a label. Today it is obvious that if it were a mode of production it ought to have at least lasted longer than six decades. Trotsky, however, took their contention seriously, specifically stating that there was no new class in the USSR or no new mode of production. His arguments are in fact irrefutable in Marxist terms. A class must have a specific form of control over the surplus product and Trotsky argued that the Soviet bureaucracy was too constrained to have developed that new method of pumping out surplus product. The privileges were hidden, they were forced to use planning and to industrialize the country.

Planning

The major underpinning of Trotsky's view of the USSR was that it was planned and the whole debate hinges around that question. Shachtman, *et al*, argued that planning was possible in a new social formation. However, Marxists had argued effectively that planning, as the basis of socialism, was the antithesis of the market. Trotsky remained convinced of that, arguing that planning was only possible on the basis of democracy: 'The plan is only a working hypothesis. The fulfilment of the plan inevitably means its radical alteration by the masses whose vital interests are reflected in the plan'.²²

Both sides of that debate were then locked into arguments which were incoherent. Had Trotsky completely abandoned the view that the USSR was planned he would have been forced to conclude that it was not a worker's state and that there was no contradiction between production and distribution, despite his having written in 1933 that: 'The Soviet economy today is neither a monetary

nor a planned one. It is an almost purely bureaucratic economy'.²³ Trotsky then embraced the contradiction in himself that the USSR is planned and not planned, while not recognizing that fact.

On the other hand, the bureaucratic collectivists produced a mechanical statement which was not dialectical in that they did not try to perceive the contradictions operating in the society. Nonetheless, the underlying point that Shachtman and others were trying to make is that the USSR cannot be understood as socialist, or proto-socialist, which a worker's state viewpoint must assert. Nationalization of the means of production can give rise to a form which is exploitative. The problem was not that Trotsky disagreed. He explicitly states that a social revolution would be required.

Needless to say, the distribution of productive forces among the various branches of the economy and generally the entire content of the plan will be drastically changed when this plan is determined by the interests not of the bureaucracy but of the producers themselves...Certain of our critics (Ciliga, Bruno and others) want, come what may, to call the future revolution social. Let us grant this definition. What does it alter in essence?²⁴

He went from critical support based on the view that the USSR was a worker's state and had to be defended against imperialist attack to an uncompromising hostility to all the institutions of the USSR. It really is not clear why the USSR, if exploitative, has to be defended unless it is argued that nationalization in itself has to be defended. Yet, no-one calls for the defence of a conservative country simply because it has nationalized institutions. No-one would need to: nations are entitled to support in order to control their own destiny. Indeed Trotsky did argue in precisely this manner in 1940, when he said:

When Italy attacked Ethiopia, I was fully on the side of the latter, despite the Ethiopian negus for whom I have no sympathy. What mattered was to oppose imperialism's seizure of this new territory. In the same way now I decisively oppose the imperialist camp and support independence for the USSR, despite the negus in the Kremlin'.²⁵

While such a view is consistent with a defence of the USSR as a workers' state, it actually makes the workers' state defence otiose.

It would seem that for Trotsky the political economy of the USSR would need to rest on the question of planning and the ability to direct labour centrally. Logically when these two elements were removed the regime would cease to have any historical justification and would cease to exist. Since Trotsky did not foresee the regime lasting he could not develop such a political economy. Instead, following Preobrazhensky, he saw the contradiction in terms of the market versus planning. This was transformed into bourgeois norms of distribution, a capitalist state with a bourgeois bureaucracy versus the continuation in some form of the October Revolution. As early as 1933 he wrote: 'The Stalinist system is exhausted to the end and is doomed. Its breakup is approaching with the same inevitability with which the victory of Fascism approached in Germany'. He then argued that Stalinism is

like a parasite which has wound itself around the tree of the October Revolution, which 'will yet know how to fend for itself'.²⁶

If planning versus market had been transformed in this manner, Trotsky was left with the question of the nature of the new laws. What was the new political economy? Here Trotsky was left with a description of the abolition of the market in market terms. His fundamental error was not to understand that the period of the form of no form could be the nature of the epoch itself. In his chapter in the *Revolution Betrayed* on the nature of inflation he argued that the market is needed simply in order to have a measure of value and therefore a measure of costs. The argument, however, reflects a critique from the angle of NEP but fails to understand the nature of the economy of the time. The point is that the Stalinist economy did evolve a non-market system and it was the task of Marxists to analyze it.

As I remarked, Trotsky did not realize that Stalinism could last for so long. It could be said that the mistake is understandable and only recognized as such with hindsight. Nonetheless, Trotsky admitted that he had made a mistake when he had earlier argued that Thermidor had not occurred.²⁷ Logically, he was on the way to admitting that an indeterminate system was being formed.

Indeed, Trotsky could have taken an alternative and more logical path. The crucial concept was the epoch itself, of which the unformed nature of the USSR was itself part. Proceeding from that point it would follow that it is the world which is in transition, caused by the movement of the laws of capitalism and the decline of value itself. Trotsky had this to say

The sharpness of the social crisis arises from this, that with today's concentration of the means of production, i.e. the monopoly of trusts, the law of value — the market — is already incapable of regulating economic relations. State intervention becomes an absolute necessity.²⁸

In addition to its objective decline, capitalism had been overthrown at least once. Whatever happened to the USSR could not alter the fact that capitalism was overthrown, placing conscious transition on the agenda throughout the world. This was a transition, said Trotsky, that had been prolonged because of social democracy. It followed then that the prolongation of the transition gave birth to Stalinism, which, in its turn, delayed the onset of socialism still further.

What Trotsky overlooked was the consciousness of the bourgeoisie of its own decline. It could and did take counter measures to ensure that it remained in power. Delay is today the essence of the epoch and the bourgeoisie has taken on board the lessons of the October revolution. It realized that it would have to make concessions to the working class to stabilize the situation. Nationalization, growth, full employment have now become standard aims of reformist and Christian democratic governments. Even Conservative governments have nationalized property and introduced forms of proto-planning. France, Germany and Japan are examples.

The socialization of the means of production has already enshrined the gains of the October Revolution, and the epoch now expresses its spirit. Only complete reaction could return the world to a pre-October Revolution position and that,

only if the working class the world over was prepared to return to mass unemployment and a low and static standard of living. The USSR in this sense is no longer important. Even the US has maintained growth and relatively low unemployment levels largely because the nature of the modern capitalist class depends on it. Arms production, the centrepiece of modern industrial production, cannot be eliminated without enormous disruption to capital itself: yet it is a needs based industry funded by the state and organized and planned over a long period of time. Plan periods, predictability, organization, are now watchwords of industry, which would not exist if growth had not become a feature of modern capitalism. That is, Trotsky saw the objective character of the epoch in terms of the decline of the law of value and the increased economic role of the state but he did not foresee its extent nor that the bourgeoisie would use what instruments it could to retain power, even if they were the very tools required for the transition to socialism.

Trotsky did not argue this point although the concept of the transitional epoch is his own. It is not a question of automatic movement anywhere, but a simple understanding of the laws of motion underlying not one country but the epoch. Yet, by continuing to maintain that Stalin was a centrist, Stalinism became a subjective phenomenon rather than having its own political economy. Furthermore it appeared to be a largely Russian rather than an epochal phenomenon.

The Process at Work in the USSR

The market had really been abolished in the USSR and the conflict between the laws of which he and Preobrazhensky had spoken had left out the actual result of such a conflict. In principle either planning defeats the market or the market wins. If neither wins there would be only degenerate forms of both, temporarily united in a society which has no historical form but has an historical existence. At one level Trotsky was struggling towards such a statement when he spoke of the historical nature of the USSR being open.

But let us bear in mind that the unwinding process has not yet been completed, and the future of Europe and the world during the next few decades has not yet been decided.²⁹

At another level, he was still bound to the previous history of NEP seeing the USSR in terms of plan and market.

It was the common currency of the early twenties that primitive socialist accumulation was required. Later, some identified the Stalinist process of industrialization with primitive socialist accumulation. While Trotsky hailed the industrialization of the USSR as a result of the elements of October, he did not call it primitive socialist accumulation. Indeed any identification would have implied that the USSR was building socialism. When Trotsky criticized Preobrazhensky he had referred to the possibility of using his analysis for purposes of building a national socialism.³⁰ Hence Stalin's industrialization could not even be called primitive socialist accumulation. Indeed, its highly contradictory nature, gross inefficiency and high levels of repression were perhaps reminiscent of primitive capitalist accumulation. Yet it is not at all clear if there was an extraction of surplus

product from the countryside: there was a shift of population but even that is questionable given the numbers killed in collectivization and perished in the famines. Would there really have been a shortage of labour, in the absence of collectivization? In that case, the process served no historical purpose, except to maintain the elite in power.

Trotsky saw the contradictions of the system and opposed the forms of collectivization and so-called planning but he still saw the system as demonstrating the advantages of nationalization and planning. At that time, of course, no other country had utilized those instruments, but he did not tease out the nature of the system coming into being. Logic would have driven him into arguing that the Soviet bureaucracy could neither use planning nor return to the market so that it would be driven from pillar to post to find an inherently impossible solution. Indeed, I would argue that this position is the only one consistent with Trotsky's theories.

For Trotsky the bureaucracy constituted a brake on 'the demands of development'. By the late 1930s development had ceased, leading to 'political convulsions' and the purges³¹ He therefore theorized the contradictions of the system, but in an absolutist way, failing to say any more than the truism that the forces of production were coming into conflict with the relations of production. What was missing was an explanation of the forms in which the conflict was taking place.

In his discussion of the market versus planning Trotsky argued strongly in favour of the restoration of the market.³² This misled Alec Nove and Richard Day into believing that Trotsky argued for the market. This is absurd. Trotsky argued quite clearly that in a transitional period between capitalism and socialism there would have to be a market. Nonetheless the market is not on the side of socialism, it is the enemy and would have to be phased out in the transition period. Thus,

The rouble will become the most stable valuta only from that moment when the Soviet productivity of labour exceeds that of the rest of the world and when, consequently, the rouble itself will be meditating on its final hour.³³

And again, Trotsky basically repeated Marx when he said:

In a communist society the state and money will disappear. Their gradual dying away ought consequently to begin under socialism. We shall be able to speak of the actual triumph of socialism only at that historical moment when the State turns into a semi-State, and money begins to lose its magic power. [He then added]: Money cannot be arbitrarily 'abolished', nor the State and old family 'liquidated'. They have to exhaust their historical mission, evaporate and fall away³⁴

Trotsky was only following Marx's critique of political economy, in highlighting the contradiction between exchange value and use value. Only the reformist Stalinists and social democrats argued otherwise. What Trotsky was saying was that money and the market must continue to be used until the demise of the transitional period to socialism. They have to wither gradually.

How can the proletariat use the market, either under the best or the worst conditions of the transitional period? The latter was the case in the USSR, alone in the capitalist world and with an economy that was both backward and in ruins. In the first case, the proletariat could be assumed to be strong enough to deal with the problems which would arise out of a market economy. They would begin to phase it out from the first day of taking power, even if it took some time to completely extinguish the market. In the case of the USSR, however, the local market would inevitably link to international capitalism and therefore constitute a political enemy. Furthermore, the small size of the proletariat (a tiny proportion of the population) would make it easy for the growing market sector to displace them from power. That would be the political problem, which indeed Trotsky had pointed out much earlier when he made it clear that the market was essential for all countries undergoing a transition to socialism. At the same time he declared that it was the use of 'methods and institutions of the capitalist system' which would be phased out as quickly as the new socialist methods of planning, centralization and accounting could be introduced.³⁵ And then at the 12th Party Congress on the Scissors crisis he pointed out that there was an impossible conflict between the market and planning. There he described NEP as 'our recognition of a legal order for the arena of struggle between us and private capital'.³⁶

There was also an economic problem which would be eased in the case of an advanced country that was part of a wider socialist fraternity of nations by two factors: a high and rising standard of living and a high level of democracy. It would be eased but not removed. Economically the market and planning are not complementary but undermine each other. This was the essence of Preobrazhensky's argument and again it is a logical development of the contradiction between exchange value and use value carried over into the transitional period. The basis of the market sector has to be exchange on the basis of value, precisely what Trotsky insisted was needed for planning in the USSR.³⁷ But, the basis of value is abstract labour, whereas the basis of planning is democratic participation in decision making by the associated producers themselves. These cannot co-exist. The first rests on alienated, controlled workers, whereas socialism requires free workers, increasingly engaged in creative labour and whose interests as human beings come above production.

It follows that under the market (where value is the touch-stone), labour is degraded, cheapened, or over exploited. Thus women's labour is degraded or worse paid because of time off to have children. From the point of view of the planned society, however, women's interests are primary, with production itself coming secondary. Ultimately women's labour will be much more productive under planning, but in the transitional period it would take some time to manifest itself. In like fashion, mining is an inhuman form of labour and the planned sector would have to automate it to the maximum degree or phase it out. On the other hand, the market sector might find it highly profitable to use cheap peasant labour. The proletariat would have to remove crucial aspects of the law of value on taking power: that is, unemployment and with it the reserve army of labour, and introduce a minimum wage and standard of living. Consequently, workers in the market sector would have less incentive to work hard, since they could not be dis-

missed or would easily find another job. The quality of goods did indeed drop in all sectors after the revolution as compared with the same firms under Tsarism. Preobrazhensky's plaintive cry that we have neither the advantages of capitalism nor of socialism would be an inevitable concomitant of any transitional period

The kind of problem faced by co-operatives in the USSR is also inevitable. Where do supplies come from for the different sectors? They cannot be self-sufficient. If the market sector needed machinery from the planned sector, it would have to conform to the planned form. That is, it would have to put in its orders to the central planners, in accordance with the planned economy's needs. Under conditions of shortage the planned sector could not rely on the wholesale trade or some spontaneous factor to fulfil its demands. Yet the planned sector could make enormous demands of the market sector at random. There would have to be planned co-operation. The market sector would then chafe at the difficulty in obtaining supplies and in selling to the state sector. The state sector would find, in its turn, that the market sector would charge it whatever it could get. If the market firm was a monopoly it could overcharge the planned sector while if there were competition, the monopoly of the state sector would permit it to squeeze the market sector.

The whole question of pay would be enough to lead to a revolution. The private sector would be based on profits and the managerial staff would be very well off, but in the planned sector, based on need, managers would be less well paid because their wages would be dependent on the needs of further investment. The result would be an increasing animosity between workers and the private sector managers, supervisors, skilled workers etc. Indeed the workers of the private sector would be bound to strike for higher pay, better conditions and more democratic participation in management. How could they be denied them?

These problems are inevitable and have no solution. In a developed society the market sector would be quickly reduced in size and scope, but in a backward society this was not possible. Trotsky faced these problems which were indeed raised in the twenties, but saw them only in the most general class form. At one point, he saw Stalinism as the expression of the bureaucratic apparatus, which found itself in conflict with its erstwhile allies, the growing petite bourgeoisie of the twenties.³⁸ From this perspective it would be clear that socialism in one country is nonsense. It also follows that Stalinism did not turn against money and the market by accident. NEP was only a holding operation and could not possibly have lasted very long. Logically, the Stalinist economy, which arose from the failure to introduce the planned economy, had to follow. But the planned and market economies could not co-exist under existing conditions in the USSR.

Trotsky failed to foresee that the Stalinist economy could last some time, although it was not a mode of production and did not have classes. Nonetheless, it is possible to understand Stalinism using Trotsky's method and initial starting point. That is, a Stalinist regime is necessarily non-market and non-Socialist. Reform is impossible. It must either disintegrate and be overthrown or go back to capitalism. The USSR had a limited life based on the expansion of the absolute surplus product and it has exhausted it.

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1. See 'Challenge of the Left Opposition' (1926), p 57 . Trotsky endorsed Preobrazhensky's laws but expressed the fear that some people might use them for purposes of national socialism.
2. I argue this point in 'Trotsky and the Social Forces leading to Bureaucracy', in Leo Olschki (1982), pp 451-467.
3. How are we to understand a statement like the following: 'Industry, freed from the material control of the producer, took on a supersocial i.e. bureaucratic character'. 'The Degeneration of Theory and the Theory of Degeneration, Problems of the Soviet Regime', April 29, 1933, **Writings, 1932-3**, p 234. A supersocial character implies that the bureaucratic form of which he speaks is really undefined. Otherwise he could just say that it takes on a new form.
4. 'The Degeneration of Theory and the Theory of Degeneration', p 216.
5. Trotsky: **The Revolution Betrayed**, p 62.
6. Trotsky: 'The Transitional Programme', p 181.
7. **Writings, 1937-38**, 'Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?', 25 November 1937, p 65: 'Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thus the world bourgeoisie'.
8. **Writings, 1930-31**, 'Problems of the Development of the USSR', 4 April 1931, p 219.
9. Rakovsky (1928), 'The "Professional Dangers" of Power'. Deutscher (1959), who said Trotsky commended this work, saw Rakovsky' as more sociological, and more pessimistic, than Trotsky. He said that Rakovsky saw the division in the working class as inevitable in any country, in any period. Fagan in his introduction followed Deutscher. Both those interpretations are tendentious. Rakovsky was certainly more incisive than Trotsky and possibly less optimistic but there is no evidence that he had adopted a liberal position and argued that power automatically corrupted, to the point where the inevitable rise of a bureaucracy would prevent socialism; Trotsky, **The Challenge of the Left Opposition**, p 261.
10. Trotsky, op cit.
11. Rakovsky, op cit, p 261.
12. Trotsky, 'Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?' *ibid.* p67: 'In that period [of Lenin] bureaucratic deformation represented a direct inheritance of the bourgeois regime and, in that sense, appeared as a mere survival of the past'. Trotsky then said that the 'bureaucracy received new sources of nourishment'.
13. Trotsky, 'Platform of the Opposition', in **Challenge of the Left Opposition** p 304, said that 'The capitalist element finds its primary expression in the class differentiation in the countryside and in the increased numbers of private traders. The upper layers in the countryside and the bourgeois elements in the city are interweaving themselves more and more closely with various components of our government and economic apparatus'.
14. **Writings, 1929**: 'Where is the Soviet Republic going?' 25 February 1929, p 48. Trotsky argued that there was a battle between the petty bourgeoisie and Stalin but also that 'This conservative layer [the majority of this officialdom]', which constitutes Stalin's most powerful support in his struggle against the opposition, is inclined to go much further to the right, in the direction of the new propertied elements, than Stalin himself or the main nucleus of his faction'. From this point of view, there were two political forces that wanted the restoration of private property, those who held private property, i.e. the property owning peasantry and the NEP men, and large sections of the bureaucratic apparatus itself. Stalin did not choose that path. The same general attitude is taken later in the same volume, in the Preface to **La Revolution Defiguree**, pp 118-122.
15. Trotsky: **In Defence of Marxism**, p 7.
16. *Ibid*, p 10.
17. Trotsky, **Revolution Betrayed**, P 52.
18. Trotsky, **Stalin**, p 410.

19. Trotsky, *Revolution Betrayed*, p 237.
20. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p 405–6. In similar vein: 'In general and on the whole the new economic base is preserved in the USSR, though in a degenerated form'. *The World Situation and Perspectives*, 14 February 1940, *Writings*, 1939–40, p 156.
21. Trotsky, *Revolution Betrayed*, p 58.
22. *Writings*, 1929–33: 'Planned Economy in the USSR, Success or Failure?' p 296.
23. 'The Degeneration of Theory and the Theory of Degeneration', p 224.
24. Trotsky: *In defence of Marxism*, p 4.
25. *Writings*, Supplement 1934–40. 'Fragments on the USSR', p 885.
26. 'The Degeneration of Theory and the Theory of Degeneration', p 225.
27. Trotsky, *In Defence of Marxism*, p 6.
28. Trotsky, *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany*, p 460.
29. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p 406, and *Revolution Betrayed*, pp 238–241.
30. See footnote 1.
31. Trotsky, *In Defence of Marxism*, p 8.
- 32 Trotsky, *Revolution Betrayed*.
33. *Ibid*, p 79.
34. *Ibid*, pp 68–9.
35. *Dvenadtsatyi S'ezd PKP/b*. 1968, p 310.
36. *Ibid*, p 313.
37. Trotsky, *Revolution Betrayed*, pp 69–70.
38. Trotsky, *Stalin*, p 410, 'In the matter of the national surplus product the bureaucracy and the petty bourgeoisie quickly changed from alliance to enmity'

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This paper was presented at Wuppertal on the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky. Hillel Ticktin lectures at the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies, and at the Centre for Socialist Theory and Movements, Glasgow University. He is editor of *Critique*.

Letter from Johannesburg

INSIDE THE ANC CONFERENCE

Bram Fleish

I'm still recovering from the ANC conference. We worked until 5.30 in the morning on Sunday to get through all the business and that was followed a few hours later by a major rally in Durban. The cumulative effect of caucusing every evening until two in the morning, then getting up for breakfast at 7.0 am, plus all the tension and excitement has left me totally drained. Despite my exhaustion, I must write while it's still fresh.

I was elected by my branch to go as a delegate to the first ANC National Conference to be held in the country in thirty years [Durban, July 1991]. For the past months we had been preparing for the conference, running workshops on the ANC's constitution, on land, economic and education policy. After the branch discussions members attended regional workshops where the issues were discussed by representatives from all the branches in the Johannesburg metropolitan areas. We also had three major regional meetings to discuss the ANC constitution, the balance of forces in the country and the way forward. (That's struggle talk). Caucusing on the new leadership has been going on for the past two months at least. Surprisingly, there was a great deal of agreement about the top positions, especially Mandela, Sisulu and the trade unionist Cyril Ramaphosa.

Disorganised as ever, I missed the bus on Monday, but got a ride down with two journalists...It was difficult to concentrate on the conversation, a million thoughts raced through my head, all my expectations about the conference, feelings of inadequacy, and the responsibility of being elected as a delegate. The idea that a group of people would actually want me to go on their behalf made all my old feelings, inadequacies and insecurities more acute.

At the regional conferences there was an undercurrent of fear about going to Durban. I heard a rumour that MK, the ANC's army, would be protecting the delegates on the buses. One delegate from Vosloorus thought that a Zulu impi would be hiding on the side of the road, waiting to ambush a bus load of ANC delegates. For many, Natal was this strange violent place: the home of an evil, as demonic as apartheid itself, the home of Inkatha and Buthelezi.

The buses from Johannesburg arrived after I did, safe but late, on Monday night. From other regions of the country, the buses brought the diversity that is the ANC. Rural chiefs from the Transkei, old men with white hair and great dignity. From the western Cape, the militant, politically sophisticated young comrades led by Trevor Manuel, a 'coloured' man of great charisma. From the northern Orange Free State, peasants and workers, few with higher education. While some had experience in large political conferences, for many others this was the first time in a large city and on a major university campus.

The conference was held at the University of Durban-Westville, a large ugly campus built during the period of high apartheid for the segregated Indian com-

munity. On the summit of a hill about ten miles from the city centre, the campus was relatively isolated from the community and from the outside world. Cut off, that is, except for a huge communication centre, set up by the ANC for the journalists with hundreds of computers, telephones and fax machines. The ANC is beginning to realize that journalists are almost as important as the delegates to the conferences.

The next morning we entered the sports centre, the place where we were to spend most of the next week. The inside walls of the stadium were covered with brightly coloured silk-screened banners with wonderful pictures and slogans of the Freedom Charter: 'the doors of culture and learning shall be opened', 'the land shall be served by those that work it', 'the people shall govern', 'there shall be homes, security and comfort', 'there shall be peace and friendship'. The delegate's seats and tables faced the National Executive Committee [NEC] on the stage. Above the platform a five high, five wide, stack of television monitors would project superlarge images of speakers.

In true ANC fashion, things started late. By ten o'clock nearly all the delegates, press and visitors, were seated, but the NEC had still not arrived. There was excitement and expectancy in the hall as the old NEC gradually took their places on the stage. Last to arrive were Mandela and Oliver Tambo. As the frail man painfully descended the stairs the delegates broke out in songs of praise for Tambo. The sick old man is a symbol of unity, a leader above all debate, above all factionalism and possible divisiveness. He represents the legacy of the oldest political movement in Africa, the liberal traditions of Christian missionary struggles against the brutality of a system his generation could never fully come to grips with. At his side was Archbishop Trevor Huddleston who had returned after thirty years, the international leader of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). He'd been asked to say the opening prayer, as was the custom at all major ANC events. It's hard even for a moment to forget that the ANC is basically a Christian movement. Despite all the communists, its true character is never far from the surface.

After thirty years, President Tambo addressed his movement in his own country. Slowly, and at times incoherently, he tried to explain what had happened in the last thirty years, in life and work in exile. The conference listened with patience and compassion to the stumbling words. At midpoint he stopped, begged the conference's forgiveness that he had asked the deputy-president, Mandela, to present the second half of the presidential address.

The theme of Mandela's speech was clear. The ANC had not defeated the present regime, despite the fact that the government had been forced into negotiations. The struggle had just changed form. To achieve the central objective, the transfer of power to the people, the ANC needed to win the struggle on a new terrain. To regain the initiative, and bring about change as soon as possible, the ANC needed to go full steam into the negotiation process. For the first time, the idea of a time-frame was introduced, a time table for a genuine interim government and free elections.

In his view the National Party did not enter into negotiations to abdicate power. Rather it was using the negotiations and the violence to prevent the genuine trans-

fer of power. On the violence, a new analysis was being developed. As in Nicaragua and Mozambique, violence was directed not just at opposition movements, but at the population as a whole. The people, it was believed, would become so tired of the terror that they would choose peace — surrendering the call for a genuine transformation of society. In his words, 'the lesson from this must surely be that as long as we make progress towards the achievement of our goals, so must we expect that those who fundamentally disagree with these goals will resort to violence and terror to deny us the possibility to move forward'. The government wanted to carefully control the process of change, a process of which they cannot and should not be in control. As they lose control over the process, they resort to forms of 'counter-revolutionary' activities to restore their position. Mandela accused Pretoria of having a double agenda: of talking peace while conducting war.

The implications are clear: on the one hand the ANC must attempt to defend the communities against the assaults, on the other it must go full steam ahead in the process of negotiations. Over and over again he talked of the speedy transfer of power. The ANC must prepare itself now for the all-party conference, for the interim government and the elections for a constituent assembly.

What seems to be new about this analysis is the recognition that the government is not negotiating away its power, but rather negotiating to retain power. The ANC negotiation strategy during the last year has been rather legalistic, attempting to move step by step to ensure that the obstacles to negotiations had been removed. The new approach it seems will view negotiation far more strategically, and begin to play the game the way that de Klerk has done so skilfully until now. I don't think that many people picked up on the shift in Mandela's position. It needed to be fleshed out and discussed more thoroughly in the commissions on strategy and tactics, negotiations and the violence, that met the following day.

Tuesday evening's session ended late, and already we were hours behind schedule. The reports of the Secretary-General (S-G) and the Treasurer-General (T-G) had not been presented, nor had we agreed on what would become the hottest debate of the conference — electoral procedure.

Wednesday morning was taken up discussing the reports of the S-G and the T-G. I was amazed at the huge assets of the organization which included properties all over the world, houses and apartments in London and Paris, Bonn, Rome and all over Africa and north America. The organization needed to find a way to realize some of these assets as most of the funding came from unstable foreign donations and grants. The old founders, the Soviet Union, the eastern bloc, and the Scandinavian countries will inevitably reduce their support as time goes on and as the ANC takes on a greater responsibility during the interim government period. In the next few years an enormous amount of money will be needed to contest the up-coming elections.

Until lunch time on Wednesday delegates on the floor seemed to be passive. The direction of the conference had been determined by the executive on the stage. All that changed dramatically. The issue initially seemed fairly straight-forward. We needed to decide on a voting procedure for the in-coming NEC. The Women's

League had initiated a campaign of affirmative action within the ANC, that is, 30% of all elected positions at all levels would be reserved for women. At the various regional conferences, the rule had been agreed upon. In the PWV (my region), it was passed after an intense struggle. But now the supporters of this policy had to convince everyone, not just the most advanced sections. The discussion began with a bang. Suddenly the stadium was alive with debate. Women and men rose to make impassioned speeches about women's oppression and the need to make structured space for women's participation. Frene Ginwala, from Johannesburg, pointed at the stage and asked why were there so few women on the NEC. There are two possible answers: either women are not as good as men as leaders, or the organization and the tradition of male domination restricted access of women to leadership positions. If the latter were the case, then what was needed was not another resolution about fighting for women's liberation, but concrete steps within the organization to address the oppressive legacy. 'Terror' Lekota, a leading figure in the United Democratic Front (UDF), responded. He argued that leadership should be elected on the basis of merit alone.

At a moment of impasse the singing began. Regions which supported the 30% rule stood up and began singing a song associated with the women's struggle. Some individuals in anti-30% regions stood up and joined in. If words could not sway, perhaps the men needed to be reminded about women's centrality in the struggle through song. For half an hour the singing continued. Delegations made and waved large signs of 30% on pieces of paper.

After the singing died down, the debate continued. The arguments continued in the toilets, over a cigarette and outside during dinner. The conference had come alive. The divide was clear. The delegates from the large urban centres tended to support the percentage rule, the rural areas to oppose it. During dinner the women called a special meeting to discuss the matter. Rumour spread that they would walk out if the vote went against them. When we reconvened the atmosphere in the hall was very tense. In the middle of the voting Mandela stood up and asking that no vote be taken, called for a compromise which had been formerly rejected by all parties. He begged for unity, pleading that this matter should not cause division and damage the organization. As he spoke it became clear that the issue had changed. It was no longer a matter of affirmative action. We, as the delegates of our branches, had chosen to vote on the issue. It was not for Mandela to force a compromise that no one wanted. Delegates responded with anger at this intervention. 'Terror' came very close to accusing Mandela of undemocratic practice. The women stood up and called for a vote, arguing that the debate alone had put the issue on the agenda of the ANC. Its rejection would send an important signal to the Women's League that such a decision could not be imposed from the top down. What was required was political education at the grassroots to explain why the rule was so important for the movement. As the floor seemed to be moving against Mandela he made a final impassioned personal plea, directed specifically at 'Terror' and Andrew Mapeto, two of the most outspoken supporters for taking a vote. Mandela left them little choice but to back down. A compromise was grudgingly accepted. The vote was not taken.

In many ways this issue reflected two very different conceptions of democracy within the organization. Mandela and the old guard strive for a compromise that would be worked out behind closed doors between the leaders. A younger group wanted a participatory democracy in which decisions taken by the majority were accepted by the minority. To change a position, it was up to the minority to convince the majority. Only by the process of debate and engagement, of struggle with the issue, would a decision be accepted by all. Compromise left the issue unresolved, and all sides would leave disillusioned or uncommitted. Following the compromise, voting for the leadership took place on merit alone, with no special provision for women. As it turned out, less than 25% of the nominees were women and, in the final result, women filled nine [out of 50] positions on the NEC.

The argument had taken almost a full day, setting the conference agenda back even further. There were still two sets of commissions, and plenary sessions to discuss resolutions, pass a new internal ANC constitution and vote for ANC officials. The voting for the top five positions was fairly straight forward. Mandela was unopposed as president. Sisulu was overwhelmingly elected deputy-president, respected as an independent thinker and a person who could unite the organization. Cyril Ramaphosa, the trade unionist was well supported as Secretary-General, Jacob Zuma as deputy S-G. Many were disappointed that there was no good candidate for treasurer: leaving the old incumbent to be re-elected. The most incredible thing about the voting was the excitement that it generated. For most of the delegates this was the first free and fair election in which they had ever participated. The process was overseen by liberal lawyers of unquestionable integrity. The legitimacy of the process was never in question. The delegates had been democratically elected to represent their branches, and here they were democratically electing their leadership. A strong culture of democratic participation was beginning to develop, of vigorous discussion, of decisions to be made by ordinary people, not carefully orchestrated behind closed doors.

I had decided to participate in the commission on the ANC constitution. My region had worked hard on the draft constitution and had come with a whole range of [suggested] changes. In fact we were so well prepared that my region dominated the proceedings. The main themes discussed were those of accountability, freedom of speech, and the development of structures that would encourage greater participation in decision making at the local level. Every member of the organization has to be a member of a branch, including the top leadership. The overall emphasis was on building a strong organization from the bottom up.

Unfortunately I was not able to participate in the commissions on strategy and tactics, negotiations and violence. From my discussion with those that did, it seems that issues raised by Mandela in his opening address were taken up, although the calibre of discussion was very uneven. Regrettably there is still a great deal of 'emotionalism' and romanticism in the organization, angry rhetoric and fantasies about the military wing. Despite this, a new approach was discernible. On the question of the transition period, a more militant position was developed. Although the organization will move rapidly into discussions on an interim government and a future constitution, there was a recognition that this must be

accompanied by deeper political understanding and grass root mobilization, and far more accountability to local structures. The mass actions of the last year had done little to educate people and had not been very effective in putting pressure on the government. New creative ways of organizing communities around popular demands are needed rather than mass rallies. In a time when ordinary workers are afraid of losing their jobs, the ANC cannot call people out on stay-aways or boycotts that don't have very strategic significance. The unions need to be consulted in any grassroots actions.

I spent most of the last two days in a commission on education and helped in drafting the resolutions. In some ways the education policy document was one of the weakest position papers. It did not really lay down policy options for a future South Africa, but rather discussed the need to establish structures that would develop these policy options. In the other commission discussions, on a future constitution for the country, local government, economic policy, technology, land and development, and social welfare, the tone was of moderation and thoughtful and creative thinking. The constitution commission recommended that there should be a house of assembly, and an upper house which would have a regional orientation, both elected by proportional representation. The commission on local government rejected the government's proposals which would involve maximum devolution of power to the smallest unit, the neighbourhood. This system would only entrench white privilege and not create a democratic, non-racial system of local government. On economic policy, the commission discussed the principle of a mixed economy, with state intervention to enhance growth and redistribution.

Looking through the discussion documents on these policy questions I was struck by how moderate and reasonable they are. If the militants have a clear role in the negotiations and transition discussions, the moderates and the academics seemed to dominate discussions of future policy. Perhaps this stems from failures in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The communists in the organization know how to conduct very successful struggles for power but are less well prepared to contribute to discussions of what should replace the current position.

Nearly everyone stayed up late on Friday night discussing the nominees for the NEC. We had to choose fifty people from a list of over a hundred and forty. The list included radical crazies like Harry Gwala who still defends Stalin to Sister Bernard Ncube, a rather daffy Christian lady. There were lots of people from the UDF including leaders like 'Terror' Lekota, Popo Molefe and Mohammed Valli Moosa. In the end I found only eleven people that I knew and thought were good. The voting began early on Saturday morning and continued until 4.0 pm. The result was only announced at 3.0 am on Sunday. The two most popular nominees were Chris Hani, head of the ANC army, and Thabo Mbeki the head of the international department. Many solid leaders got in including Pallo Jordan, Trevor Manuel, Lekota, Stofile, Molefe, Tshwete, Albertina Sisulu, Raymond Suttner, Albie Sachs, Barbara Masekela and Mohammed Valli Moosa. I was not really happy with the team, too many romantic revolutionaries. A number got on because of their involvement with a recent failed underground campaign called

Operation Vula, many with little political experience. The only trade union leader elected was Ramaphosa.

On a more positive note, the group is very representative with seven Indians, seven whites, four Coloureds, and a cross section of Zulus, Xhosas, Tswanas, Pedis, Swazis and Tsongas. Nobody will ever be able to accuse the ANC of being an ethnic organization again. Perhaps the best thing about the Executive Committee is the large number of people from rural areas who will be able to redress the overall urban bias of Congress.

Saturday was our longest day. Still at work at three in the morning. Just before the new NEC was announced, Thabo Mbeki reported on the foreign affairs commission. Initially there was enormous opposition on the floor to any change in the hardline position on sanctions. The first sanctions movement [in the 1970s — eds] followed a deeply racist and callous remark made by Jimmy Kruger, the head of the police, in response to a journalist's question about the death of Steve Biko. The international community was outraged when this brutal man said 'it leaves me cold'. The outrage grew when the world saw police beating up school children in 1985–86. The anti-apartheid forces were able to rally massive force for sanctions in that period. But now the world sees what seem like reforms when they see the apartheid legislation disappear. It has become very difficult for the AAM to sustain the pressure. Then Thabo told a story about an Organization of African Unity meeting in Nigeria where all the countries insisted that sanctions be maintained. A week later the Nigerians and Zimbabweans were entering into trade agreements with Pretoria. The USSR is opening an embassy in South Africa. Sanctions are crumbling, Denmark was able to stave off a major shift in the European Parliament, but only for a short while. As Mbeki explained, either we maintain sanctions and lose it as a weapon, or we seize the initiative and develop a strategic policy of selective lifting of sanctions. As the transition occurs, various forms of sanctions will be lifted until the first free elections. One simply spoken man stood up and questioned him. For them nothing had changed, how can they give up sanctions when their lives are as miserable as ever? Again Thabo explained in clear and simple terms. We need to be more strategic in our thinking, the world does not care about us, it does not act out of compassion, if we want to win we have to be realistic about how the world acts towards us. We need to capture the initiative.

After an hour of intensely serious discussion the once hostile house had shifted its position. By Sunday morning the new leadership had a mandate to develop a new policy on sanctions. Finally at 5.30 a.m., exhausted after close on twenty hours, Mandela closed the conference and delegates, guests and journalists stood up to sing *Nkosi Sikelele Afrika*, *God Save Africa*.

* Reality was more complex than our correspondent knew. Fear and manipulation were not absent. Within a week of Omry Makgoale being elected as a delegate by ANC members in Germany, headquarters in Johannesburg issued new rules which debarred him. Mr Makgoale, a former district commander of Umkhonto in Luanda, was a leader of the armed mutiny in Angola in 1984. He served nearly five years in Quatro prison. (See *Independent on Sunday*, 2 June 1991) Another delegate, from Britain, described months before the Soviet coup as a 'Boris Yeltsin', by a conference convenor, decided not to attend. — Eds.

THE PAC CONFERENCE – 1959

In *Searchlight South Africa*, No 7, we printed a review of Benjamin Pogrand's book on Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe and the Pan Africanist Congress, together with Jack Halpern's account of the conference of the ANC in March 1958 when the split was imminent. Consequent to those articles appearing Bob Edgar sent us copies of the following three documents found in the Intermediate Archives Depot, Johannesburg under the heading: Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department, File 219/38, Africanist Liberation Congress A.L.C. (sic). Considering their origin they must be treated circumspectly. Nonetheless They throw further light on the thinking of the founders of the PAC and will be of interest to those wishing to understand the nationalist movements in South Africa.

The Manager
Non-European Affairs Department
60 Albert Street
JOHANNESBURG

Meeting of 'The Africanist Movement' held at the Orlando Communal Hall — 4th to 6th April 1959, and termed the Africanist Liberation Congress.

I instructed Municipal Policemen, Isaac NA 64150 and David NA 64121, to attend the above congress and submit a report to me on the happenings there.

Isaac was able to gain admittance to the meeting on the 4th, and the morning of the 5th of April 1958, but was then excluded as he was not in possession of a membership card. David, however, blustered his way in on the last two days and as a result was present, when the confidential agent was dealt with.

The average daily attendance at the congress was in the region of four hundred people, of which only about fifteen were women.

I am enclosing copies of both Isaac's and David's reports, together with a copy of the Agenda, the Manifesto, and the Draft Constitution of the Congress. A list of the elected officials of the Congress is also enclosed.

E Aidaltal [?]
Acting Senior Superintendent
ORLANDO

Recvd 7 April 1959

Report by Municipal Policeman David NA 642141

The gathering at the hall called itself the Africanist Liberation Congress (ALC). The membership consists of some former members of the ANC e.g. Mr Madzunya and Sophukhue [Sobukwe].

It was felt that it was not enough for them to be mere helpers in as a movement, but had to be actual drivers of the congress. Several pamphlets were dissipated (sic) among the members, headed thus:—

1/ Manifesto of the Africanist Movement (the Africanist Manifesto) Africanist Inaugural Convention.

2/ Draft Constitution of the Africanist Liberation Congress.

(There were also two others which I missed.)

The Draft Constitution was read through and amended. A new copy would be disseminated (sic) to different branches e.g. Cape Branch, Durban Branch, etc. after printing.

The National Executive members were elected; they occupied their seats and hereafter individual after another had to voice his opinion on what the ALC must do. Their main objective to strive for recognition by different racial groups, and thus treated equally as these. They want to be served and satisfied in shops in exactly the same way a European would have been served. It was also stated that for this reason, any shop that shunned this would be boycotted and only those shops prepared to attend them as they do the Europeans, would be patronised. In schools also, where the Govt prescribes a syllabus, teachers should try and give the learner a little more than what is contained in the curriculum.

They planned to have as many layers of leaders as possible, so that when one group of leaders is removed, another takes its place, and so on. Certain slogans would be introduced like 'Akuthengwa' i.e. we don't buy in the shops that do not satisfy the ALC. They rejected being called names like John, Nanny, Boy or Girl, especially in public places and also aimed at being extremely sensitive to oppression and misuse of any kind.

Report on the Africanist Inaugural Convention Orlando Hall

Date 4.4.69

Time 2.p.m.

Attendance 400

Chairman – Mr Mothuping [Mothopeng]

The convention opened with a national hymn – Nkosi Sikelele Africa, prayer and preaching by Revs N B Tantsi, W Dimbaand, Rev Ngqoloma, while waiting for delegates from other places.

The chairman addressed the meeting saying that they are not African National Congress (ANC), they are Africanists. He said we are here today to discuss about our freedom and our Africa, which the white man gained from us by bribery. It is high time that we should shake ourselves up and freed ourself from the white people. We do not want to be ruled by other nations any longer, three hundred and seven years in which the white man kept us as slaves are enough. We want to govern ourselves here in Africa because Africa is for Africans.

One of the speakers said that we have long been pleading for freedom from the white man as though is our God today. We have come to the end of our task, and we want freedom by force. 1959 is the year of African's freedom, we do not care what might happen, we are going to die all for our Africa. Fancy 250 million to be ruled by 5,000,000 Europeans. God created all black and white people and gave each and every nation a country to live in and rule over it. Now the white people

through their selfishness they left their country of birth to come and interrupt us in our country. We are criminally oppressed men and sons of Africa are being forced to carry passes wherever they go, just like a dog when is fastened a ticket [collar?] on the neck. Still all they are not satisfied, they go on forcing women and daughters of Africa to carry passes as well, which is a shame and a disgrace.

At 7.30 pm the convention adjourned. The chairman said there will be a reception at 8.00 pm. The reception started from 8.00 pm to 2.00 am next morning.

On the 5th members of the Africanists were given chance to ask questions after the opening of the convention at 9.30 am. At 1.30 pm lunch. At 2.00 pm the convention resumed. Only members of the Africanist, who have membership cards were permitted to go in. The same thing occurred again on the 6th, until the closing of convention at 1.30 pm.

Isaac NA 64150.

Books Received

Reviews of some of these titles will appear in later issues.

Robert Fine and Dennis Davis, *Beyond Apartheid*, Pluto, 1991

Hillel Ticktin, *The Politics of Race Discrimination in South Africa*, Pluto, 1991.

Randolph Vigne (Ed), *A Gesture of Belonging: Letters from Bessie Head, 1965–1979*, SA Writers, London, 1991.

Jay Naidoo, *Coolie Location*, SA Writers, London, 1990

Lauretta Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die*, Virago, London, 1990

Pamphlets

Yunus Carrim, *Liberation Movement and Beyond: Challenges for the ANC*, Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), 1991.

Robert Davies, *South Africa in the Region: A Post-Apartheid Future*, CIIR, 1991

SOUTH AFRICAN SANCTIONS: A PLEA FOR OPEN DEBATE AND THE RIGHT TO DISSENT

Merle Lipton

Recently a copy of my paper, *The Challenge of Sanctions*, was sent to you. Publication of this paper was delayed by a dispute over its contents with my former employers, the IRRC, in Washington DC. After attempts, unsuccessfully, to pressure me to make certain amendments to the paper, IRRC refused to publish it as part of the research project for which it had been commissioned. IRRC also opposed my attempt to appeal against this decision to its governing board and to the University Consortium which had commissioned the project. [This] appears to be related to the political pressures that have hampered serious analysis of South African sanctions, leading to attacks on researchers who refuse to toe the 'politically correct' line.

A consortium of American universities and colleges provided financing of a project I designed on 'The impact of economic sanctions on South Africa' and approved my role as the project's editor and as author of the lead paper. The initial version of my paper...was warmly approved by IRRC's Director and by the head of its South Africa (SA) section. With IRRC's approval, the paper was presented as invited testimony at the September 1989 hearing of the UN Commission on Multinational Corporations.

At the UN hearings, the paper attracted attention from the media, including the *Financial Times*, and elicited varying reactions from the UN's Panel of Experts. Some panel members argued that I had underestimated the contribution that economic sanctions were making to SA's economic problems and to changing white political attitudes. But other panellists praised the paper for situating SA's economic problems in a broader international context (for example, highlighting the fact that SA's debt crisis was hardly unique and that, despite sanctions, SA was coping better with the problem than many other indebted countries) and for placing current political development in an historical context which emphasised the role played by long term internal forces in eroding apartheid and changing white attitudes. The panel's chairman, Dame Judith Hart, described the paper as an important contribution to the sanctions debate.

Some leading advocates of sanctions reacted angrily to my UN testimony. In particular, the interfaith Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) in New York circulated to Congressmen and others a damaging attack on my scholarship and personal integrity, bracketing me with the 'racist South African government'. In private discussions and correspondence with me and with the ICCR, IRRC's directorate rejected these allegations as outrageous and groundless. However, the ICCR's hostility to my paper was shared by one of my colleagues within IRRC, who lobbied against publication of the paper by IRRC. Soon after, IRRC reneged on its undertaking to me to respond publicly to the ICCR's 'groundless' allegations on the grounds that they do not wish to stir up controversy but preferred 'to let sleeping dogs lie'. This was followed by IRRC's unexpected refusal to publish the revised and expanded version of the paper, which they had recently praised, and

which continued to elicit support from some within IRRC, as well as from the three outside authors commissioned to write papers for the sanctions project.

IRRC denies that its conduct was influenced by political considerations, claiming that my paper 'does not meet IRRC's high standards of objectivity, rigour and completeness'. But...their criticisms raises questions about their own objectivity and rigour on this...issue. A central criticism was that my paper underestimated the costs which sanctions had inflicted on the SA economy. IRRC therefore pressed me to give more weight to these costs. However, IRRC also, inconsistently, wanted to remove evidence which included examples of costs that fell mainly on blacks. They did not question the accuracy of these examples, but maintained they were 'redundant'. This was puzzling, in view of the scarcity of evidence about the specific effects of sanctions...due to the fact that the main impact has been general and direct, via financial sanctions that slowed overall growth, rather than specific and direct, as trade sanctions and disinvestment led to localised closures and job losses. However, during my fieldwork, I came across some specific cases of closure of factories and mines due to sanctions, particularly in Natal.

Unemployment in Natal...has aggravated the struggle for resources, such as jobs and housing [and] fuelled the terrible violence there, particularly between Inkatha and the ANC. This...in turn, has delayed — [even] endangered — agreement on a post-apartheid settlement. Advocates and opponents of sanctions will, no doubt, offer conflicting interpretations of any connection between any additional unemployment caused by sanctions and this violence. But there can be no question about the need for researchers to record this information. Moreover, it is difficult to see how one can argue that sanctions are having a major impact, while treating as 'redundant' evidence of their consequences for production and employment.

Another disconcerting example of IRRC's approach was their objection to my critique of the argument (by some leading advocates of sanctions, such as the Hanlon and the Ovenden & Cole reports produced for the Commonwealth Secretariat) that sanctions were stimulating labour-intensive industries in SA and thus *creating jobs*. IRRC first [said] this was a 'straw man' argument, [because] 'most advocates of sanctions' had not adopted this position. But IRRC also, inconsistently, argued that it was quite conceivable that sanctions could have this labour-intensive effect and urged me to pay more attention to this possibility.

Now some of us had argued that sanctions might push the SA economy towards greater *capital*-intensity...as the SA regime strove to become more self-sufficient in products such as synthetic fuels, chemicals and armaments. This argument received reinforcement from the research conducted by IRRC's sanctions project by Charles Becker of the Institute of Economics at Boulder, Colorado. Indeed, in their press release on the sanctions project, IRRC gave pride of place to Becker's argument that sanctions had been very costly to the SA economy. But Becker's argument was that these costs were due to the capital-intensive and inefficient policy of import substitution which SA had adopted since the 1960s to counter the threat of sanctions — a policy which had slowed the growth rate. This argument, if correct, means that the cost of sanctions fell mainly on black workers, who comprise the majority of the workforce and who also (due to the effects of apartheid) lack the skills required by capital-intensive industries.

There is room for debate, and for a range of views, on this question...What is difficult to accept is the inconsistent, indeed contradictory, position adopted by

IRRC, which pressed me, apparently as the condition for finding my work publishable, to (a) give more weight to the costs of sanctions, as illustrated by Becker's finding of their role in leading to capital-intensive import substitution, but (b) refrain from citing examples of the specific impact of sanctions — at least in cases where they added to black unemployment; and (c) refrain from criticising claims that sanctions were stimulating labour-intensive growth, thus creating new jobs.

The result would have been a logically inconsistent and incoherent analysis which magnified the overall impact of sanctions, while ignoring the practical implications of this impact whenever it adversely affected blacks. This is incompatible with the requirements of logic and of respect for the evidence — let alone of such lofty aims as 'objectivity, rigour, and completeness'.

[O]n a complex issue such as [the] assessment of the effects of sanctions, there is no single 'objective and complete' analysis to which everyone can...subscribe. What one can expect is scholarship: respect for, and certainly no suppression of, the evidence, a striving for logical consistency, and avoidance of that arrogance and delusion which leads some people to believe they have a monopoly of truth and morality. Instead, researchers need to recognise that the only way to approach the truth is via the partial truths that many people will contribute from their differing perspectives...the willingness to accommodate differing interpretations and to respect the right to dissent. At this crucial moment in SA's history, it is particularly important that academics and researchers set an example of the political tolerance that they have (rightly) long urged on this violent and intolerant society.

IRRC was established in 1972 to promote the concept of 'corporate responsibility', including greater accountability and openness by the managements of leading business firms to their shareholders, workers and consumers. Indeed, IRRC's own monitoring of the conduct of these companies has depended on the willingness of leading American (and other) companies to engage in debate and to operate in a more democratic, open and accountable manner.

It is ironic, therefore, that IRRC's management not only failed to publish my findings and circulate them to subscribers, but also prevented me from putting my case to IRRC's Board and to the university consortium which financed the sanctions study. They did so on the ground that this would infringe their management prerogatives. They even threatened to take legal action...if I did not 'bring to an immediate halt...the slanders against IRRC', i.e. if I dared to voice publicly my criticisms of their conduct. Meanwhile, in response to enquiries about my expected paper, IRRC repeats its damaging and baseless allegations about my work.

My paper has now been published by the Centre for the Study of the South African Economy at the LSE. This too is not without its irony, because the LSE Centre was established by a group of Commonwealth countries strongly committed to sanctions. However, both the LSE and the Centre are committed to open academic enquiry and free speech. This has ensured that the Centre publishes that wide range of analyses and interpretations which is the only route to the 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' to which IRRC lays such insistent claim.

May 1991

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