

# SEARCHLIGHT

## SOUTH AFRICA

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**The Election of a Government**

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**South Africa: The State of a Nation**

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**State Informers in the ANC London Office**

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**A History of the  
Non-European Unity Movement**

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# SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

VOL 3, NO 4, (NO 12)

A Marxist Journal of Southern African Studies

## Baruch Hirson

- Searchlight South Africa: The End of a Series, p 1*  
*The Election of a Government, p 6*  
*Apartheid Laws & Regulations, p 14*

### South Africa – The State of a Nation

- Vigilance and the need for a Critique, p 16*  
*Amnesty and the Truth Commission, p 20*  
*The Civil Service, p 23*  
*The International Monetary Fund, p 24*  
*The Land and the People, p 25*  
*The Beatification of Joe Slovo: 1926-1995, p 27*  
*Exeunt Winnie Mandela, p 32*  
*The Workers on Strike!, p 34*  
*The new Labour Bill, p 36*  
*The Armed Forces, p 37*

Advertisement: *The Delegate for Africa, p 40*

## Paul Trehela

*State Espionage and the ANC London Office, p 42*

## Joe Rassool

*Letter On the general strike of 1922, p 52*

## Baruch Hirson

- Book review: Youth in Crisis, p 60*  
*A short history of the Non-European Unity Movement:  
An insider's view, p 64*

Index to Vol 3, p 94

## SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

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**Editor of this issue:** Baruch Hirson.

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Back copies are still available – except for Nos 1 & 5. We hope that readers with incomplete volumes will avail themselves of this opportunity of securing missing issues.

It is time to say farewell. The venture is over, the journal has come to an end. There is no reason to appeal for contributions or to search for material for the next issue. However we are sad: over the twelve issues I (and those who worked on the journal) had the means to print articles that were too unpopular or critical (or occasionally too long) to find a home elsewhere. It was liberating under such circumstances, to know that there was a place where our ideas could be published and we were glad of the opportunity.

It was the continued support of our subscribers and readers that made this possible. To them we say thank you. We also thank our friends for dipping into their pockets and filling the gap between revenue and expenditure. We lost heavily on every issue and would have collapsed if it had not been for their generosity. If I do not mention names it is to avoid hurting any person who would rather remain anonymous.

Of course we will not stop writing – as a glimpse at the back cover will demonstrate. I have several other works on the way: some will go to commercial publishers, others will be published through desk-top facilities. Also, Core Publications has plans to reprint limited numbers of long out of print works. This should provide important, but unobtainable, texts. Suggestions from readers will be gladly considered.

## SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

### THE END OF A SERIES

It is with some regret that I announce that this issue of *Searchlight South Africa*, the twelfth to appear since we commenced publication in September 1988, will be the last. The effort required to produce the journal has proved to be too much for those who were connected with it and there have been 'casualties'.

Nonetheless, in closing the journal formally I have not come to dismiss our work and, contrary to Shakespeare's Mark Anthony, must state openly that I have come to praise it for what we achieved.

From the outset the editorial board set out to discuss developments in Southern Africa and, true to our aims, we confined ourselves largely to discussions of events on the sub-continent. We wrote about events as we they unfolded, we reinvestigated crucial events in the history of labour struggles and we looked at the careers of men and women who had been active in or had written about South Africa. Although many of the historical events and persons had been important in their day, most were unknown to our readers – or so poorly described elsewhere that they were misunderstood. I believe that through our writings we were able to raise new questions and offer answers to place these people in a new context.

The problems we all faced in our presentations arose from the late development of South African radical historical writings – and we could only dent the surface of studies that are in need of reinvestigation. Obviously, we were not the only writers involved in re-examining aspects of South African history and, although different, made no claims to being unique. We rested on a tradition which extends back to the journal of the Workers Party of South Africa, the *Spark* (1935-39), edited by Clare Goodlatte (the 'Red Nun'), Paul Koston and Y Burlak, and the writings of members of the Forum Club in the early 1950s including Kenneth Jordaan of whom more is said below. I believe that our journal contained articles that can claim to be both different and revealing. They have been widely quoted and will be referred to by others for some time to come.

Our progress has not been easy. The journal was banned and could not be freely distributed in South Africa – the excuse, from the censor's office, being that some official had misinterpreted our London box number, which had the initials BCM. This, they said, meant that the journal was produced by the Black Consciousness Movement. If that was the truth it was absurd and it was reprehensible. We were quite

obviously anything but supporters of Black Consciousness. I go further: whatever our criticisms of the BCM (not the box number) there was no reason to ban any of its publications. The ban on our journal was eventually lifted but it did prevent many from reading *Searchlight South Africa* and, besides the loss of money to ourselves, we resented the silencing of the journal in South Africa. Our partial satisfaction came from the news that photocopying machines worked overtime reproducing articles.

I will return to some of the works published below, but must first refer to those articles which set us apart from almost every paper across the world which carried articles on Southern Africa.

In 1989 we were informed by members of the *Workers Press* that former members of the Namibian nationalist movement Swapo (South West African Peoples' Organisation), then visiting Great Britain, had been victims of an arbitrary purge of members by their movement's security department, had been arrested and were then transported to prison camps in Angola. There they had been kept captive for five and more years in pits six foot deep. Interviewed by Paul Trewhela and Roman Eisenstein, they told a harrowing story of false arrest, spurious accusations, imprisonment without trial and degradation at the hands of their captors. This was a story that threw light on the liberation movement that grew out of the then South West Africa, confirming our belief that most such movements, if not all, were not to be trusted politically. A later article in issue No 11 showed further that the treatment of these women and also those in other liberation movements was reprehensible.

It was not hard to anticipate that similar stories would emerge from the ANC and its armed forces, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). Stories had been circulating for many years of the meaningless escapades that led to the loss of lives of the men who had joined MK. Consequently when we heard of the mutiny in Umkhonto in 1984 and of the exposures by five men who had managed to reach Kenya we sought them out for an extended account of their part in the mutiny. In the unravelling of this story Paul Trewhela played an outstanding role, encouraging the writers, arranging for their pleas for assistance to be transmitted to Nelson Mandela (then visiting Great Britain for the first time since his release from prison), and trying to get some of the major British newspapers to print extracts from their article. Trewhela's subsequent articles on ANC activities in exile, with the imprisonment of dissidents in Zambia and elsewhere, will stand as a high-water mark in the exposure of illegal actions by Congress leaders.

Trewhela also wrote about the trial (or mistrial) of Mrs Mandela. In a trenchant article he examined the events surrounding the so-called 'Mandela football club' and provided an analysis that differed radically

from stories that appeared in the left press. Once again we were different – but have been proved correct.

The story we printed helped lift the lid on that event and was widely read in South Africa. One Zulu-language journal *Um Afrika*, translated the article and carried it in full, but elsewhere the account was photocopied and widely circulated. We had also learnt of similar (or even worse) events in the Pan Africanist Congress, but never found first-hand internal accounts of what had happened. The draft chapters of a book, written by a member of their organization but pulped after libel action was threatened, contained too many circumstantial accounts to warrant its reproduction in our journal.

From our first issue, where we referred to events in the first three decades of the century, we made it clear that we were not talking about colour or ethnicity in South Africa but were concentrating on unravelling the relationship between social classes in the country. While we were opposed to every form of oppression in South Africa, our aim was to show the *class* nature of that repression. We started off with accounts of the activities of Ivon Jones (the man who moved socialists towards communism during the First World War) and of Frank Glass, the first person to declare his allegiance to the Left Opposition (or Trotskyism). We followed up by reprinting the 1928 Moscow statement by SP Bunting -- leading communist in South Africa -- in his attempt to stop the communist movement's slide into colour politics. Bunting's attack on Bukharin in 1928, when he opposed the move to make the CPSA adopt the 'Black Republic' slogan, is one of the classic statements of communist theory that has been long forgotten.

Many of our articles sought to further a tradition of viewing the problems of South Africa in class terms and it was for this reason that we criticised the Communist Party's thesis that the issue in the country was 'internal colonialism' -- a term that has no meaning in the Marxist lexicon and was only a thin veil to justify that party's uncritical support for the ANC. This did not mean that we ignored the country's repressive legislation any more than we could ignore tribal tensions in the country. It was the need to stress what we believed were basic issues underlying the situation in the country. It was in this light that we drew attention to the writings of Kenneth Jordaan, who towered above his peers in the 1950s in his presentation of historical events in South Africa. His articles appeared in journals of limited circulation and the sharp break in organization after Sharpeville, when the ANC, the PAC and the SACP were banned, led to a collective memory lapse in the re-emergent left.

There were also large gaps in our knowledge of significant people and movements in South Africa. I tried to fill some of the gaps, hoping thereby to stimulate interest in Clare Goodlatte and in Ruth Schechter Alexander -- a radical commentator who inherited the mantle of Olive

Schreiner. I wrote an extended article on the Trotskyist movement in South Africa, which was also published in the journal *Revolutionary History*, and I contributed articles by (or based on the writings of) David Ivon Jones and Frank Glass, two of the more important early communists in South Africa. I continue such studies with a long article on the Non-European Unity Movement in this issue and hope at some stage to have them reprinted and included in a volume on the growth of resistance in South Africa.

From the outset we knew that there were international dimensions to what we uncovered. It would have been easy to digress: to write about events across the world. Most left journals span the universe and carry articles about trouble spots almost anywhere. We decided to concentrate on Southern Africa and to direct attention to other countries only when they impinged directly on the southern end of the African continent. In rare cases where there was specialist knowledge we diverged from that policy – and it was by virtue of such knowledge that we printed Ticktin's article on Gorbachev. Even that fell within our primary aim because theoreticians of the SACP like Joe Slovo discovered the 'greatness' of Gorbachev when the USSR went into ignominious decline and collapsed. It became necessary to criticise Slovo's pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* and show that in praising Gorbachev he had failed to understand the very nature of the corruption of Marxism in the USSR. This critique of Slovo is taken one step further in an article in this issue.

It was the interconnection between George Padmore and CLR James and events in the USSR as well as their writings on Africa that led to our carrying articles on them and it was the cancellation of Salman Rushdie invitation to a Congress of Writers conference in South Africa that led to Trehwela's article on the *Satanic Verses*.

Events outside South Africa proved to be one factor that led to the collapse of National Party control. The demise of the USSR had been signalled in a series of foreign policy changes both towards eastern European states like Rumania and Hungary, to Poland on its western flank and towards former colonial countries. This accelerated and led to the dramatic changes in 1989 when the Berlin wall was demolished, eastern Germany was incorporated into greater Germany, the regimes in eastern Europe, once mis-called communist, were overthrown and the 'cold-war' was formally ended. In Southern Africa this ended the role of the USSR as a force and the establishment of US hegemony in the region. The road to change in Southern Africa was opened in Mozambique, in Angola, South West Africa/Namibia and ultimately in South Africa. Even more importantly for South Africa, Soviet experts called for changes in ANC and SACP strategy and there were drastic cuts in the supply of money and arms to these movements. As indicated in the

article on Slovo this led to a U-turn in ANC/SACP rhetoric and their participation in negotiations with the National Party government.

Putting the emphasis on world political changes does not belittle the impact of the struggle inside South Africa which can be traced back to the phenomenal rise of a black trade union movement, the youth revolt – starting in Soweto – in 1976, the rent revolt of the 1980s, and the emergence of the United Democratic Front to co-ordinate the struggle. In all this the guerilla army of the ANC played little role, but it was inevitable that when change appeared imminent, it was this armed force and the parent bodies, the ANC and the SACP, that made the running in opening negotiations with the government.

We were not always right. Predictions can go notoriously wrong and we had our fair share of error. But we were convinced then, as we are now, that the removal of colour restrictions, important as they are, provided no answer to the basic class exploitation on which South Africa was (and is) built. I stressed this in issue No 6 when I wrote about the misapplication of socialist energy to what is called ‘third worldism’. This is an issue that is becoming more obvious to many now that discrimination solely on colour lines has been removed in South Africa. With the removal of legislation based solely on ethnicity, discrimination on the basis of class is all the more obvious. That problem is highlighted in the contents of this issue and is also pointed to in an examination of the failure of the Non-European Unity Movement which occupies so many of the pages below.

*Searchlight South Africa* depended largely on the writings of Paul Trehwela and myself. We hoped to secure contributions from South Africa and although there were occasional articles and letters – all gratefully received – the onus rested on the two of us to fill the remaining pages of the journal. The burden proved to be too great and the cycle was broken when I required extended hospital treatment and Paul’s personal life led to his withdrawal. Consequently, except for an article by Paul (held over from No 11), and a letter from Joe Rassool, I have had to write much of this issue. I must apologise to those of our readers who might feel that I have stretched their patience to a limit.

Baruch Hirson

In the compilation of this issue the following journals and newspapers were consulted

*Guardian*, *Independent*, *New Nation*, *New Statesman and Society*, *Observer*, *SA Times* (London), *Southern Africa Report* (both the Canadian journal and the South African newsletter), *Star*, *Work in Progress*.

## THE ELECTION OF A GOVERNMENT

Baruch Hirson

It would seem that the apartheid system, unable to cope with mass insurgency and international pressures had to go. But, as made clear in a referendum on negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC) and its ally, the South African Communist Party (SACP), conducted within the white community by the government, the future of capitalism was assured. That is, private property would be preserved and white privileges safeguarded. A page had been taken out of Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard* – a story of Italian feudal society at the time of Garibaldi's campaign to unify Italy – where the statement: *for things to remain the same, things must change* provided the basis for talks between the government and the ANC/SACP.

Did matters really stay the same as a result of the negotiations, or were there basic changes? Before that can be answered it must be said that the scare stories that were current before the election in April 1994 proved to be unfounded. South Africa escaped the bloody turmoil that many commentators had predicted, at least for the present. But it would be foolhardy to believe that the threat of violence has disappeared: maverick elements can always wreak vengeance on a population that is not on its guard.

The despair before the elections was fuelled by the seemingly aimless killing of thousands of people. These have continue and, if frustration is added to whatever other grievances exist, nothing will stop grassroots disillusionment from turning to violence to challenge the new regime.

During the negotiations the ANC surrendered the call for a Constituent Assembly and by virtue of what was described as a Sunset Scenario, as suggested by the Communist Joe Slovo, settled for the parliamentary norms that forms the basis of bourgeois democracy. Consequently, on April 26-28, just over a year ago, the first non-racial election was conducted in South Africa. Viewed from the point of those who flocked to vote, this was an event that signalled a change in the country's history. In one step South Africa marked the end of a system in which whites had an exclusive and overarching control of the political system. Whether it led to significant changes in the country needs further discussion.

Correspondents, reporting in the press outside South Africa were most enthusiastic. Democracy, they declared had taken a giant step forward and, without questioning what this 'democracy' involved, they used the event to praise Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk. Three

cheers for Mandela and only two for de Klerk, but everyone could openly drink South African sherry and greet the new dawn.

Writing in the *Independent* on Boxing Day 1994 John Carlin went right over the top:

Centuries from now South Africans will commemorate 1994 as a year as rich in historical significance as 1776 for the Americans and 1789 for the French. It was that sort of year granted to nations – if they are lucky and deserving – once in a millennium.

This was the most enthusiastic statements I read and coming from Carlin I was not surprised. He, alongside the majority of correspondents, had always praised the African National Congress and its leaders. Now he could write in superlatives. The election in South Africa was compared by John Carlin with the war of American liberation (from British rule) and the beginning of the French revolution of 1789. These are exorbitant words of praise and his stock of superlatives could be employed to complete the picture. He continued.

The highlight of a year rich in extraordinary moments – of patience, generosity, forbearance and deliverance – was the spectacle of millions of black people waiting to vote. They waited in sacramental reverence . . . They had waited since 1652 for their first opportunity to vote since the arrival of the European settlers.

John Carlin seems to know very little about South African history. There was no vote for anyone in 1652, white or black, in South Africa and there were no Africans at the Cape in 1652. Furthermore, when representative government was granted in the Cape in 1872 Africans were given the vote, with property qualifications that were not dissimilar to that of the predominant white electorate. There were further restrictions in 1887 and 1892, when the qualifications for African voters were raised and no blacks were ever elected to parliament. It was an inequitable system but Africans in the Cape were only effectively disenfranchised in 1936. The Coloured people retained the vote until 1956. It was not a situation about which any democrat could rejoice, but it is just not true that the people waited for over 300 years. No matter, in his exhilaration John Carlin could avoid facts in order to stress the importance of the franchise given to a people denied the right to cast their vote for so very long.

Yes, the queues looked impressive, with the sun, as Mr Carlin said, beating down on the men and women waiting to vote. Ah! South Africa is unique. Do people who vote in other countries not have to stand in the sun? Not in India or any other country where millions have to be accommodated in just a few days? Before the election it was estimated that 22,709,152 people would be eligible to vote, 27 parties were listed as taking part in the election – by proportional representation – for the

400 seat national assembly, and also for nine regional assemblies. It would seem that numbers were underestimated, at least in some regions, and extra ballot papers had to be rushed to polling booths. That is understandable: there was no electoral roll and no registration of voters.

However, the vote in itself was rendered nugatory by the juggling of figures to give Inkatha control of KwaZulu/Natal and ultimately to give the swashbuckling Gatsha Buthelezi the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the new South African cabinet. The shortage of ballot papers was due not only to a miscalculation of the number of voters, but to the fraudulent return of falsely filled ballot papers in KwaZulu

That was not the only misuse of the vote. Smaller groups like the Workers' List Party found that their vote had shrunk when the final figures were announced while other insignificant lists seem to have been grossly inflated.

Yet, without denying the importance of the vote, there is another issue that needs debate. We do not know whether the South African public are well versed in political tactics but it is certain that many, and the peasants in particular, are illiterate and could not read ANC or indeed other documents. Dr Verwoerd, architect of apartheid, had succeeded in restricting education and ensured that most Africans would remain illiterate. The African electorate knew that their candidates would be the followers of Nelson Mandela and that was what they wanted. Having cast their vote they returned home and would not be required to vote for parliament again for at least another five years.

The illusions spread by the leaders of all parties were, naturally, to be expected. They did not explain what the vote meant, nor did they pause to suggest that parliament might not be the place to rectify the wrongs of the past. Other assemblies, summoned to work out changes and composed largely of the people concerned, are needed if the disastrous policy moulded by colonialism is to be righted and if the people are to learn to shape their own destiny. Instead the message transmitted was over simple and crude: the vote had arrived! The future was assured! It was only necessary to put an X against the ANC's logo. Very few dared to say what should have been the most obvious of all observations: that there is no magic in the ballot box and the vote has no supernatural powers.

As constituted inside a parliament that is designed to uphold the existing system (that is, a capitalist economy with a ruling class that controls the economy) the people and the parties elected to power are there to maintain and reinforce the system.

The vote was farcical for another reason. The agreement that preceded the election ensured that the National Party, the former architects of apartheid, would form part of the government, at least until the turn of the century. This was the so-called 'Rainbow Coalition'. And

written into the draft constitution is a clause which unseated any member of parliament who wished to leave the party for which he or she were elected. That is, there could be no open dissention in parliament and those elected were prisoners to the party leaders and what was said in parliament was irrelevant to the way the country was run because the government could not be changed during the five year life of parliament. The only alteration permissible was for a party with members in the cabinet to sack such representatives after consulting all the other parties in the government.

Was it any surprise then that many parliamentary sessions had to be cancelled because there was no quorum in the house? Why should those fat cats, drawing a princely salary, bother to arrive for a debate which had a pre-determined result? Provided only that they would not lose their monthly cheques, the members of parliament could go about their other business.

### *Lives at the Top*

Members of the cabinet live a new life of luxury. I have no information on the number putting their hands in the pork barrel and drawing out substantial sums of money to which they were not entitled? How many have followed the example of Winnie Mandela (discussed elsewhere in this issue), or Peter Mokaba MP, former ANC Youth League President who, as supremo of the National Tourism Forum, paid himself an annual salary of R250,000 (\$71,000) over and above his salary as an MP although this contravened the ANC code of conduct which demanded from the outset public disclosure of extra earnings. The NTF also lost a further R1,250,000, misappropriated by its officials.

The sleaze factor rises everywhere. General Bantu Holomisa MP, former President of the 'independent' Transkei covered up for his police when they were accused by President Mandela of defrauding taxpayers of millions of Rand by tampering with the computer system controlling their salaries.

The case of Dr Allan Boesak is now obscure. Designated South Africa's representative at the UN, he was forced to withdraw when Danish donors claimed that he had substantially enriched himself with funds they had donated through charities he controlled. He was subsequently cleared of the misappropriation in an internal ANC inquiry but this has not satisfied the Danes.

Another scandal, one of many that seem to have condoned, concerned the fraudulent activities of the Agricultural minister of the North-West Executive Council, Rocky Malebane-Metsing. He won popularity in the 1988 attempted coup to remove Lucas Mangope of

Bophutatswana and was implicated in the issue by the Bophutatswana Agricultural Bank of R16,600,0000 (\$4.75 million) to help an illegal immigrant set up a food company. Although Malebane-Metsing was sacked by the regional Premier, Popo Molefe, the ANC leadership, led by Defence Minister Joe Modise, brought pressure to bear to have him reinstated as special adviser. In this case it did not work. Malebane-Metsing was eventually suspended by the ANC. He then said that he was forming a new party.

If the acts of corruption are not speedily eradicated, South Africa will go down the slippery slope of other cowboy states. Yes, the people had the vote. But they have lost all control of a small elite who were installed for five years in parliament. What then was the function of parliament? Although the MPs could raise issues in the house they certainly could not act as a check to government policy, nor could they determine what legislation should be passed. All power had shifted to the executive (that is the cabinet) and the coalition of ANC/SACP/Cosatu together with the National Party and Inkatha has left almost no opposition group.

If the vast majority of the population are alienated from the parliamentary process, and if no organisation emerges to offer a new leadership, the far right might find it opportune to resume their violence. This will become even more possible if they find allies among discontented elements in the country: among Coloureds who demand autonomy; from a section of Inkatha which claims that they are denied their rightful independence inside a greater Southern Africa; or with members of the police force and army who want to destabilise the existing government.

There are many other factors that weaken the new parliament and make it ineffectual. The new parliament was elected by proportional representation. That is, no Member of Parliament was responsible to a particular constituency and nobody had access to a particular MP who would look after his or her interest. This allowed MPs with a populist policy to move from township to township, wherever there were difficulties, excessive violence or conflict with the police. Winnie Mandela was particularly good at this. Instead of sitting on her bottom cut off from the population, she appeared tirelessly at trouble-spots where there was a perceived possibility of championing the population, young or old or both. This boosted her popularity and secured her a devoted following.

### *The Fruits of Victory*

In his valedictory speech Mandela congratulated former President FW de Klerk on the strong showing of the National Party and held out the hand of friendship to his opponents. This was a speech of victory and

Mandela paused to speak about the importance of the Reconstruction and Development Programme and his plans that the lives of blacks be improved by providing houses and electricity, jobs, ten years free and compulsory school education and redistributing a third of South Africa's agricultural land in five years.

He said that he would not tolerate any attempt to reduce his partners in the ANC-led government to mere ciphers and, addressing the workers, he urged them to return to their work places and boost productivity and economic growth. This was to be the prelude to his later condemnation of all those who backed their demands for better pay and work conditions by striking.

Nelson Mandela, leader of the majority party became President, Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's protege, became Vice-President, and de Klerk, the National Party leader became the second Vice-President. Cyril Ramaphosa, the one-time leader of the Mine Workers Union, passed over for vice-presidency, refused any other office and declared that he would devote his energies to organising the ANC. And then it was left to Mandela to choose his cabinet. He gave Gatsha Buthelezi, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Alfred Nzo, the Foreign Ministry, Joe Modise, the man who helped destroy the mutineers in Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1984, became Minister of Defence but the Finance ministry was left in the hands of the National Party. Other appointees were a mix of MPs who deserved office and those who came in because they had helped reorganise the unbanned ANC, or were owed office in the old, old style, known as nepotism including Winnie Mandela who was appointed deputy minister of Arts and Technology. Her ability to contribute to this area is suspect and her departure, after clashing with her estranged husband, will not weaken this lame-duck ministry.

There were also elections for the nine regions and these generally followed the parliamentary pattern with two significant differences: the National Party won the western Cape after winning majority support from the Coloured population while the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) took control of the Natal region after winning a majority in a vote that was rigged. This gave them an inflated representation in Parliament, entitlement to a cabinet post and control of KwaZulu/Natal. The overall consequences for the country lies in the establishment of two foci of discontent from which calls for independence or autonomy can be pressed.

The salaries given to cabinet members and MPs drew strong condemnation from Archbishop Desmond Tutu who observed that the government had missed a golden opportunity to stop the gravy train. He added that the poor and disadvantaged could only be alienated from a wealthy elite in parliament and the government could not ask the unions to moderate the trade union's demands for higher pay when they accepted

such high salaries. The President received R784,356 (\$220,000), Deputy Presidents R681,600 (\$192,000), Cabinet Ministers R470,000 (\$132,000) and MPs R161,000 (\$45,000). As a result of the criticisms the salaries were decreased.

### *What then of the ANC?*

In June 1994 Cyril Ramaphosa, the man who had set himself the task of organising the ANC, announced changes in the movement's structure which included retrenchment of head office staff, the opening of a Cape Town headquarters (which was indeed opened but never staffed) and of restructuring to prepare the ANC to play a role in the implementation of the RDP. He also said that the ANC wanted to ensure that its representatives remained dynamically linked to the masses. Representatives would be deployed to do organizational work. His task, as he said, was to prepare for local elections in 1995 and national elections in 1999. The task was apparently beyond his resources. In August 1994 Mandela said at a public meeting that the ANC was in tatters. He had decided, he said, personally to take charge of rebuilding the party and would spend every Monday at the Johannesburg headquarters to address the movement's affairs.

But Mandela was apparently no more successful than Ramaphosa. According to Karl Meier, in the *Independent*, on 19 December 1994:

The ANC is increasingly out of touch with the mass of black voters who gave it a landslide victory in April's general election. Top ANC officials were saying, according to Meier, that so far the ANC had failed to begin clearing up the mess left by the white minority government. Meier quoted Ramaphosa as saying that the party lacked decisive leadership, had a serious shortage of funds and was out of touch with its supporters. He then appealed for an end to 'cliques, factions, tensions and squabbles.' The ANC senior ranks, he said, had been depleted by their election to parliament and the party relied too heavily on Mandela. ANC branches and membership lists were in disarray.

Mandela, who painted a gloomy picture, said at the ANC conference that the problems in the country included corruption, unemployment at 40 per cent, seven million people without proper housing and an economy growing at only two per cent — less than the growth of population. He added that what was needed was efficient government spending and management, a disciplined labour force and a stable investment climate to ensure a smooth transition and an end to pandering to white fears.

This then was the 'great historic event' of 1994. New men were in power and it was obvious that apartheid was officially dead. But every-

thing else was still in place. This change, heralded in the western press, was closer to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* where the pigs who led the revolution, and took complete control, were indistinguishable from the farmers they had replaced. Any semblance of stability in South Africa is still an illusion and observers will no doubt throw up their hands in horror when the new government calls in the troops and the police to subdue dissident elements. Then, short-sighted as they are, they will say: 'this is only Africa, what else can one expect'. But by that time the press correspondents, the television commentators and the political pundits will have turned elsewhere to find comparisons with the American and French revolutions. Maybe, or perhaps by then the workers will have found their way to independent organisation and will challenge the 'pigs' who have taken control.

*Footnote: The Buthelezi Factor*

The IFP was the last to enter the election, and did so with great reluctance. Gatsha Buthelezi laid down conditions for participation: he demanded and was promised that international mediators would be summoned to arbitrate on his demand for greater autonomy for Kwa-Zulu. The Transitional Executive Council agreed to this and, on that promise, the IFP list was entered on the electoral roll at the very last minute.

That promise should not have been given but, having been solemnly pledged, it had to be honoured. Yet, after the election, declaring that the issue was no longer relevant, the ANC-led government has refused to appoint mediators. As I go to press there have been a set of dictatorial demands that Buthelezi abandon mediation with threats that the Constitution will be altered to allow Mandela to cut off finances for Kwa-Zulu/Natal.

Whatever one thinks of Buthelezi — and this journal has not been sympathetic to the IFP — the renegeing on the promise and the threats made by Mandela bodes ill for the future. The Constitution, faulty as it is, is not the plaything of an irate President.

## APARTHEID LAWS & REGULATIONS: INTRODUCED AND RESCINDED

### A Short Summary

The absurdity of apartheid legislation, which incorporated legislation passed by the (minority) white governments prior to 1948, is reflected in the following list. Although the legislation was seemingly passed in the interest of the white minority, to maintain both political and social hegemony, it is obvious that most of the measures carried little or no economic benefit for the ruling class and that its scrapping would be in the interests of the capitalist class as well as the majority of blacks.

For blacks the end of apartheid laws meant that the hated pass system was abolished, that the legality of residential apartheid was removed from the statute book and that Bantu education was formally ended. Nonetheless there was little freedom for the poor to move from their squatter camps or township houses and most children still went to third rate schools with few amenities to assist them. It was only a section of the wealthier blacks and those who ran the political machine that benefited most fully from the changes. The vast majority saw no improvements in their way of life, a matter that is dealt with in this issue of *Searchlight South Africa*.

It is also not insignificant that many measures were repealed before the unbanning of opposition political movements and before negotiations got under way. The pressure for change came partly from the activities of the internal resistance movement and the trade unions, from covert discussions between movements that supported the government and the ANC, from the demographic pressure that led to a mass migration to the urban areas and also from the altered relations between the USSR and the west — a change which was interpreted by the government as removing the communist threat from the region.

One of the most dramatic changes took place at the end of the 1970s when, in the aftermath of a nation-wide strike wave, black trade unions were recognised and required to register with the state registrar. Although this was opposed by many African based trade unions for tactical reasons, this effectively ended the racial discrimination clause in the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 in which Africans, not recognised as employees, were denied the right to belong to, or to form, registered trade unions. Bantu education was also modified in the 1970s to provide more facilities for secondary education. It was these changes that led to the Soweto revolt of 1976/77 and signaled the beginning of the end of apartheid. Other changes included the reform in 1983 which offered

Indians and Coloureds the right to vote for members of newly created (and segregated) parliamentary chambers — a move which inflamed the resistance movement and helped trigger off the revolt of 1984-1986.

### The Apartheid laws and their removal

1949: Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act: Ban on marriages between whites and other races. *Repealed 1986.*

1950: The Immorality Amendment Act: Extends 1927 Immorality Act, illegalising all sexual relations between whites and other races. *Repealed 1986.*

1950: Population Registration Act. A central register divided the entire population into White, Native or Coloured (subdivided into Indian, Griqua, Cape Malay and Chinese). *Repealed 1991.* The definition of a white person in the Act stated:

A White person is a person who in appearance obviously is a white person and who is not generally accepted as a coloured person, or is generally accepted as a white person and is not in appearance generally accepted as a white person and is not in appearance obviously not a white person (*sic*).

This mumbo-jumbo fell away when the Act was repealed, but the memory of its provision will live on for a long time to come

1950: Suppression of Communism Act. *Repealed 1990.*

1950: The Group Areas Act. The entire population was to be segregated and allocated separate residential areas. *Repealed 1991.*

1952: Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act. All Africans over 16 to carry passbooks which contained information on employment, poll tax, etc. *Repealed 1986.*

1953: Separate Amenities Act. Separation of whites and non-whites in all public places and vehicles — which need not be equal. *Repealed 1990.*

1953: Bantu Education Act. Which prohibited any education other than that provided by the state. *Repealed 1991.*

1959: Extension of University Act. Which segregated tertiary education. *Repealed 1988.*

1970: Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act. All Africans to become citizens of their tribal homelands. They were to be regarded as aliens in South Africa. *Repealed 1994.*

## SOUTH AFRICA — THE STATE OF A NATION

Baruch Hirson

### VIGILANCE AND THE NEED FOR A CRITIQUE

The transformation of South Africa in 1994 has evoked two very different responses in the press outside South Africa. The major response has been to speak in hyperboles of the change that, they claim, comes to a country only once in a millennium. This is a startling assertion that needs more attention. If it has been so radical a transformation there will have to be a major recasting of political theories on change in general and revolutionary change in particular. This is absurd. There has been no revolutionary change in South Africa and no need to rethink old theories of change.

The other response, particularly in the far left press, has been to condemn the African National Congress (ANC) for 'betraying the people'. This approach is also false. Despite suggestions by leaders of the ANC that they intended transforming social and economic relations in the country, it was always clear that they had little intention of introducing radical changes. The ANC, in the words of Nelson Mandela, was not a party but 'a government in waiting'. His aim, and that of his colleagues, was to take over the country and install an ANC-led administration within the framework of the existing society. This is precisely what has happened and only those who failed to understand the nature of the ANC could talk of 'betrayal'.

Equally misleading have been statements, again from a far-left group, this time in the US, that the world revolution is now dependent on the workers' movement in South Africa. This is a fantasy. There is no working-class political organization, and the workers have no revolutionary ideology. The scope for activity by the minuscule left-wing groups is severely limited and they know it. This is the hard reality and to suggest otherwise is downright misleading.

Finding our way between the extremes of these views is not easy but will be essential, not only for readers of *Searchlight South Africa*, but for the citizens of the country. In setting out an alternative view I do not wish to be simplistic. It must first be said that the transformation of the country is (and will be) a task that surpasses anything that has happened in the former colonial world. After three and a half centuries of repressive control in the sub-continent, of wars, conquest and dispossession, of rural impoverishment, industrial exploitation and race discrimination

that introduced the term *apartheid* to the world's dictionaries, it will be no easy task to reshape social relations.

There are other impoverished societies that are in far worse shape than South Africa. Their poverty, lack of social welfare and arbitrary political control mark them as pauper countries. Yet South Africa stands unique as a country with an advanced industrial base and obvious wealth and prosperity from which the vast majority were excluded as a matter of principle. Part of government policy was directed at reducing the black population to servility. The catalogue of measures designed to achieve this is printed on pp 14-15 and makes dreary reading but, because of its effect on generations to come, its consequences must be spelt out.

Education for blacks is in tatters and non-existent in many areas. What has survived the revolt of the schools in Soweto and elsewhere in 1976-77 is third rate and unable to serve the needs of the population in a modern state. Facilities for health care serves only a small portion of the African population and those that survived childhood are subject to diseases that have been virtually eliminated in the western world. Mental health care is scarce and stress related to trauma is barely covered — and this in a country in which the level of stress has been so high over so many years.

Housing is non-existent or crude for the vast majority — and where it does exist it is in segregated townships miles from the place of work. The existing housing stock, with small exceptions, is rudimentary and the townships in which they stand are slums, mostly without electricity or water borne sewage, without water in the houses and with minimal facilities for sport or leisure activities. Transport from these plague spots, essential for any employed person, is expensive and unreliable. Yet these built-up townships are like oases amidst the sprawling squatter camps that offer the barest shelter from inclement weather and are without basic amenities.

The situation in South Africa is one of unemployment or under-employment, of a predominantly unskilled work force and of starvation wages. Is it any wonder that the crime wave — said by the World Health Organisation to be the highest in the world except where war is raging — is totally out of control. Many regions are dominated by criminal gangs who leave a daily toll of rape, mugging and murder. This is so great that the daily press, already filled with tales of violence, do not carry accounts of most crimes. So it should be. There are more important events that need attention in the press and on television, but that does not make the crime go away, nor does it lead to easy methods of bringing the crime under control.

Yet the few possible solutions must lead to even greater problems. Only a massive injection of finance can set up the workshops and fac-

ories to offer employment. But such investment will mortgage the state to institutions that will further control the South African economy. Furthermore the introduction of such industry, if it is viable economically, can only provide employment for a small minority of those without work and cannot employ men and women who are illiterate and innumerate. Schooling will take years even if special methods are employed to speed the path to literacy for those who must be employed now. There are also problems that have to be faced in combining the resources of four separate school systems (one for whites, the others for blacks), with different syllabuses and buildings that are grossly unequal. Yet, despite the difficulties, when six thousand black pupils were bussed into an otherwise unused building at Ruitervacht in the Cape, without furniture or staff, the youth were greeted with hostility by the local white residents. The item hit the news headlines and then disappeared. What transpired thereafter is unclear: did the pupils (reduced to 600 to fit accommodation) settle into the old routine of Bantu Education in a new building? Were the teachers retrained to meet a new syllabus? Was there enough money and equipment to make the school viable? And was this a single instance or were other buildings taken over to relieve the still existing primitive conditions of schools in the townships?

In all this there is still the greatest of all problems: finding a way to eliminate segregation. This is not a matter of removing legislation, which is the easiest part of introducing change, but of destroying the townships and moving the millions of township dwellers and squatters to houses and apartments in the residential suburbs of towns and cities. That would obviously help to dampen the crime wave but would also disperse gangs to parts of the towns that have been relatively immune to this pestilence. As we will see, current policy will only entrench the segregated areas and leave a legacy of despair for generations to come.

Of course one of the solutions would be to provide land for farming and moving people, on a voluntary basis, out of the towns. It need hardly be added that this is beyond the financial resources of the country. If land is not commandeered, but bought, that will be a burden that the state cannot contemplate. That would be only the beginning. People who go back to the country need housing, including schools and hospitals and shops, implements, fertilisers and seed. Financial reserves must be made available to tide people over both their first few years and also the periods of drought, and flooding, to which the country is afflicted.

I do not think that this is an overstatement of the current position in the country and there are undoubtedly many issues that have not been mentioned. The enormity of the problem is such that even the most ingenious of governments would experience great difficulty. Even a partial alleviation, which would win the support of a section of the population, would not satisfy those who felt they were being neglected.

The administration has fumbled, carried out contradictory policies and scrapped crucial portions of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that was designed to assist them. In this respect it can be said that a different government could have achieved more. Yet even the best of governments, devoted to social change, would face difficulties that could not be easily overcome. In the circumstances it would be arrogant to state that had socialists been at the helm we could achieve all that is required. But that is not our task. Although we are not in government we are concerned about the future of the country and can only use the tools of criticism that were sharpened by Karl Marx. He sought the underlying, often unseen, features of a system and pointed to methods of social change through revolutionary upsurge. Marx offered no prescription for a new society, saying that the people would have to find solutions for themselves. His critique was meant, not as a recipe for building the future, but of understanding existing events, allowing workers to undertake the reconstruction themselves.

In South Africa all the indicators point to a lack of involvement of the vast mass of the population in bringing about change since the election. It was only when the ANC/SACP alliance wanted to exert pressure on the National Party to resume negotiations, that the workers were called upon to actively demonstrate (as in the campaign against VAT). When negotiations were resumed the working class was required to stay passive, neither to be seen or heard. When *Searchlight South Africa* No 11 appeared the ANC was negotiating with the National Party and other movements over the future constitutional development of the country. At the time the ANC had more or less abandoned the claims of the Freedom Charter, the programme adopted by the Congress Alliance in 1956. There were grave faults in the Charter, but the nationalisation of the mines and the banks, which underlined its economic strategy, were features that had become a matter of faith in the ANC. Similarly, there was talk of a Constituent Assembly, under pressure from other movements.

Thus, on 18 February 1993, for example, a National Executive Council resolution of the ANC stated that a Constituent Assembly, which would be a 'sovereign constitution-making body . . . bound only by agreed general constitutional principles' would be summoned. It was to be elected on the basis of national and regional lists and, with decisions agreed by a two-thirds majority, would draft the new constitution. A sitting of regional representatives would perform the same task for the regions. Yet, in their race to take office, the ANC surrendered the principles upon which they had claimed to stand. The more recently planned sitting of parliament and the senate (which is drawn from the regional assemblies) to act as a Constitutional Assembly, with Cyril Ramaphosa as chair, is a caricature of the original call for a directly elected Con-

stituent Assembly. Although it was to be called within nine months, said the ANC resolution, even that meeting is long overdue.

In looking at the problems that faces South Africa I will ask whether there has been any fundamental change in the state — and if not, examine the reasons for the short-changed transformation. This will be done in the full knowledge that the problems facing the government are legion and none of them can be effected without great effort. On the other hand one can only despair at the lack of preparedness of the new administration. No liberation movement in history has had so many offers of assistance from friends or received so much financial assistance. Also, given Mandela's declaration before the elections that the ANC was not a party but 'a government in waiting', it would seem that the waiting was not backed by serious study of what needed to be done or, where plans were drawn up, expediency led to their being scrapped.

### AMNESTY AND THE TRUTH COMMISSION

Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured . . .

Anyone who has suffered torture never again will be able to be at ease in the world, the abomination of the annihilation is never extinguished. Faith in humanity, already cracked by the first slap in the face, then demolished by torture, is never acquired again.

Jean Amery, quoted by Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Abacus, 1989.

Are we to accept the right of past torturers and murderers to go unpunished if they stand before a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and state their culpability? Are we to tell the victims or their families that the maiming and the killing or the disappearance of countless men and women, over the past three decades are to be forgiven? Commenting on Amery's statement (quoted above) Primo Levi added:

We do not wish to abet confusions, morbidities, Freudianism and indulgences. The oppressor remains what he is, and so does the victim. They are not interchangeable, the former is to be punished and execrated (but, if possible, understood), the latter is to be pitied and helped . . .

The pain of the past in South Africa, as in Chile and elsewhere, is being constantly renewed by revelations of the actions of police, army and former government ministers in the running of death squads. What these armed goons did, in the name of an unspeakable ideology, is unforgivable and cries out for remedy. And, even if pardoned, how is it possible to prevent the guilty men from returning, as in El Salvador, to kill those who had given evidence against them?

It is not only the activities of the armed forces that calls for correction or retribution. People were harassed over decades for pass offenses or other administrative crimes that formed part of the segregation pattern

in South Africa. They were humiliated, beaten up, charged, sentenced and turned over to white farmers (in the notorious farm-jail system). They were arrested, imprisoned, and sometimes murdered, for participating in protests and strikes, for involvement in the stay-at-homes, for possessing banned literature or for advocating the programmes of underground movements.

Drawing a line, in time or in space, before which an event can be forgotten is impossible. The scar of the past remains to haunt the victim and there can be no possible reason why the perpetrator should walk free – whenever or wherever the incident occurred. What then could the victims say when the President unilaterally offered to extend the cut off date for amnesty to the 9th of May 1994?

The list of crimes is immense and includes death under interrogation, through parcel bombs, from the assassins bullet, or any of the many ways devised by evil men to intimidate and terrify those who could not otherwise be silenced.

Blacks were the main victims, but they were not alone in this. The killing fields extended to the white suburbs, the Indian and Coloured townships. Who shot and killed Rick Turner in his house or fired at Harold Strachen's house in Durban? I could continue with the roll-call of victims endlessly, naming events and people, yet undoubtedly missing more people than I could name. The events must be chronicled, the truth must be told openly and fearlessly. It must be stated clearly that it is impossible to draw the line in finding those who took part in the harassment of blacks and those who stood aside while approving the situation. As Desmond Tutu said wryly: it seems impossible to find a single white who supported the apartheid system.

There are those whose viciousness is beyond doubt. Former spy and state security agent, Craig Williamson, has brazenly declared that he was either present or instrumental in preparing the bombs that killed Ruth First and Jenny Curtis Schoon. In making this statement openly, in order, it appears, to save himself from prosecution, he implicated members of the government for instructions he received. But how many others did that man kill or maim? Of what other dirty tricks was he also guilty? A dossier listing his activities in South Africa and abroad would show that he, and his wife, were guilty of crimes that were planned by his superiors and also by himself.

What can be made of the military chief of the eastern Cape, Lieut-General Joffel van der Westhuizen whose request to the State Security Council for permission to kill eastern Province political leader, Matthew Goniwe and his three comrades, was confirmed by an inquest judge? While this is being written there are reports of the trial of de Kock, the man who controlled the death squads in the northern Transvaal. What he did places him beyond contempt but in some ways he is just more

unfortunate than others who imposed a reign of bloody terror in the regions they controlled. Many of them have now retired with golden handshakes that have made them Rand millionaires. de Cock seems to have been just too late to join this band of pirates.

The charges against those that perpetrated the many dirty tricks, including the blowing up of the South African Council of Churches Headquarters in Johannesburg, the bombing of the ANC premises in London in 1982 and so on, have been laid at the feet of National Party leaders, including former state president de Klerk and foreign minister 'Pik' Botha, both of whom are in the present Government of National Unity. These are only a few of the many accusations that have been recently publicised. The list of assassinations or preparation of such acts is growing with the weeks as former state agents speak out in the hope of gaining indemnification. They must not be allowed to get away with their crimes and must pay their debt to society, by compulsory community service or some similar means where the criminal acts did not lead to death, by imprisonment where lives were taken.

The acts of violence have not been one-sided. Indeed, earlier struggles involved attacks on Azapo and other groups, and then between ANC cadres and members of the Inkatha Freedom Party. There have been campaigns, not against military targets, but aimed at killing and maiming ordinary citizens, trapping them in their burning houses, cutting them down with machetes or turning their guns on them. There might be excuses for some of these deeds but they were mainly dastardly and inhuman. There is nothing more vicious than 'necklacing', that is the hanging of a motor car tyre filled with burning petrol over the head of a victim, nothing as cowardly as the ambush of a bus or the shooting down of a carriage of train passengers. If the planners were often police or army personnel, the perpetrators were blacks who had lost all claims to humanity. They can be as little exonerated as those who organised the carnage that swept through the country and killed tens of thousands of people.

Among the more serious of crimes was the torture and execution of members of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1984 after a mutiny that involved most of the volunteers in that army. When all attempts at suppressing knowledge of that event failed the top brass brazened it out and said that they had indeed stood by, or had actively participated in the tortures and executions. Instead of the perpetrators of these crimes being disqualified from high office some became members of parliament and were even appointed to the cabinet.

In the dying days of the National Party government President de Klerk signed a batch of indemnities and approved a number of reprieves for prisoners on death row claiming that he referred his decisions to the Transitional Executive Council. Then in the Further Indemnity Act of

1992 application for indemnity could be made for a political offence, the definition of which was so broad that it covered almost any crime. Ultimately at the national negotiations it was decided that the new government would grant an amnesty in 'respect of acts, omissions and offenses associated with political objectives committed in the course of the conflicts of the past.' This is impossible. The trauma lies too deeply in the hearts of the victims or their relatives.

That is a serious issue that has been underplayed. But there is an even greater danger: there are guilty men and women in comfortable positions — and it is precisely these people who will seek an opportunity to step back into positions of authority. If they ever do their reign of terror will outdo the era of repression that has been temporarily put aside.

### THE CIVIL SERVICE

It is obvious that the transfers of resources and power will only be effectively managed if these are done via institutions that are in favour politically of the reconstruction and development process. This factor is the proverbial 'Achilles Heel' of reconstruction and development, as the established institutions of the state, the existing parastatals and the public corporations are nearly all in the hands of the National Party, owing to its own successful, if twisted, programme of affirmative action (apartheid) and its strategy to gain a firm hold of all the locations of power in society after the Second World War.

The public sector is riddled with racism, patronage, corruption and poor administration. There is a duplication of management, yet a shortage of services. The determination of service delivery points is irrational and the domination of the management by white, middle-class males is virtually complete. Years of job reservation have ensured that these imbalances are firmly entrenched and, coupled with the effects of Bantu education, the pool of potential replacements for key posts is tiny in comparison to what is needed.

Philip Dexter, *Work In Progress*, Feb/Mar 1994

Philip Dexter, MP, points crucially to the problem that must bar the way to progress in the new South Africa. If there is any problem with what he says it is in confining his discussion to the post-1948 government of the National Party. Indeed the restriction of personnel in the public sector to whites extends back to the former governments of the three Generals — Botha, Smuts and Hertzog. The public sector, notable for its rudeness rather than its service, worked solely in the interest of the white minority and a large proportion of its resources was used to administer the segregation (or apartheid) regulations.

Obviously this cannot continue and the civil service has to be transformed so that the entire community is represented — with Africans taking the commanding positions in its ranks. Yet such a transformation is prohibited by the agreement reached by the ANC/SACP and the National Party under which the incumbents of the civil service are protected until at least the year 2,000.

The state apparatus will need extensive overhaul if it is to meet the needs of underprivileged communities and is not to act as an agent against social transformation. It will need to be pruned and controlled to avoid the creation of a new elite, as rude and as inefficient as the old. If this is not achieved the new South Africa will fail to serve the needs of the vast majority of the population.

### THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

To initiate many of the projects that are needed to transform South Africa, the government has been talking to representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This is a road that can lead to disaster as so many other countries across the world have discovered.

Dot Keet, writing in *Work in Progress*, Feb/Mar 1994, says that the World Bank vice-president Edward Jaycox admitted that his organisation's experts have been a 'systematic destructive force' in Africa. Continuing, Ms Keet says that the amount of interest paid by African states during 1983-1991, some \$200-billion, was more than the entire debt owing in 1982. The \$26-billion paid every year by Africa did not stop the debt doubling to \$289-billion by 1992. In Sub-Saharan Africa the external debt has trebled. It now stands at 109 percent of gross national product and the states are technically insolvent. Despite some debt cancellations from the very poorest countries the banks continue to demand their repayments while the debts give the funds a political hold on the African states. The grip is maintained, says Keet, by the IMF and the World Bank working in tandem to ensure that the governments pay their debts and they structurally adjust entire economies by way of development project loans. That is, the world economic institutions continue to squeeze payments out of the poorest countries.

Vishnu Padayachee, writing in the Canadian *Southern Africa Report* of July 1994 (incorporating *Work in Progress*, No 97), cites the Letter of Intent, signed by the Transitional Executive Council — the joint pre-government body containing the ANC/SACP — and the IMF. It is a statement of the kind of policies and 'financial discipline' the new government is committed to follow.

It states that the new government must reduce its budget deficit to six per cent of Gross Domestic Product within a few years. Spending must be contained, taxes pegged and the civil service wage bill limited. The tight monetary policies of the previous four to five years must be continued, and the government must pursue policies that 'couple wage restraint and training to foster investment and promote employment'. Padayachee is also concerned by the fact that the ANC negotiated the

terms of the IMF loan without opening the debate to the peoples' organisations. Instead it was all done in secrecy.

In the same issue of the Canadian journal, Colin Stoneman, a historian lecturing at York University, painted a bleak picture of South Africa's economic prospects. He said that in the 1980s only seven per cent of school leavers in South Africa found formal sector jobs. In the past two decades in most parts of Southern Africa the proportion of the population in employment has actually been decreasing. Capital intensive industry (and new technology) has been increasing so that the introduction of an average industrial job now costs \$40,000. Consequently, industry is now providing relatively fewer jobs than before. Stoneman adds that 'South Africa can no longer provide jobs to immigrants, for it cannot provide jobs for its own people.' So badly is the economy hit that there have been calls for the reintroduction of the once hated passbooks in order to stop workers from Mozambique, Malawi and elsewhere seeking work in South Africa. In a news film made recently workers from Mozambique were shown being rounded up by the police and taken to deportation centres for repatriation. Such is the moral state to which the country is sinking.

Once called the power-house of Africa, the per capita income of South Africa is only \$2,000, a tenth of that of the advanced (industrial) nations. Contrary to declared IMF policy, South Africa needs protection of domestic industry, state investment in key sectors, including the rapid construction of houses and the removal of shanty-towns and export promotion to create a substantial domestic manufacturing sector.

Furthermore, there has to be a programme of voluntary return to the land, not only to satisfy the demands of a people that has been forced to vacate land they owned, but also to provide sustenance for the millions who cannot find employment in the towns. Although this must take time such a move will create a larger internal market and provide food for the urban population. It properly managed it can also feed into the export market without depriving local farmers of their basic foods.

## THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

The repossession of the land is an issue of immediate practical necessity and also one that meets an emotive need that has deep roots. It is an issue that has been raised over the years by those who were dispossessed by white settlers, either through early conquest, or by the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and then by the forced removals under the apartheid regime. It was among the most popular slogans for the liberation movement, particularly for the Non-European Unity Movement before 1960 and then for the Pan Africanist Congress.

The complexity of the problem is illustrated by statistics of land possession taken from *Work in Progress*, Feb/Mar 1994, with additional material culled from other sources.

There are about 60,000 (white) family units in the commercial rural areas which constitutes 87 per cent of the country's land surface. Three hundred and sixteen square kilometres of this land is desert or semi-desert. The average farm size is 2,500 hectares, much of it lying fallow. There are 1,000,000 labour tenants who live and work on these farms.

About 15,000,000 people lived in the former Homelands which consisted of fragmented regions covering less than 13 per cent of the country. Some 70,000 square kilometres is arid or semi-arid and large areas are eroded and infertile. The situation in these regions is grim. Thirty per cent of the population is homeless, between 60-80 per cent depend on earnings in the white industrial/commercial regions and over half are small-scale farmers who eke out a living on an average of one hectare of land: only 10 per cent get an income from agriculture.

There are 320,000 hectares of unoccupied state-owned arable land.

Some 3,500,000 people were removed by the state between 1960 and 1982, 1,300,000 in pursuit of bantustan policy, 475,000 from black freehold areas (the so-called 'black spots'). At the same time 834,400 people were removed from areas under the Group Areas Act and, although they were in urban or peri-urban areas, they too stand in urgent need of resettlement.

Despite the urgency of land reform the Constitution restricts what can be achieved. Hein Marais writing in *Work in Progress*, Feb/Mar 1994, said that Clause 28 allows for expropriation of land with compensation, but only for public purposes and not public interest. The restriction confines expropriation to such things as building roads, schools and hospitals, but does not provide for land distribution or reform. This Kafkian world offers no right to restoration of land forcibly seized under apartheid, only the right to claim such restoration and, in each case, the state must certify that the return to that strip of land is 'feasible'.

Those dispossessed by the Land Act of 1913 can claim land through the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights which will mediate and settle disputes, and a special Land Court will hear cases on the restoration of land or the granting of alternative relief. Yet, once again, the Commission and the court can act only in so far as the state rules it feasible. In other words, the right to restitution is no more than the right to claim. Even the right to restoration of state land, fought for after two years of dispute, will be dependent on a state ruling of feasibility.

In effect, says Marais, the constitution entrenches white land ownership without recognising black land rights and claims. Despite holding out some hope of land reform landowners can use litigation to narrow the scope of change.

There is a further snag in land restoration. The Bill of Rights entrenches the right of private property and its use. This makes it unlikely that the state can nationalise land unless the Constitution is altered. However it is reported that the ANC is following World Bank proposals that the government buy farmlands outside the Homelands for redistribution at the rate of six per cent annually for five years. If they do — and the cost makes it unlikely — this could provide the promised thirty per cent of land for redistribution.

However it all seems unlikely and sections of the population are not prepared to wait before their claims can be heard. Squatters are already moving into empty land outside Johannesburg and in the eastern Cape without asking permission.

Repossessing the land, difficult as it might be, is still the smallest part of the problem and there is little information on what might happen when people return to the land. Where land is provided the new owners will need to be financed. There will have to be money for building houses and latrines, for a school and a teacher, and possibly for a chapel. Furthermore the land will lie fallow or under-utilised without proper seeding, fertilisers, draught animals and technical aids. There will also have to be some supervision — which will not be popular — to limit the number of heads of cattle and goats, to prevent the denudation of the land. Thirdly, the land allocated must be large enough and the feasibility of co-operative farming must be studied. A newly impoverished peasant class that was a continued burden on the state would be disastrous.

The tradition of the past, to which much of the rural population probably aspires, will need massive changes. To be successful there will have to be agricultural trainers, expert advisers, veterinary doctors, medical or para-medical practitioners and close co-ordination between developments of industry and agriculture. Has the new government the will, foresight or ability, to carry through such a revolutionary plan?

## THE BEATIFICATION OF JOE SLOVO:

1926-1995

The news today is that Joe Slovo is dead. Given the state of his health, that is not surprising. What is surprising is that the current [Chairman] of the South African Communist Party and the ex-Chief of Staff of the ANC's armed wing should receive such gushing obituaries from all sides of the South African press. The most knuckle-abraded hairy back is apparently grief-stricken at the death of this sweet-natured, nay saintly old Stalinist hack. Of course one does not unnecessarily speak ill of the dead. At the same time it is not necessary to suppress one's criticism because one's political foes have the good grace to shuffle off this mortal coil before they can add to their crimes.

Jim Higgins — *Revolutionary History*, Spring 1995

The passing of a life is always a matter of regret yet readers of *Searchlight South Africa* will know full well that we have never been

admirers of Joe Slovo. We always considered him to be the epitome of Stalinism and we have nothing but contempt for those who either slavishly accepted the Soviet Union's political line or those who led the SACP in admiration of that land of tyranny and corruption.

Among those who laid down the party line, Slovo must count as among the foremost. Despite his retrospective statements, he showed no signs of wavering in his admiration of the USSR before the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. He agreed fully with the sentiments of those who attended the conference of the SACP in 1988 where delegates spoke of the victory of socialism in the USSR. And when the regimes in the USSR changed like musical chairs, Slovo discovered the greatness of Gorbachev: the greatest genius after Lenin in the communist pantheon, he said.

It was during this 'changing of the God' that Slovo discovered the importance of democracy. There was to be no more 'vanguard party' which had the monopoly of political sagacity, he wrote; no more centralism in the socialist movement. At last, it seemed, we heard the voice of reasonableness: the party had to win its spurs in competition with other movements trying to woo the workers. And on his Stalinist past he could only tell Philip van Niekerk, reporting for the *Observer* on 4 December 1994, that 'I was wrong and I am ashamed of some of the traps I was led into'. This innocent could merely say that when visiting the USSR he was assured that there were no gulags and he believed his informants. Do we have to ask how Slovo was able to ignore all the information, so easily available, which described events in the USSR? But more: How did he come to accept the Moscow trials and the condemnation of Lenin's comrades as fascist traitors, or the trials of all the leading communists of eastern Europe, or the slavish adoration of Stalin and his henchman? And how did he come to accept the Stalin-Hitler pact, the anti-semitism or the killing of Polish socialists?

These are all questions that Slovo refused to confront. Indeed he went his rounds in the 1950s claiming that he would shoot all Trotskyists — and we had no reason to disbelieve him.

It was almost possible to greet his change of heart after 1989. The proponent of dictatorship had 'matured and softened'. Slovo had taken off the mantle of tyranny and was the earnest champion of reasonableness. Or almost. Lurking beneath this cosmetic change the man had remained the same, as any reader of Soviet pronouncements, reported in the South African and the western press, could discover.

It is not certain when the Soviet 'experts' on Southern Africa started changing their line but it was evident in the mid-1980s that they had reconsidered their position on the armed struggle and on the need to find agreement with the incumbent government of PW Botha. I discussed the change in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 3. There I quoted the

Soviet academician Gleb Starushenko who said that the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party had decided in 1986 that:

it was in favour of vitalising collective quests for ways of defusing conflict situations in the Middle East, Central America, South Africa, in all of the planet's turbulent points.

Starushenko did not believe that socialism was on the order of the day in these countries. He made this quite clear:

Proceeding from the objective laws of social development, the communists do not advance at this present stage of social development any other slogans but general democratic ones. They believe that the restructuring of South African society along socialist lines is a matter of the future and will be possible only after the general conditions have ripened.

Details of one of Starushenko's articles were reprinted in the *Weekly Mail*, in January 1987. The message was transparent. He was quoted as saying that the ANC should 'not advance plans for a broad nationalisation of capitalist property [and] should be willing to give the bourgeoisie the corresponding guarantee'. This was not a mere matter of words: with it went a reluctance to continue Soviet support for the armed struggle. That meant that arms, ammunition and money were no longer available for guerilla warfare or party funds. More importantly, it was now openly said that the ANC/SACP could not defeat the apartheid regime directly and that it would be better to entertain talks with the authorities.

Although it was claimed that Starushenko was only speaking for himself there were several other Soviet academicians who made similar remarks. Speaking in Harare in 1987 Victor Goncharov, Deputy Director of the (Soviet) Institute of African Studies, said that the current struggle in southern Africa was for liberation and not socialism. He believed, he said, that the liberation movement in South Africa would have to negotiate with the National Party government. It was against this background of moderating Soviet voices that Joe Slovo led a deputation of SACP members to meet three members of the Central Committee of the USSR in April 1988. There are no available details of what transpired but, in the statement that was published, the stress was on the need for a political settlement that would transform South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial state. The message was resisted, at least in some sectors of the SACP. It was not easy to switch lines and, despite the sycophantic chants of support for the 'home of Communism', there was a reluctance to accept the pacifist course in South Africa, as advocated by Moscow.

The first major indication available to us that Slovo was changing course appeared in his pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* It was a confused document and I criticised the thinking in *Searchlight South Africa* No 5. But even then I missed the central thrust of Slovo's thinking. He

had come to accept the Soviet line and was advocating, softly-softly, the end of struggle and the need to talk to the members of the government. It is not certain whether this was communicated directly to Mandela, who also entered into negotiations from his prison cell, or whether he had arrived at the same conclusion independently. However it was a remarkable coincidence.

The change had to be put into effect: in 1991 Slovo placed the motion for a cease-fire before the ANC national executive and in 1992, after negotiations with the National Party had been halted, he put forward his 'sunset scenario'. This reopened the negotiations and guaranteed a coalition government with the National Party until the turn of the century. It also ratified job protection for civil servants and the security forces.

Lambasting this compromise in February, Pallo Jordan, a leading member of the ANC and a prospective Cabinet member, said that 'this implied the retention of a public service that has no interest in serving the mass of the oppressed'. Once the sworn enemy of the capitalist class, Slovo now moved rapidly to become a defender of the system, while retaining enough of the radical rhetoric to remain the titular leader of the SACP. He preached the virtues of the free market with enthusiasm before the April elections but was reported as saying in an interview: 'we won't have real power — by "we" I mean the ANC — even if we win by an overwhelming majority. We will have political office. But the day after the election the framework of apartheid in its essence will still be in place' and he added that the struggle would continue for a transition to a real, non-racial democracy during which there would be a 'commonality of objectives' between the ANC and SACP which justified the maintenance of the alliance for at least a period.

Is it possible that this nonsense will continue to befuddle those workers who followed the SACP and believed that their leaders were guiding the transformation towards socialism — even though they claimed that further struggle would be contained inside a market economy? Oh! What a massive let down for those who so blindly followed the lead provided by Slovo and the Communist Party.

After the election Slovo was appointed housing minister. Addressing the Senate in October 1994 he said that there was a backlog of some 1.5 million houses and that this number was growing at 200,000 per year. That is, if the million (starter house) houses that he had promised were supplied within five years, the backlog would remain constant. Writing in the *Observer* on 4 December 1994, Philip van Niekerk, reported Slovo as saying that he planned to supply the million houses in five years but, before building could begin, the banks had to provide the finance. If the banks did not provide the loans, he warned, it might be necessary to ensure this through legislation. Slovo tried to overcome the problem by

coaxing the banks into the township market by deploying state funds to underwrite mortgages while urging residents to resume payments. For those who could not afford mortgages he proposed offering the basics of a foundation, electricity, water and sewage — the rest was up to the occupier. He also said that it was necessary for the occupiers to meet their bond repayments,

The situation was serious and there was no possibility of change. The breakdown of law and order had led to an impasse when court orders for the eviction of eighteen thousand families could not be implemented because the sheriffs, who were to repossess the houses, were threatened with necklacing and had fled. Yet all that the communist minister could say was that the payments had to be met.

Needless to say the reports on housing made no mention of the appalling state of existing housing. An estimated 70 per cent of black houses have no direct access to water and 50 per cent lived in buildings that were little more than shacks.

Was Slovo really serious in saying that he would build so large a number of houses, or was he playing to the gallery? It was physically impossible to build a million houses in five years. But, numbers aside, this was a remarkable proposal for a man who still used socialist rhetoric. Slovo was using the language of Margaret Thatcher in viewing housing in terms of the market. Did he, or his advisers, not think of providing accommodation through housing associations on low rental or even free of rent? Yet all he could say on township policy and on the rent boycotts, as reported in the *Southern African Report* on 13 January 1995, was:

I don't believe leadership should follow in the wake of popular prejudice . . . In the end you have to provide political leadership. If one becomes unpopular, so be it.

Over the months the reports that came from people sympathetic to the ANC claimed that Slovo was doing a great job in providing houses. However, available figures provide a different picture. According to Mark Nicol, in the *New Statesman and Society* of 28 April 1995, only 800 houses (less than three per day) had been built in the first year of the Mandela government and these did not come through the Ministry of Housing. The promise of one million houses in five years requires the building of 550 houses per day, including Sundays and public holidays. It is impossible to build 550 per day over the first five years and that will mean that the shortfall of houses in 2,000 AD will be over two million and the squatter camps will not have been removed.

Slovo helped move the liberation movement from continued resistance to negotiations. For this, he received the acclaim of the ANC and of the white population. The one-time ogre was transformed into an instant hero among the whites: among the ANCers he was revered as the

one-time head of Umkhonto and as the white they could trust. He held high office in the closing years of his life and was charged with solving the housing question. Perhaps it was an impossible project but we saw no greatness in his efforts and no imagination in the tackling of this task.

### EXEUNT WINNIE MANDELA

In writing about Joe Slovo I said that I could not mourn at his passing but at least he was a man about whom there was no obvious personal impropriety. But there are others in the hierarchy of the ANC about whom there have been rumours that cannot be lightly dismissed.

It is said of Nomzamo Winnie Mandela, mother of the nation, estranged wife of the President, former Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, that she has been accused of fraud, shady diamond dealings, misappropriation of ANC funds, received money for seeing that a building contractor was awarded a contract, used money donated by Benazir Bhutto for her own project, the Co-ordinated Anti-Poverty Programme, involvement in abduction and murder. Paul Trehwela discussed her trial in some detail in *Searchlight South Africa* No 9. I will not repeat the details here but will, instead, round off her story.

Faced with the ongoing accusations top leaders of the ANC stayed silent and even gave Mrs Mandela their full support. They sat in court when she appeared before the judge on the most serious of charges and supported her claims to innocence. Some members of the organisation – and we do not know how high up in the ANC this was arranged – secreted the main witness against her, Katiza Cebekhula, and whisked him away to a Zambian prison. This story, using reports printed in the London *Independent*, was discussed by Paul Trehwela and has never been repudiated. This was a conspiracy against justice and there appears to have been no move to get Cebekhula out of prison, return him to South Africa, and hear what he has to say. This is an international scandal and the government of Zambia is as culpable as the administration in Pretoria.

The silence, from inside the ANC, on Winnie's deeds is deafening. When she was said to have misappropriated ANC funds, together with her deputy and lover Dali Mpofu, the commission established to investigate this has either not reported or its findings have been kept silent. She has been accused of diamond dealings, but there is silence. And there is silence on almost everything else of which she stands accused.

She seems to have flouted every law, in society and inside the ANC, and been allowed to continue from one exploit to another without sanctions. She had been ousted from office in the ANC Women's League yet

managed to appear at the League's conference and have herself elected as President. There she remained until members of her executive could no longer tolerate her underhand manoeuvres. Yet, when they resigned, this was accepted by Mrs Mandela. Since then the affair seems to have been swept under the carpet.

So defiant was this woman of all rules of the organization she represents in Parliament that she defied the President and rode off to West Africa. When President Mandela eventually dismissed her from the cabinet, there was no statement on her misdemeanours, no explanation of any sort. Then, to add insult to injury, this cabinet member condemned the government for spending money on celebrations held for the British queen. Mrs Mandela might have had a point if it were not for the vast sums of money she is said to have taken from her own movement, or for the fraud cases that the police said they were investigating.

All of the above is public knowledge, repeated again and again in the South African press, and there would be little cause for *Searchlight South Africa* to repeat it if there was nothing else to contribute to this continued saga of chicanery and dishonesty. As the stories emerge there are also repeats of all the old hoary excuses: the persecution suffered by Mrs Mandela, the imprisonments, banishment, harassment and, of course, the plight of a woman who was left a grass-widow by the imprisonment of her famous husband. Nobody can deny these stories and nobody who demanded change can do other than condemn the state that did all this to Mrs Mandela. But that does not give her any licence to act in this anti-social fashion.

Racist South Africa, over more than three centuries, maimed or destroyed an untold number of lives. Millions of men went to prison for failing to carry their passes, their poll tax receipts or lodger permits. Tens of thousands of women also went to jail for contravening one or other of these laws or for brewing beer. It was a society in which going to jail was a common occurrence, a cross to be borne in a state that made a mockery of justice.

Driven to despair many turned to real crime, to theft and mugging, to rape and extortion or to murder. Some were even cheered for their defiance of the law — making them mini-heroes of the townships. Vigilante groups emerged in the townships to root out the dreaded criminals and, when they succeeded, established an even more vicious rule by terror.

There might have been occasions when lawyers, arguing in mitigation, spoke of the miserable conditions in which their clients were forced to live. But if they did, it served little purpose. The accused were found guilty and sentenced. They were sent to jail, were whipped, hanged, or served their sentences. Some were sent to farm prisons where they slaved, dressed only in sackcloth, kept in near starvation and paid a

miserly wage. This was part of the system enforced by the ruling class to keep the African people in near-slavery, and it was a price that left deep scars on those who suffered — whether innocent or guilty.

It is in this light that the excuses for Winnie Mandela's plight must be seen. To use the arguments of harassment as an excuse for her behaviour is unacceptable especially when it is remembered that she is accorded every honour as a leader (in her own rights) and has always been provided with large sums of money by charitable organisations. She was given a large mansion in Soweto and always flew to Cape Town (to visit her imprisoned husband) in style. Yes, she was harassed but she was also venerated and she was universally acclaimed as a heroine. Even the absence of her husband was compensated for by the many men she invited into her life. Indeed she was quite indiscrete in such matters, flaunting her lovers, at least one of whom was accused of being a police informer.

Yet, Mrs Mandela plays, and will continue to play, an important role in South African politics. Her radical and populist oratory has won her grass-roots support as a champion of the poor and dispossessed. She was present during past struggles (and applauded the use of the 'necklace' to murder the peoples' opponents). But behind such mindless proclamations she is seen by her followers to offer the only way out of the political impasse. She might be a loose cannon, as Trewhela said, but she has not yet fired her last shots!

### THE WORKERS ON STRIKE!

In the strike wave that hit South Africa in 1994, the workers were lambasted by President Mandela. In a call for 'nation building', he followed the pattern of all nationalist leaders in Africa and Asia in saying that trade union leaders were finding it hard to move away from resistance politics. He derided the strikers, saying:

Workers of a particular faction have their own interests. They forget that we have five million people unemployed. We want them to have jobs, not tomorrow, today.

At the end of a meeting to honour veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle at the end of July, Mandela repeated his attack on the strikers. This did not stop Joe Slovo, the Communist Party chief, from saying that Mandela 'was the greatest leader South Africa has ever produced'. He added that Mandela 'embodies all that we have fought for' — and perhaps, in so saying, Slovo was associating himself with the anti-working class stance of his leader.

Meanwhile the trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), was undergoing a period of uncertainty

and losing the support of groups of workers. By being so closely allied with the ANC in its election campaigns they had ceased representing the workers.

In a document entitled 'Towards developing a long term strategy', according to the *Southern African Report*, of 15 April 1994, trade union leaders said that the trade union movement had lost sight of priorities: its structures could not cope with changing circumstances and union members had been relegated to spectators in their own organisation. The shop steward committees — that is, Cosatu's leadership within work places — were no longer functioning. The holding of meetings during working hours — a hard won victory — were no longer being used by workers. The document noted that there was a lack of cohesion in strategies taken by affiliated unions and that little time was devoted to discussions of trade union work in Cosatu's central executive meetings.

It is against this background that the press reported widespread strikes in July 1994. The *New Nation* of 22 July — a report chosen at random — said that in two weeks in July 1994 more than 100,000 workers, from court interpreters to distributive workers, were involved in 45 separate protests. Among those mentioned were the South African Commercial and Catering Workers who represented the 20,000 strikers at the Pick 'n Pay. They demanded a twelve per cent increase and were only offered seven per cent. There were also 18,000 workers in dispute with the diamond conglomerate, de Beers, after negotiations, led by the National Union of Mineworkers, broke down. Ten thousand members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa marched to their union headquarters in support of their wage claim. The union was also in dispute with Auto Manufacturers and Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers involving 26,000 workers and 5,000 Brewery workers were in dispute with their bosses. The South African Municipal Workers Union said that 1,600 workers were in dispute with management and a further 1,200 confronted the Rand Water Board.

The disaffection was widespread. The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union reported that 900 of its members were in dispute with the Witwatersrand University over arbitrary cuts in wages and 3,000 of its members were in dispute with Kroonstad Hospital. The list seemed endless. The Construction and Allied Workers Union was in dispute with Basil Reed over the lockout of 200 workers and the Chemical Workers Industrial Union reported a dispute with Total over pay rises and improved work conditions.

There was talk of tension between leaders of the ANC and Cosatu in the wake of the strike wave. While claiming to take a middle stance between bosses and workers, the ANC leaned towards business management. In calling on workers to modify their positions and, indeed, to stop strike action, Mandela's response to brutal police action in suppressing

the strikes was decidedly tame. His call to the police not to be so violent in restraining strikers, or in getting them back to work, carried no real challenge to the offending officers. When, shortly afterwards, there was a strike among black policemen their white counterparts had no reservations in shooting and killing one of them.

He quite unashamedly said in an interview in the *Sowetan* (as reported in *Southern Africa Report* of 22 July 1994): 'We have won this election, for those who do not know, because of the financial support of big business'. The implication is obvious: big business (and this includes the multi-nationals, the mines and the large department stores), provided funds for the ANC's election campaign and are not to be pestered by workers who want more money! If Mr Mandela is correct — and there is no reason to doubt his word — the names of the firms that gave funds to the ANC must be made public.

To add to our suspicions, Mandela's connections with business was underlined when he chose a successor to former Economic Minister Keys. It is reported that he turned for advice to business leaders in choosing the new minister and not to his allies, Cosatu and the SACP

### THE NEW LABOUR BILL.

In February 1995 a new Labour Relations Bill was published. It was obviously designed to shackle the entire labour movement in a form similar to the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 which was Smuts's last act after the General Strike of 1922. His intention was clear: the white workers were to be prevented from ever threatening the state again. The intention of the new government in presenting the Bill is not dissimilar. All trade unions, except those that are racially exclusive, can be registered and only those so registered can use the system. Closed shops are banned although collective bargaining levies, paid by the workers, are allowed. The trade unions will in future be constrained to enter into arbitration before taking strike action over wages or work conditions. Although the Bill does legalise many categories of labour disputes, its aim is to proscribe the use of the strike weapon and, significantly, has the support of organised business.

The Bill applies to all workers in the public and private sectors except those in the police, the defence force and the intelligence services. All labour disputes must first be taken to a Commission for Conciliation for mediation and arbitration before any further action is allowed. Strikes over dismissals are outlawed — all such disputes having to go to arbitration.

In line with a clause in the draft constitution workers have the right to strike action — except for those in essential services related to the

health and safety of the public or where business infrastructure should be protected. Strike action in defence of broad socio-economic interests is allowed, subject to restriction. Presumably stay-at-homes, such as those used by the Mass Democratic Movement, or demonstrations called by Cosatu when VAT was introduced can be outlawed if found inconvenient by the government.

The Bill also provides for the establishment of workplace forums to encourage flexibility and efficiency in production. That is, it is designed to promote co-operative relations through consultation and joint decision making in order to boost production and increase profitability. All the worst practices employed by capitalism in Europe and America are to be enforced in South Africa in the name of liberation.

### THE ARMED FORCES

The Government of National Unity was the inheritor of a large standing army, an air force and a small navy. This was the force used by the National Party regime to mount an invasion of Angola, to fight the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (Swapo), the Namibian movement, to conduct incursions into neighbouring territories and constituted the praetorian guard to quell rebellion inside South Africa. Quite obviously the National Party was at ease with such a body and wanted to keep it in the new South Africa.

The reason for its maintenance by the ANC-led government seems less obvious and the retention of the old generals is inexcusable. It is surely pertinent to ask why this body has been taken over intact and added to by amalgamation with the forces of Umkhonto we Sizwe and why the military budget, even when cut, should take such a huge portion of the budget?

What are its uses given that there are no external forces threatening the regime? Which nations threatened South Africa in the past and which nations would dare to attack South Africa today? Furthermore, if there are no such enemies, why are there plans to extend the fleet, an arm of the fighting forces that the National Party government found it convenient to downplay? Surely, the entire matter of arms (whether military hardware, aeroplanes or naval forces) must be reappraised in terms of the financial resources available for RDP.

Besides the obvious fact that the Nation State seems to demand that the government of the day surround itself with bodies of armed men with the very latest weaponry, the major reason for keeping a large armed force is to suppress any internal revolt. Short of keeping the extreme right from adventurous escapades – and it did not seem to need much military force to subdue members of the AWB when they went into

Bophutatswana to save Lucas Mangope's Homeland's regime — there seems to be no internal threat. Is it then an army that must be kept in reserve in case a disaffected black movement emerges to challenge the incumbent government? Or is this a force that will be called upon to suppress a rising working class? Or will such a movement be bombed into submission by an air force as happened in the General Strike of 1922?

There seems to be no other reason for the retention of this army and we have little reason to support the members of Umkhonto who flocked to join this army. It seems obvious that the Minister of Defence, who helped to suppress the mutiny in Umkhonto in Angola in 1984, should relish his new and powerful position. But do the rank-and-file know how they will be employed if there is a working class uprising in the country?

Even more ominously, does the regime not know that an army, much of it unreformed and shaped in the cauldron of apartheid, will remain a threat to its very existence? Are they unaware of the coups across the world carried out by the top brass or their immediate lower officer class?

These larger questions need an answer and, as if to foreshadow the answer of the government, there was a peculiar incident when 7,500 former members of Umkhonto went absent without leave in October 1994 — or more cogently, mutinied. The trainees' grievances included allegations of racism, attempts by some army elements to sabotage or at least postpone their integration into the army because of the disappearance of a number of files.

Mandela, as Commander-in-Chief, while recognising the justice of the men's complaints, said that the Umkhonto cadres had been 'infiltrated by people who wanted to destabilise this process [of integration in the army] and by sheer criminals'. This was a shameful and unjustified accusation which he used as a prelude to a rare display of firmness. That is, he gave the men who were still absent without leave seven days to return or be dismissed from the South African National Defence Force and demanded that there be no further absenteeism. About 4,500 out of 7,500 absentees returned the same day but the rest stayed away.

This was another shameful episode but its full implications are not clear. Was Mandela placating the army chiefs, hoping to keep them loyal to the new state? If so, he was playing a dangerous game because this is a body that has its own agenda and needs to be warned that the old habits and methods will not be tolerated. Where new regimes have not clipped the wings of the generals — and the lesson of previous coups must be heeded — the consequences for the elected regimes have been disastrous. The defection of Umkhonto cadres provided an opportunity for ending discriminatory practices in this central state institution.

Mandela's response fell far short of all previous warnings on racist discrimination and bodes ill for the regime.

The above picture of events, partial as it is, does not square with some of the reports emanating from South Africa. There is a new spirit, we are told. There is boundless enthusiasm and everybody is straining to build the new society. Commissions are sitting to plan land reforms, legal reforms have been promulgated, education has been altered, health schemes are in place and new social welfare schemes are being implemented. We have no doubt that there is a new spirit in some quarters. It would be remarkable if there was not some celebrations after the government was changed — both in the camps of the ANC and the National Party. Yet even the much publicised changes have been less than successful. The health scheme that was implemented failed to take account of the needs of the rural population, the hospitals are short staffed and the pharmacies are empty. The school system was altered but there was neither the trained staff, the required books or the school premises. Pupils streamed out of the townships and crowded into Coloured, Indian or white schools. The whites alone were protected — they moved to grant-aided schools.

I can see no way out from these (and other) miserable conditions but, given the financial constraints, the danger of increasing state debt, the difficulties of change in a capitalist society and the lack of schooling in the population at large it would be wrong to pretend that the transformation has been a great success. Indeed the nature of the new state ensures that it cannot succeed.

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Baruch Hirson and Gwyn Williams (1995) *The Delegate for Africa: The Life and Times of David Ivon Jones, 1883-1924*, Core Publications.

Of the three people who played the central role in moving socialists in South Africa towards communism, two were commemorated over fifty years ago when RK Cope wrote *Comrade Bill*, the biography of WH Andrews and Edward Roux published his biography of *SP Bunting*. These brought the lives of two pioneer communists into the public domain. The third pioneer, David Ivon Jones, was mentioned briefly in both the biographies – he could hardly be excluded – but the descriptions were short, the details sparse and Jones was barely known in the party he helped prepare.

There was no excuse for the omission. Andrews, who provided his biographer with much of the material was an intimate friend of Jones, knew about his Welsh connections and had lived through some of the events that helped to shape Jones's consciousness. But he hardly mentioned Jones, as can be ascertained by a perusal of Cope's notebooks.

The witnesses of the time were silent but there is little excuse for the Communist Party historians who came later. HJ and RE Simons seem not to have searched the records for material on this remarkable man and he receives scant notice in their *Class and Race in South Africa: 1850-1950*. Michael Harmel, in his history of the CPSA/SACP, *Fifty Glorious Years*, failed to take the story any further. Nonetheless in the records of the Comintern, and in the journals of the CPSA and the British Communist Party, there is enough material for a substantial monograph.

Such an account would have been important but could not have revealed the full story of Ivon Jones. For the inner story of the man as religious philosopher, as traveller and as international socialist it was necessary to visit the National Library of Wales and read his diaries, his note-books and his letters. This is a rare feast that uncovers a passionate man who searched for the truth and eventually found it in the events of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Gwyn Williams, doyen of radical Welsh historians, undertook the writing of Jones's life in Wales and then in New Zealand from 1907-1910. In so doing he painted a picture of the industrial development of the Welsh principality and set the scene of the conflict between the Calvinist Methodist and the Unitarian chapels in middle Wales. He provides an account of the intellectual flowering of Jones under the guidance of George Eyre Evans, his Unitarian mentor and life-long friend. Whatever lay in store for young Ivon in Wales was cut short by the appearance of that scourge of Wales and of the Jones family, tuberculosis.

Searching a cure, Ivon was sent on the longest available sea voyage of the time, to New Zealand. This sharp witted young man struck up a friendship with two socialists who had been involved in the Russian Revolution of 1905. Their stories were to stay with him and, in an echo of their experiences, he was to travel to and end his life as a propagandist for the Bolshevik regime in Russia.

Hirson takes up the account from 1910 when Jones landed in South Africa. In the same way as Williams cast the early years of Jones's life in the social development of Wales and then New Zealand, Hirson provides a social history of South Africa as a background to the biography. In this he was fortunate in having hundreds of letters which gave a personal account of the social and political life of South Africa, as seen through the sharp eyes of Jones.

There are completely new accounts of the white workers' strikes in 1913 and 1914, some taken from the columns of the British socialist press, others described in Jones's letters to Evans. This is followed by an account of the anti-warites in South Africa in the First World War and the events that led to the split in the South African Labour Party and the formation of the International Socialist League.

The achievements of this remarkable man include his role in the organisation of the first viable black trade union movement, the Industrial Workers of Africa, his prediction after the first revolution in Russia in March 1917 that the Russian worker would join the worldwide struggle for socialism, and his pamphlet, 'The Bolsheviks are Coming' which placed him in the dock in South Africa's first anti-Communist trial. He edited his group's journal through 111 copies, provided the first accounts of the factors forcing Mozambiquans to seek work in the Rand's gold mines and, after he left South Africa, to write one of the most penetrating accounts of the 1922 General Strike.

Gravely ill, Jones was returning to his home town in Wales, Aberystwyth, but was persuaded to journey to the Soviet Union. There he was a delegate to the Congress of the Communist International in 1921 where he first raised the need to convene a Conference of Negro Toilers, translated Lenin's early works from the Russian, wrote acute accounts of events in the USSR and of the founding conference of the Red International of Labour Unions.

His health could not hold up and Jones died in a sanatorium in Yalta, in 1924, but not before writing a lengthy letter to Andrews suggesting a change of tactics after the defeat of the General Strike. This book, which provides new insight to the early communists in South Africa can be obtained from:

**Core Publications**, 13 Talbot Avenue, London N2 OLS  
price £8.50 — or £9.50 (inclusive of p&p) outside the UK.

## STATE ESPIONAGE AND THE ANC LONDON OFFICE

Paul Trehwela

### *Enemy Agents*

In *Searchlight South Africa* No 10, published in April 1993, I discussed infiltration of the ANC in exile by South African Military Intelligence (MI) and noted that a 'major scandal involving the top ANC leadership . . . has still to break' (p 30, fn 10).

In May the ANC admitted that its chief representative in London in the 1980s had, before his death in April, confessed to being a spy for MI. On receiving the man's confession following his return to Odendaalsrus, South Africa, in 1991, the ANC had suppressed the information and allowed him to continue as chairman of the ANC's northern Free State region from 1991 to 1992. His constituency members had no knowledge of the affair, nor were they informed by the ANC after his death.

This real 'enemy agent' in the leadership of the ANC was known abroad under his exile pseudonym, Solly Smith. (In London he was 'Uncle Solly'). His real name was Samuel Khanyile. Shortly after his death in Odendaalsrus in early April, a German magazine, *Top Secret*, published a facsimile from the Companies Registration Office in London indicating Smith's 10 per cent stake in a South African state funded media service in London, Newscope Limited, which published a now defunct magazine, *African Preview*. The company was run by a Ghanaian exile in London, Major Kojo Boakye-Djan. After his secret had thus posthumously been exposed, an ANC spokesman, Ronnie Mamoepa, stated that Smith had approached the ANC voluntarily after his return from exile and 'admitted he had been compromised and coerced into working for the regime' (*Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 30 May).

At the same time, the South African press published information linking Smith's espionage operation on behalf of MI to a second leader of the ANC and the South African Communist Party, Dr Francis Meli who died shortly after his return from exile in a Johannesburg hotel room in October 1990. Born in East London in 1942, and a former student at Fort Hare University College in the early sixties, he was in his late 40s at the time of his death. Meli wrote a history of the ANC,<sup>1</sup> was editor in London of *Sechaba*, the official exile journal of the ANC. He was a member of the ANCs National Executive Committee and had been a member also of the SACP Central Committee, and possibly also its Politburo. As the first political commissar at Nova Katenga camp in Angola from the end of 1976, he held prime responsibility for ideologi-

cal indoctrination of young recruits from the generation of the 1976 Soweto school students' revolt. He had earlier acquired his doctorate (in history) at the University of Leipzig in the German Democratic Republic, and was a classic product of the stalinist Party School system of political training. His exile pseudonym, Meli, was derived from the initials of the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Institute.

In their account of the ANC and the SACP in exile, Steven Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba charitably describe Meli's history of the ANC as 'highly sanitised'.<sup>2</sup> It is indeed a shabby piece of non-research. They go on to state that Meli had written his thesis on the history of the Comintern and had 'impeccably orthodox Marxist credentials'. At the time of his appointment as commissar in Angola, where he was responsible for 'licking the new recruits into political shape', Meli was already regarded as an expert on the national question . . . In this, as in many other things, Meli was a fervent disciple of Stalin. The SACP has traditionally considered that if there was one sphere in which Joseph Stalin may be said to have had a correct approach in the Soviet Union, it was in successfully incorporating all the diverse nationalities of the USSR into a socialist state (p 88).

No amount of evidence of the repressive nature of the Soviet state, its Great Russian chauvinism and the forced removal of whole peoples as a result of Stalin's politics of 'ethnic cleansing' could shake the faith of the SACP in the USSR as a model for South African conditions, or in Stalin as their philosophical guide. This stubborn faith remained impervious to the facts until the whole edifice came crashing down, revealing a snakepit of ethnic hatreds. As editor of *Sechaba* (one of the few journals available to ANC members in the camps) and as one of the SACP's leading 'theoreticians', writing under the names Phineas Malinga and Nyawuza, Meli was influential in elaborating ANC/SACP ideas on the 'national question' relating to South Africa. He fed into the central area of ideological debate in the country.

Like Smith, Meli had a very serious alcohol problem. Ellis and Sechaba state that he was removed from the SACP central committee 'on account of his alcoholism' and was put under investigation by a party committee 'because of his lapses in preserving Party security'. At Engineering Camp at Nova Katenga (shared by Cubans and Angolans as well as the ANC), he was very sarcastic and rude to the recruits, who frequently dozed off in his lectures (personal communication). The boredom induced by his lectures was no disqualification to his eminence.

At party schools such as Meli attended in the Soviet bloc, among other subjects cadres were taught 'MCW', (Military and Combat Work). This concerned underground work and intelligence, and normally involved connections with the Stasi and the KGB. People attending these courses were closely monitored by the intelligence organs of the eastern

bloc states, which kept files on them. Meli would have been held in high esteem by the east German authorities and was a big fish for the anglers of South African MI.

He was placed under scrutiny by the ANC in 1988 following revelations in a London newspaper, the *Independent*, that Major Kojo Boakye-Djan had received ANC documents from Meli.<sup>3</sup>

In May 1993, Boakye-Djan was revealed to be the crucial link also between Solly Smith and MI. He was placed under scrutiny by the ANC in 1988 following revelations in a London newspaper, the *Independent*, that Major Kojo Boakye-Djan had received ANC documents from Meli.<sup>3</sup> In fresh revelations in *Top Secret* both Smith and Meli were said to be involved in a disinformation campaign headed by Boakye-Djan and funded by MI.

### *In the London Centre*

Like most ANC chief representatives in important station posts during the exile, Smith belonged to the higher ranks of the ANC security department, Imbokodo ('the boulder that crushes'), now known as the Department of Intelligence and Security (DIS). London was the crucial coordinating centre for ANC activities internationally. As chief representative, Smith was like an ambassador of a Soviet bloc state. He was in charge of everything in the mission, including security. He was chief of Imbokodo in the London office, and coordinator of all ANC security in Britain.

All black ANC members (but apparently not white members) in Britain were required to surrender their passports to the chief representative's office in London, in other words to Smith. These passports were then kept locked up and their owners were deprived of their use until authorised by Imbokodo — that is Smith — who had access to and control over the passport records of ANC members in Britain, whether they arrived to study or were passing through en route to conferences. All private mail arriving in Britain for ANC members and addressed to the ANC office was vetted by Imbokodo staff, and was available first of all to Smith.

At ANC headquarters in Lusaka in 1980, Smith had been a member of an Imbokodo directorate that discussed current dissension among young security personnel. Their dissatisfaction was directed at corruption among top officials, stagnation of the military struggle and repressive conduct by the security department.<sup>4</sup> Through Boakye-Djan in London, Smith was thus in a position to provide MI with copious ongoing information about the whole of the ANC in exile, including its central nervous system, Imbokodo. In the battle for security, the ANC was disastrously out-gunned. The 'turning' of a high level political and security official like Smith made nonsense of the arrogance of Imbokodo, as

self-asserted guardian of the struggle. ANC members in exile had cause to fear Imbokodo not only because of its brutality but for the scope it gave to penetration by the South African state. The nature of its control over ANC members made it doubly dangerous to them.

This was indeed what very many rank and file ANC members — especially in Umkhonto — did fear and suspect. The revelations about Smith and Meli bear out the charges and suspicions of ANC mutineers in Umkhonto in Angola in 1984 that the organisation had been infiltrated from the top by South African intelligence. The mutineers first demand was for suspension of the suspect security department and for a comprehensive investigation into its activities.<sup>5</sup> These suspicions were forcefully articulated by a group of loyal and dedicated former members of the security department — also members of Oliver Tambo's personal bodyguard — who had resigned from Imbokodo at ANC headquarters in Lusaka in 1980 in protest both against its failure to protect the movement and at corruption among ANC leaders, including Tambo. After resigning their posts as security officials and resuming duties within the ranks of Umkhonto, some of these men continued to protest at the abuse of power by Imbokodo.

The fate of these former members of the security department — all from the generation of the 1976 Soweto school students' revolt — illuminates the real relations of power within the ANC in exile, its ideology and methods of rule, and its incapacity to even listen to its most serious-minded younger members.

One, Mlamli Namba (MK name James Nkabinde), was shot by firing squad on the orders of a tribunal staffed by members of Imbokodo after the third and final phase of the mutiny, at Pango camp, in May 1984. Head of the tribunal was Sizakele Sigxashe, who like Meli had studied at Fort Hare in the early 1960s. (Sigxashe got his doctorate in Moscow).<sup>6</sup>

A second, Sidwell Moroka, or Mhlongo, was elected spokesperson by the June 16 detachment of MK and was delegated to call on the leadership to convene a conference of the whole organisation to discuss its problems. (No such conference was called until five years later, after the critics had been crushed and silenced). By 1984 Mhlongo was MK district commander in the Angolan capital, Luanda. He was elected a member of the Committee of Ten that was chosen to lead the mutineers in Viana camp in February 1984, helped negotiate the surrender of the mutineers, was arrested, and spent nearly five years under continuous tortures in Quatro penal camp. On his release he was elected chairman of all ANC exiles in Tanzania in September 1989, before being forced out of office by Chris Hani and Stanley Mabizela, representing the NEC.

A third former member of Tambo's bodyguard, known as Earl (or McCann) fled to Kenya from Zambia with his wife in the early months of 1990, after being approached by senior members of Imbokodo to participate in a drug smuggling ring. He had been a camp commander

in Angola, and had participated in arrests of his colleagues during the mutiny.

The warnings and insights of these former security officials were systematically ignored by the leadership of the ANC in particular by Tambo, but above all by the security department. Instead these young men were themselves hounded by Imbokodo as 'enemy agents'. It was the concerns of these men, and others, that Smith had rejected as a member of the Imbokodo directorate in Lusaka in 1980. Now he and Meli are found to have been deeply compromised.<sup>7</sup>

Smith's family has said he died of natural causes and that he had been very ill for some time. He had been admitted to hospital in Johannesburg and Bloemfontein several times in 1993. A Bloemfontein state pathologist, Dr Jan Olivier, found that his death was caused by cardio-respiratory failure. He said he had checked for traces of poison but had found nothing suspicious. A Bloemfontein doctor who treated Smith earlier in 1993 said he was not surprised to hear that he had died of heart failure. Smith, he said, had 'an enlarged heart, high blood-pressure, poor kidneys, degenerative arthritis, diabetes and Parkinson's disease' (*Sunday Times*, 30 May). His appalling state of health could only have been aggravated by his alcohol abuse.

Many ANC members, however, are suspicious. According to an ANC 'intelligence source', Smith had been warned by state intelligence agents not to reveal his past role on behalf of MI, and was in fear of his life. 'He had reached a point where he did not know whether they or his health were going to get him first', according to this ANC source (*Sunday Times*, Johannesburg). Smith had approached the ANC after important documents had been stolen from his home in June or July 1992. His son-in-law stated that Smith had been 'extremely worried' about the missing documents, because only he and ANC headquarters knew about them. (The ANC appears to have left these documents in Smith's keeping even after he had told the organisation about his work for MI)

### *Poisons in the Bloodstream*

The unnamed source in ANC intelligence said it was '80 percent convinced' that Meli had been poisoned by a drink at the Carlton Hotel, even though he 'ostensibly died of heart failure' (*Sunday Times*). Major Boakye-Djan, the Ghanaian agent of MI, is believed by ANC members to have been with Meli in Johannesburg shortly before his death. [He was seen in a drunken stupor with a suspicious friend in the eastern Cape, by members of the ANC, according to *Top Secret*, and was to appear for questioning when he was found dead.]

No conclusive evidence exists at present to show that either man died by poisoning. It is obvious, however, that both could have been susceptible to blackmail by MI) in exile, because of their alcoholism. Anything

could have been planted on these men, or extracted from them, in their habitually drunken state. They were wide open to exploitation by MI), and with them a huge swathe of the ANC membership.

This appears not to have been perceived as a critical problem by ANC security in exile, nor by the NEC and the SACP central committee. [The matter was ignored by the SACP because that is the way the party functioned]. Neither man appears to have been able to get adequate counselling for his addiction problem, to their own cost, and that of their closest relatives, and also of the organisations in which they held senior rank, with access to top-grade confidential information involving life and death for many people (including, ultimately, perhaps also themselves). Meli was regularly 'dried out' in East Germany, but it is questionable whether this even began to help him in confronting his addiction problem. Addiction is notoriously intractable. It is doubtful whether much sensitivity or understanding was shown in the closed world of the ANC/SACP hierarchy. Chances for recovery would have been problematic, even had this been so.

The real question here, however, is political. Duma Nokwe was removed from his post as ANC hierarchy secretary-general in 1969, following the Morogoro conference in Tanzania, because his alcoholism rendered him unsuitable for the post. (According to Ellis and Sechaba, Nokwe's alcoholism was 'eventually to kill him', p 60). Smith and Meli retained senior posts, however, with access to confidential information.

The ANC has yet to make a full public account of the relations of Smith and Meli to Boakye-Djan, of the problems posed by their alcoholism, of the measures taken by the organisation to limit damage to its members and itself, and of the extent of damage done. Once again, if nothing else, the shoddy quality of the ANC/SACP exile operation comes to light. It appears through the characteristic form of personal tragedy, masked by rhetoric from an organisation that is more symbol than substance. Nationalist and stalinist phrases blunted sensitivity to real needs, real patriots were hunted down as 'enemy agents' while real enemy agents urged on the hunt. The deaths of these two senior figures of the exile show that the ANC operation in exile, to which so much blood and life was sacrificed, was in large part a tragedy in the form of *opera bouffe* — a clowning with real needs. It was this perception, and its truth, that produced the mutiny of almost the entire ANC trained forces in Angola, a perception punished by the high-ups with torture and executions. The prison camp was the expression of an ideology of suppression and denial.

That mutiny, the gravest crisis of the exile, was the moment of truth for the ANC, the moment at which fictions took absolute hold. For penetration by the skilled, ruthless, well-resourced security managers of the South African state, there could not have been a more suitable culture than that of Imbokodo through which the ANC was seized by an

ideologically-driven security mania. As in Goya's painting of Chronos devouring his children, Imbokodo devoured the best, most able and most dedicated of the generation of 1976. This was a coup for MI). The ANC provided it with this prize.

The ANC security department was MI's most viable route of penetration into the ANC in exile. Mouching of vehement rhetoric was the appropriate way to get into Imbokodo, and to advance in rank. Nothing was easier for a trained agent to mimic. In a bureaucratic, hierarchical organisation in which real opinions and feelings were driven underground, the advantage lay with the individual who could most successfully lead a double life. In this sense, little was learnt by the ANC/SACP from the experience of penetration by state intelligence of the underground inside South Africa in the early 1960s.

In this nest of sadism and special privilege, individuals took leave of their senses, as well as ordinary human feeling. An example: during training by the Stasi in the former German Democratic Republic, teenage Imbokodo recruits were taken on tours of Nazi extermination camps where they were shown lampshades made of Jews' skins and other delights. They returned to Angola, Zambia and Tanzania, psyched up by their Stasi controllers to believe that this would be their own fate if critics of the ANC/SACP line gained authority (personal communication). This was an appalling perversion of the death camps by their then supervisors. The result was naturally a further perversion. These young people, who had been abused in this fashion, told the victims they tortured: 'We are not sadists; we are doing this in defence of the struggle.' Or, in words they learnt from the former ANC commissar and SACP leader, Andrew Masondo: 'We are waging war, not playing war.'

These were the semiotics of torture. The specific ideological milieu of the ANC, and especially of Imbokodo, provided cover to the spies of MI.

### *The Kitson Affair*

One of the shameful episodes of the exile was the hounding in London by Smith, Meli and others of the former Umkhonto leader, David Kitson, who was a member of the Communist Party of South Africa since 1940. Like others in the CPSA he fought in the South African army during World War Two. This prior military experience by white members of the Communist Party played a crucial part in the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe. It gave the ANC a decided edge in military organisation over the rival efforts of the Pan Africanist Congress, which had minimal military experience or scientific technology to draw on when it embarked on violence in the early 1960s.

Having qualified as an engineer at Natal University after the war, Kitson had worked as a draughtsman in an aeronautical engineering

firm in Britain. An ardent stalinist, he joined the technical workers' trade union in Britain, the Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians' Association, later the Technical and Ancillary Staffs Association (TASS), which was controlled by members of the Communist Party of Great Britain. He won a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, funded by his union.

In 1959, Dave Kitson and his wife Norma returned separately to South Africa, where both worked in the SACP underground. After the arrest of the first High Command of Umkhonto in Rivonia (a Johannesburg suburb) in 1963, Kitson became one of four members of the second High Command. Arrested, interrogated and tried in 1964 along with Wilton Mkwayi, Mac Maharaj, Lalloo Chiba and John Matthews, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison, most of which he served. Kitson's union, TASS, played a major part in the campaign for his release, prominently placing his name and South African racist conditions before its members.

Norma Kitson left for London after Dave Kitson's arrest and campaigned in Britain as a member of the ANC for his release, for his transfer away from the condemned prisoner's block, and for the release of all political prisoners. Norma and her children were central in the formation of the City of London section of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), which advocated a strategy of non-stop picketing of the South African embassy in London.

After his release from prison Kitson rejoined his family in London and participated in the picketing. When City Group refused to abandon its strategy after being instructed by the London leadership of the SACP, the ANC and the, the Kitsons were suspended from the London ANC in November 1984 and City Group was expelled from the AAM the following February.

Leaders of TASS now broke their promise (in 1969) to fund David in a fellowship at Ruskin College for life, after his release from prison. After lecturing in statistics at Ruskin for a year the TASS leadership ordered Kitson to obey the ANC, or lose his Ruskin post. In the same week, Kitson was informed by the ANC London office that his suspension would continue and his of funding by TASS was withdrawn. A major part in this sordid affair was played by Solly Smith. Smith behaved like a hatchet man (*ibid*, pp 286, 312, 317). This squalid conflict was manipulated by MI, working through Smith and Meli, and assisted by the methods of control within the AAM and TASS. Kitson had in fact been required by London leaders of the SACP

and the ANC to denounce his wife, as the price of keeping his job. He indignantly refused.<sup>8</sup> Such was the treatment — in London — of a prison hero of the SACP and the ANC, utterly uncritical of the Soviet Union and in his own words a 'Mandela man'.

[PS. Because of the centrality of Smith and Meli in having the Kitsons expelled from the ANC, they were 'reinstated' after the exposure of these government informers. Kitson accepted the reinstatement but by this time his position had been made redundant and he did not return to Ruskin College — Ed]

### *A Person Above Suspicion*

The ANC spokesperson who confirmed that Smith had been a spy stated that his death needed investigation. After Smith's fears for his life, he said, his death was 'suspicious' (*Weekly Mail*, 28 May 1993). If the ANC is serious about these suspicions, it should publish a truthful report on the deaths of its operatives in Zambia in 1988 and 1989, in addition to making a complete public inventory of all its information concerning Smith and Meli, in London and elsewhere. At the time of the spy-mania in Zambia, completely innocent former members of the ANC — critics of Imbokodo — were condemned for bombings, drug smuggling and other offenses, in full knowledge that the charges were nonsense, and beaten up and imprisoned by Imbokodo, with the connivance of the Zambian state.<sup>9</sup> As with its response to the criticism of the young security officials in Lusaka in 1980, with the discontent of the troops in Angola in 1984, in the dispute with the Kitsons in the mid-1980s and in the response of *Sechaba* to the revelations in *Africa Confidential* in 1988, this was the normal response of the ANC to any threat to its central ideological apparatus.

Honest accounting is the least that is owed by the ANC to its members. Without full disclosure, and an end to suppression and denial, it is impossible to know whether a trail of murders of leading officials has spread from Zambia to South Africa.<sup>10</sup> The uncertainty itself constitutes a poisoning of public life.

The revelations about Smith and Meli make it all the more essential that there should be candid and public accounting for murky episodes from the past, including the Kitson affair. The guardians must be held to account.

### References

1. Francis Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us. A History of the ANC*, James Currey, 1989.
2. Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile*, James Currey, 1992, p 7.
3. Meli's book was published in London after these revelations.
4. This climate of unease and dissension in the security department in Lusaka in 1980 is referred to by Bandile Ketelo et al, 'A Miscarriage of Democracy: the ANC Security Department in the 1984 Mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe', *Searchlight South Africa* No 5, July 1990, pp 39-40.
5. *Ibid*, p 45.
6. Meli's generation at Fort Hare in the early 1960s provided an important nucleus of younger ANC and SACP leaders in the exile, with a deeply stalinist ideological make-up. Others in this cadre, besides Sigxashe, were Chris Hani and Stanley Mabizela. The

leading influence on their development at Fort Hare was Govan Mbeki, then leader (in Port Elizabeth) of the best ANC and SACP branches in the country. A major split took place with one of their former Fort Hare colleagues, Thami Mhlambiso, after the Morogoro conference of the ANC in 1969. Mhlambiso had been a leader of the National Union of South African Students while at Fort Hare, head of the ANC youth in London in the mid-1960s and became ANC representative at the UN. He was expelled from the ANC in 1975 as one of the so-called 'gang of eight' who opposed the increasing influence of the SACP in the leadership of the ANC. Dismissed as ANC representative at the UN, Mhlambiso faced strenuous but unsuccessful efforts by Thabo Mbeki (Govan's son, then a leading international spokesperson for the ANC) to have him dismissed from a UN salaried post.

7. In its issue of October 1988, *Sechaba* responded to revelations published in the London newsheet *Africa Confidential* with an editorial headed: 'Whom does *Africa Confidential* serve?' It denounced recent articles that gave a 'gloomy, if not a horrifying and frightening picture' of conditions in the ANC in exile. Articles which portrayed the ANC as 'a mafia-type organisation' were 'more like distorted intelligence reports than serious journalism'. *Sechaba* made the characteristic response, when the exile conduct of the ANC was brought up for discussion: 'Who is *Africa Confidential* working for?'

This followed two detailed articles in previous issues of *Africa Confidential*, one of which referred to the role of Chris Hani — then army commissar — in 'Putting down the 1984 mutiny in the ANC training camps in Angola' (Vol 29, No 16, 12 August 1988). This was probably the first reference to the dread secret at the heart of the ANC in exile. *Africa Confidential* was not deterred. In December 1988 it provided specific and accurate reference to imprisonment by the security department of the ANC's research director, Pallo Jordan, in June 1983 (Vol 29, No 24).

This was probably the first public reference to the ANC's imprisonment for political dissent since publication of similar information by the British left-wing newspaper *Black Dwarf* in the late 1960s. Details were confirmed by Jordan in 1992 in evidence to the ANC commission of inquiry headed by Advocate Thembile Skweyiya (see SSA, No 10, 'The ANC Camps: An Audit of Three Years, 1990-93', p 16), and again in evidence this year to the commission headed by Dr Sam Motsuenyane (*Star*, Johannesburg, 20 May 1993). While *Sechaba* under Meli's editorship concealed abuses, *Africa Confidential* was for two crucial years the sole reliable source of information about the victims of Imbokodo.

Meli was a major figure in the management of information (and disinformation) by the ANC. His relation to Boakye-Djan suggests the problem of who ultimately was in charge of this system of manipulation of minds, and of the media. One could rephrase the question: Whom did *Sechaba* serve?

8. According to Norma Kitson 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement was controlled by the *chevra*' (ibid, p 262). *Chevra* means Comrades, but as used here was a friend's abbreviation for the *Chevra Kadisha* (the Jewish burial society) when referring to a small group inside the SACP in London. She quotes this friend as saying:

"If anyone starts any activity that is not under their control, they "bury" them — immobilise them, or manoeuvre them out of the solidarity movement . . .' The *chevra*, she said held sway over the London ANC and influenced the Anti-Apartheid Movement and TASS. "Those who criticise the *chevra* are called 'Trotskyist' or 'ultra-left' — words used as insults that have no relation to their real meanings. Those who wish to expose them are in danger of being accused of siding with the South African state" (p 214-15). Ironically, through Smith and Meli, this squalid conflict was manipulated by MI, working through Smith and Meli, and assisted by the methods of control within the AAM and MI had detailed access to the thinking, decisions and manoeuvres of 'the chevra'.

The Kitson affair illuminates stalinist manipulation of public perceptions in Britain and South Africa. Among the many South African exiles in Britain, there was abysmal support for the right of David Kitson to retain his funding from TASS

9. See Trewhela, 'A Can of Worms in Lusaka: The Imprisonment of Hubert Siphso Mbeje', SSA, No 9.
10. This might include the murder of Joe Gqabi, the ANC chief representative in Harare, in July 1981. He was one of the very few senior ANC leaders who sympathised with the demands of the troops in Angola for greater openness and accountability (Ketelo et al, p 38). He told a visitor a few weeks before his murder that he feared for his life from within the ANC (personal communication). Participants in the mutiny in Angola considered his murder to have been an 'inside job'.

## Letter

### ON THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1922

Comrade Editor

Your article 'The General Strike of 1922' in *Searchlight South Africa* No 11 argues that the strike by the white mine-workers was not basically an insurrection aimed to preserve white hegemony, and their privileged status on the Rand gold mines, but rather a revolutionary action of the working class, albeit white, against the capitalist system. Your article also claims that there was no precedent comparable in the English speaking working classes — which is probably true. Nevertheless, the attempt to re-interpret that historical event places you in an untenable situation in reconciling the evidence that you marshal — with your own feelings about the insurrection. However, my reading of the article leads me to argue the position that the evidence reveals the strike as profoundly racist and reactionary.

It is my contention that three underlying beliefs contribute to this error in interpretation: firstly an abiding desire to accord the white socialists their due place in the South African pantheon of revolutionaries; secondly a continuing adherence to the problematic of proletarian revolution as the only means of destroying the capitalist system; and thirdly, an overwhelming reliance on the views of Ivon Jones.

One cannot fault your opening discourse on the role of Smuts on the national and international scene — it is scholarly and appropriate. Ivon Jones is brought into the picture with the statement that the latter was 'instrumental in forming the first black trade union'. Jones took up the cause of the South African miners when he was in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it is difficult to deny his attitude to the black miners was extremely patronising — even taking into account the period in which he operated. It appears he was filled with a messianic desire to uplift a group that was incapable of helping themselves. His paternalism is evident, for example, in his view that 'natives as a rule are unwilling to go underground without the white miners'. This is confirmed further in his defence of the use of 'Baas/Boss' as being animated by 'respect for the white worker as his educator'. For someone who regarded himself as a Bolshevik such a view is quite indefensible — even in 1922. This leads one to the conclusion that Jones was white first and communist second — and your attempt to excuse Jones on the grounds that one must view the man in his time therefore is hard to justify. You do provide an excellent account of the black miners' boycott of the mine stores where they were being severely overcharged; you also faithfully describe inter-tribal antagonisms. Hence your conclusion that the boycott was a failure be-

cause only a 'few prices were lowered' misses the real issue: it is surely the lessons of co-operation and struggle which the oppressed learn in the process that are important. The fact that a boycott is seldom 100% successful surely is no criterion of failure.

The account of the events in the first months of 1919, which detail the widespread strikes, riots and pass burning are exemplary attention to detail. However, this would have benefited from a citing of the relevant evidence for the activities. Your discussion of how the white Board of control (dubbed the Soviet) 'had little sympathy for the black workers' and the 'Soviet' was even prepared to assist the authorities in quelling the anti-pass campaign underlines the fact that they regarded the issue as a white man's affair in which the blacks had to keep out.

You refer to the events of the 10th February, quoted from the Rand Daily Mail regarding the cohesion of the workers, and the call for solidarity by the SANNC, which you dismiss with the following words: 'This was one of the few occasions in which the congress leaders called for solidarity; otherwise they had little effect on the cause of events.' About 80,000 black workers were involved in this strike. The white Miners' Union 'did not strike (in support) and did not stay neutral'. In fact they were enjoined to 'uphold the maintenance of the colour bar . . . and deprecate any attempt to imperil it.' Moreover you point out that the black workers attempted to create a breach between the white workers and the mine bosses by an offer 'to work without the help of the whites, and guaranteed to double production' — an offer which was of course rejected. This clashes of course with Ivon Jones's belief that the blacks couldn't go down into the mines on their own! It is obvious why the white establishment refused to act on the black miners' offer: it would have had far-ranging consequences affecting the status quo in the country. The immediate background to the strike in Jones's account is sketched with notable precision — but is flawed by his report on communism in South Africa, which stated that the propaganda of the IWA (the communist General Workers Union) in 1918 and the rising cost of living played an important part in the strike movement among the 'natives'. This is hard to accept since there is no indication how this propaganda was transmitted or received and, more importantly, how they circumvented the police guarding the compounds.

Another point at issue is the attempt to characterise the strike as 'a revolt'. One could speculate what the consequences of the strike would have been had this 'revolt' been successful. In light of events post-1948, one can surmise that the victors would have ensured the continuance of the status quo vis a vis the blacks. There is no other feasible conclusion despite the fact that the CP through the 20s and 30s expressed the view 'that it was an outstanding example of the struggle between the workers and the ruling class, even though there were racist aspects which were deplorable.' What puzzles me though is the contention that the CP

changed their stance after the Second World War and declared the strike to be reactionary. In our verbal duels with ideologues of the Party we always held their support for the racist strike against them and this they doggedly defended. In researching this aspect (to bring some new knowledge to bear!), I looked at the writing of Alex La Guma, a CPSA stalwart to the end, as well as the work of Jack Simons. In 'Time of the Butcher Bird' La Guma refers to the Barends family who owned a grocery store in a mining town allegorically representing Fordsburg, where the white miners made their last stand. The reference is suffused in nostalgia as is evident in the following quotation 'The artillery of the government, the rifles, shotguns and sticks of the defeated miners had passed into history books, but the little shop had stood still.' La Guma also mentions Taffy Long, the leader of the Fordsburg commando, who got the death penalty. But it is the Simonses who speak with glowing pride in 'Class and Colour' of how Taffy went to his death 'singing the Red Flag'. Nevertheless, one cannot deny your assertion that the event was 'far more complex than a black or white account would suggest and merits a reinvestigation returning to the view of those who were involved at the time'.

In referring to the origins of the strike of 1922 a number of sources of the developing situation are quoted. We have an Ivon Jones quotation that is analytical and free from race prejudice. He cites the call of the white miners to the blacks 'to stay out of the struggle', which is mildly chided as being 'myopic'. We also have the mayor of Springs who berates Smuts for backing the Chamber of Mines 'to put the white standard in the background and the black standard in the foreground.' All this seems to me to be further evidence that undermines your contention about the nature of the strike and underscores the dilemma presented in your attempt to try to justify the anti-black aspect of the strike. This is evident in your presentation of the aims of the commandos 'to defend white society . . . against the magnates and not the state' and your citing of the fact that the leader writer of *The International* also supported the commandos 'even if they did make mistakes' (your comment). There was also reference to the Red Flag as 'a real contribution to working class weapons', plus 'there is no precedent in the English speaking working classes'. One can but question the historical objectivity implicit in the comments. To those on the scene like Smuts, there was never any doubt about the situation on the mines and his support of the magnates. His declaration was unambiguous: there could be no abrogation of the colour bar. A lower standard of living for the white would be preferable.

You also refer to the fact that Dr Abdurahman had no difficulty in condemning the racism of the 1922 strike and that the white workers had no intention of breaking with the status quo. Abdurahman's views contrast significantly with that of Clements Kadalie of the ICU who made a confused and reactionary call on the blacks to be loyal to the govern-

ment, the king and country. The attempt on your part to excuse or at least to minimise the racist aspects of the strike leads inexorably to the following comment: 'With white miners earning seven to ten times more than blacks, their replacement by blacks would increase the mines profitability considerably'. One could ask on the reasoning implicit in the above, whether you would also have excused the white Australia policy, which was also a policy 'in opposition to the attempt by capital to undercut wages.'

You refer to the editorial of *The International* of 27th January 1922, which is so riddled with racist formulations which oblige you to conclude that it 'came close to endorsing the worst aspects of white supremacy'. Surely, far from 'coming close' it seems to have endorsed those views to the hilt. You concur with Jones's outlook when he adds 'Their legal privileges are an anachronism, yet no communist can withhold support of their resistance to the capitalist offensive.' Could one ask whether that includes black communists as well? I also refer to Jones's further comments about the blacks as 'a constant menace (*sic*) to them'.

It is refreshing therefore to move from Jones's mealie-mouthed populism to the views of the Defence Committee who make no bones what the strike is all about. They speak of: a sound instinct to preserve the purity of the white race . . . and an instinctive perception . . . that the European worker who accepts equality with the negro tends to become in the end . . . a negro ceasing to live up to the standards of the great white race. 'There is an attempt by the DC to justify this racist view by raising the far-fetched fear that the abhorrent compound system might be extended to the whites! You also approve Frank Glass' view 'that the white workers were too backward, their trade unions too weak, and the Party's forces too insignificant to make a revolution — and part of the reason lay in the racism of the white workers which disqualified them from becoming the leaders of a united working class' — surely, the *sine qua non* of a socialist revolution! (In a footnote Glass illustrated his acceptance of the difficulties that beset white socialists in the South African context).

Finally one has to deal with the notorious photograph that appeared in a capitalist journal showing the slogan '**Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa**'. Jones comments that 'till the fifth week of the strike this token did not betoken race enmity'. How ever could he justify that? Furthermore, the presence of blacks in the vicinity of the picture is actually interpreted as support for the strike, is another difficult proposition to accept. But the hardest of all, his view that the workers 'atoned many times over in blood and tears, and indeed heroism . . . for the anti-native outrages committed in their name'. This is elegiac but tragic as their suffering was it cannot be logically argued that one thing cancelled out the other. What can be said is that 1922 serves to highlight the fact the white workers' conceptual framework,

although 'progressive' in terms of their own rights, had been shaped indubitably by the white supremacist hegemony.

In conclusion, one has to stress the fact that the article has only two incontestable points, namely that: (a) the uprising was brutally crushed by the state and (b) it was directed against the Chamber of Mines, which represented the interests of Capital. Nevertheless, it is my view that these facts do not obscure nor outweigh the explicitly racist nature of the uprising. Moreover, the regrettable loss of blood did not alter the basic nature of the strike, which essentially upheld the maintenance of white supremacy in South Africa.

Fraternally yours

Joe Rassool

### The Editor's reply

Dear Joe,

Your letter probably represents the opinions of several readers and lies at the heart of many debates on attitudes to events in South Africa. The question is whether the struggles of the white workers and their leaders are to be considered as part of the struggles that socialists can support, or whether they were so racist that they are just beyond the pale. Indeed, was it correct to condemn the hanging of three miners, and shooting many others, or did they get their just deserts? After all Clements Kadalie wanted to see them hang and Abduhraman condemned them roundly.

But first things first. We seem to have a basic disagreement on the role of the working class. I cannot agree with your contention that socialist are wrong in seeing the 'proletarian revolution as the only means of destroying the capitalist system'. It is this that distinguishes my point of view, and that of this journal, from many others. It has been our understanding that if the working class does not act to remove capitalism there is no possibility of socialism emerging. The workers alone, in alliance with the peasants where there is still a large rural population, have it in their power to transform society. I know of no other social class that can perform this task and, if they do not take their place at the head of a revolutionary movement, society must ultimately stagnate or revert to chaos or barbarism. In saying this I do not wish to imply that the workers, as revolutionaries, have themselves been transformed into people who have a complete understanding of social issues. They have until now suffered from prejudices that they have absorbed from the society in which they live — and have even shaped some of the worst features of the country in which they live. After the strikes of 1913 and 1914 Jones (and I think your description of him is unwarranted)

believed in the role of the proletariat as the motor-force of socialism. In this I think he was correct.

The question you may then ask is: which proletariat? We will never know how far Ivon Jones was able to shed his racist prejudices or whether he came over completely to the view which he stated when on trial in 1919, that the future Lenin of South Africa would be a black man – the highest compliment he could pay. He was also unique in calling on the Comintern to convene a Conference of Negro Toilers in 1921. (But that was not in the article, it appears in the biography of Jones). But, as I tried to show, he was a man of his time: he never entered a location or a Reserve and he probably never conducted a serious discussion with an African. There were no black communists before he left South Africa and the nearest the International Socialist League got to the black workers was to form the Industrial Workers of Africa – and Jones was too ill to participate in its practical work. Yes, Jones never quite shed his racism – and my quotations showed this quite clearly. I make no excuse for the many silly things that Jones said: I only place them alongside some of his more perceptive statements.

Nonetheless, as you say, the statements of the time are redolent of racism. The effects of colonialism, with the racism it spawned will live with us long after capitalism is finally removed. It stems from the overbearing arrogance of a people who lorded it over the people they enslaved and conquered. Racial discrimination also arose from the competitiveness introduced at the workplace by capitalists (and the government), in which the drive to keep wages down led to a divide-and-rule situation in which the white workers were faced by the real threat of lowering standards or unemployment. The socialists called for a closing of ranks and co-operation but workers, short-sighted (if you don't like the word myopic), were not often convinced. Instead they resorted to the grossest racial stereotyping and open antagonism. While rejecting all racist attacks, verbal or physical, it is still essential that socialists continue to speak to the workers and mobilize them for the real task ahead: the onslaught on the capitalist system.

Such an approach leads to ambivalence on all our part. We condemn the racism – as in fact the communist strike leaders did in 1922 – while urging the workers to turn their wrath on the real enemies. Percy Fisher, a communist strike leader intervened to stop racial attacks, and the CPSA issued a leaflet, which I reprinted, urging the white workers to turn their wrath on the real enemy; the Chamber of Mines. The leaflet, written in 1922 would have been written in different language in a later era, but it is otherwise to the point and not incorrect.

At the same time the writer in the *International*, probably WH Andrews, was muddled and mixed his enthusiasms with racist nonsense. I did not approve such statements in my article, nor did I suggest that Jones had the same attitude. However, both Andrews and Jones recog-

nised that in raising commandos the workers had found a new method of fighting capitalism. Thirty years later commandos were transformed into guerilla armies and, in many circumstances, these were welcomed by socialists. But in South Africa the commando first appeared in the Anglo-Boer war and by employing the same name the workers' fighting force carried forward the philosophy of a people that had opposed British imperialism while embodying a racism that was among the worst in the world.

Before I leave this point I must repeat my contention that the communists changed their perspective on the 1922 strike after 1950. I cannot believe that you would want me to accept counter-evidence from a short story written by La Guma. However, the Simons are a different matter. Of course they lamented the hanging of Taffy Long — he was a victim of the Smuts regime — but if you read the Simons' book again you will find that they consider the general strike to have been unsupportable. It is still my contention that they are wrong.

I belong to the school that believed that the strike was anti-capitalist and reading the evidence again, and considering Jones's writings, strengthened my position. I did not, as you suggest, 'place overwhelming reliance' on Jones's views. I had found in my researches that Jones threw light on many matters that had been obscure. These matters are discussed at great length in *The Delegate for Africa* and could not be included in a journal article. There was other evidence that became available from writers at a later date, and also from Sam Barlin's report to the Comintern Congress in 1921 which show that the IWA and the ISL were involved in the African mine workers strike in 1920. I never said that the ISL called the strike or even led it. This was the work of sections of the black workers and to them must go the credit. We do not know if they could have carried on without outside assistance and on this it seems evident to me from the reports made at the IWA meetings (and not from Jones's pan) that this group had played a significant part in the events of 1918-20. The ISL, in their journal, denied involvement. In the atmosphere of the time, when the government was actively considering anti-Communist legislation, that is understandable if regrettable.

When eventually the strike of 1922 did take place the most insightful comments came from the pen of Jones. He saw that the strike was aimed at the very centre of world capitalism by being aimed at the gold mines. In this Jones was far ahead of his contemporary's in realising that gold provided the backing of most currencies. If the Rand had fallen to socialists in 1922, and if that fall had not been met with massive armed force, the relation of forces in the world would have altered. The workers could not be allowed to win the battle of the Rand and Smuts was aware of the danger. This too I discussed in the chapters I wrote on the Rand in *Delegate for Africa*. There I also noted that Smuts had first contemplated using an aeroplane to bomb the Africans in the strikes of

1918-20. In the event he used this weapon in 1922 and Jones noted its significance when most socialists were silent.

I must, in all fairness, end this reply. But there are two lesser points that I must take up. Jones and the ISL were full of praise for the solidarity and organisation shown in the boycott of the mine concession stores. That was not the point. Socialists have always claimed that the workers' main struggle must be directed against capitalism at the point of production. However well the boycott weapon was employed (and a consumer's boycott in particular), this could not affect the basic class relations in the country.

The other point refers to the presence of Africans at the rallies called by the strikers in 1922. Like you I do not know why Africans went to the meetings. However it does show several things. Firstly that there could not have been a lynch spirit because the Africans were obviously not afraid. There was no fighting at the rally and the Africans arrived and departed unharmed — and they must have known that they were safe. Secondly, they did stand under that awful slogan and that seems to indicate that they were unconcerned. Thirdly, and this is the most contentious point, to which you have referred: was there an understanding at the time, to which some blacks concurred, that if the Chamber of Mines did remove the white miners, standards of pay would be forced down uniformly until only starvation wages were paid across the board? That appears to have been the understanding of (or misunderstanding of) the latter part of that slogan 'For a White South Africa'. It is an abomination if read literally but, if it was a call for livable wages, it makes more sense in unravelling the philosophy of the strikers in their clashes with the Mine owners.

And as a final point. When the white workers were engaged in struggle with the major prop of capitalism and when Smuts brought in the aeroplanes to bomb them into submission, socialists who had their reservations, could do no otherwise than support the strikers. Frank Glass who saw the situation most clearly and saw that the white workers were not a force capable of changing society, supported them against the mineowners and the government, It was left to the black leaders of the time to call on the government, the government that had smashed the black workers struggle, to suppress the white workers. There is no excuse for their position and I could not commend Dr Abduhraman for continuing to support, not only the government but also the King and the Empire. His daughter called the doctor a reactionary: with this I heartily concur.

## Book Review

### YOUTH IN CRISIS

Gill Straker (1992), *Faces in the Revolution: The Psychological Effects of Violence on Township Youth in South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town.

The building of a new society in South Africa must depend on the ability of the country's youth to provide the energy to remould the social structure of the country. Research in the 1930s showed that the problems was immense. Youth roamed the streets, apparently directionless, begging or involved in criminal activities. They existed on the edges of society until arrested – if they had lived that long. Once removed their places were filled by new recruits from the festering slums that were called townships. So it went on, like a merry-go-round, generations of destitute youth replacing those that went before.

The struggles against apartheid, in the 1970s and 1980s, which shook the fabric of every township, spawned new layers of street-wise youth. Some took part in the struggles, adopting names that were lifted from B-grade films, others turned to petty crime in the townships or in the streets of the cities. These misfits, with no place in their own communities were, and are, illiterate and unemployable. In urgent need of assistance they live in a society that provides no special schooling, no counselling and no therapists. It is doubtful whether there are any reliable statistics, and little research, to guide the few social workers in confronting the many difficulties faced by the youth. What is known depends largely on anecdotal information.

A glance at information provided by the annual *Surveys of Race Relations* in Johannesburg serves to indicate the scope of the problem. In February 1990 the then Minister of Planning said that there were 2,055 'street children' in the country. That is, children who roamed the streets, alone or in gangs, begging, scavenging, or thieving. He also said that there were no special government facilities or funds available for these children. His figure was rejected by Jill Swart, the National Chairperson of Street-Wise, a nationwide educational, vocational and child-care project for street children. She said that there were 1,200 street children in Soweto alone. In addition Professor Linda Richter at the Institute of Behavioural Studies at the University of South Africa estimated that there were 9,000 street children in South Africa.

In a detailed article in the *Journal of Comprehensive Health*, 1,1, of June 1990, Ms Swart said that these children, who were physically and sexually abused (some were recruited as young as seven for sex) were carriers of venereal diseases. They used intoxicants such as glue, petrol, benzine and thinners. Those who roamed the streets of Hillbrow (at that

time a suburb of Johannesburg that was mainly white) were greeted with hostility. When interviewed, 12 per cent of the local inhabitants called for their compulsory sterilisation or 'annihilation'; 30 per cent said that they should be removed from society, placed in a state penitentiary or distant reformatories. Shopkeepers kept sjamboks (rhino skin whips), tear-gas and boiling water to drive them away.

Reviewing the available statistics for children in detention the *Survey* stated that in South Africa there were 11 'places of safety' for African children in 1990 with accommodation for 1,400 children. 709 were held in February 1990. Seven institutions held children in terms of the Child Care Act of 1983, and the remaining institutions held 204 youths in terms of the Criminal Procedures Act of 1977. Eight places of safety which could accommodate 700 Coloured children held 506 children in February; 2 places of safety for Indian children with 140 places held 102 children; 7 places of safety for White children with 491 places held 392.

It is against this scenario that I read Gill Straker's account of her encounters with youth caught up in the revolt of 1984-86. Let me say at the outset that I was most impressed. It is a book that is wonderfully well written and presented and carries the stamp of authority with its references to contemporary literature and its appendix on methodology. It is an important contribution to the problems of a society torn in conflict, and particularly those traumatic experiences that impinge on a youth caught in violent upheavals. Above all, this book concentrates on human beings, their reasons for becoming involved with their peer groups in the struggles during the years of revolt and the effects of that struggle on their lives. It is a book that deals with a universal problem that has surfaced in Africa (it is possible to cite Somalia, Sudan and Liberia), in Europe (particularly former Yugoslavia) and across the world.

As Straker points out the effects on those *passively* suffering violence has been well documented in works on post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the effects on the psyche of those *actively* participating in violence has been less well studied. Straker's work, which concentrates on the latter aspect of violence, widens our understanding of victims of self-induced trauma and will undoubtedly be placed on the list of required reading for all counsellors, psychiatrists, mediators and politicians who have to deal with such matters.

I do not claim any expertise in psychology or psychiatry, but from generalised reading knows how topical the matter of PTSD is, in the work done by specialist paediatricians and psychiatrists. I had some doubts over some of the psychological models used by Prof Straker, but perhaps this work will revive debate on the validity, for example, of Freud's interpretations. However, whatever my doubts, the references to Freud (among others) did not distract from the overall scope of the study. This

work extends the literature on the topic in looking to the therapies that will assist youth active in struggles that involved arson, mutilation and death by 'necklacing', during a fight for justice in a repressive society. Furthermore it is a story of youth, many of them severely disadvantaged by the poverty, broken families, alcoholism and endemic crime of the black townships.

Prof Straker, while distancing herself from the methods used by the youth in the struggle, makes it quite clear from a moral standpoint that her sympathies lay with those who aimed at removing the apartheid system. She did not make contact with the (black) vigilantes who were used to attack the youth groups and, consequently, offers no estimate of the harm done to their personalities as a result of the violence in which they were involved.

The author was not complacent about the nature of the work in which she was involved. She saw that the counselling team, white and middle-class, were out of touch with township politics. 'Living in peaceful suburbia, the idea of a civil war taking place fifteen kilometres from where we lived had not fully penetrated our consciousness' (p 94).

The work discussed in this book was centred on one set of youth from Leandra in the eastern Transvaal. This focus strengthened the work of the counsellors by allowing them to consider individual case studies. Those in the group, interviewed in 1986, during or just after the events in which they were involved, were followed up three years later. Consequently, it was possible to sort out resource persons: leaders, followers (including, 'heroes in search of a script', 'conduits', and 'conformists'), casualties and anti-social persons, each illustrated by carefully drawn case studies, constructed from material taken from a number of persons who fitted a given category, in this way protecting the anonymity of those interviewed. It emerged, as could be expected, that family backgrounds, and especially maternal and/or paternal attitudes or fostering (for positive or negative reasons), introduced some of the youth to the battle grounds, and support from the elders (in the family and the community) allowed the youth to meet adversity with greater confidence.

Exposure to strife, says Straker, is emotionally stressful to youth: it is a tribute to the human spirit that so many youth have the resilience to face that adversity. Optimistically, she says that one out of two will be reintegrated into a more normal society. Just as equally, one out of two are going to face personality problems — some of them severe. Consequently there is a discussion of 'psychological vulnerability' to illustrate the many effects of the violence in which the youth were involved. In this the burdens of the problems are highlighted. Straker pinpoints the actors who, apparently the most vulnerable, have learnt to live with complexity. With their pain and discomfort they become the true survivors — because of their humaneness and compassion. Taking this further,

she states that it is those who feel guilt who had the greatest possibility of integration into civilian life in the future.

I have dealt with only some of the points made in this study. I conclude by saying that the study of the Leandra youth can only assist them in finding some normality in their lives. Furthermore this investigation should provide a base for those attending to the tens of thousands outside Leandra who were not the subjects of these studies. It is my belief that other therapists, whether they place the stress on treating the trauma or on considering the youth as freedom fighters, will return again and again to this work. This, if there were nothing else, would provide the basis for praising the book.

Having put the book down I was led to consider the resources available to the government of South Africa if, and when, it decides to confront the issues of a lawless and asocial youth. The stress will have to be placed on therapists, social workers and educationalists. The cost of such a programme will be vast and it is hard to see how this can be undertaken when the resources put into educating the new generation of youth will be so taxing.

This is not the place to outline methods of education that lie outside formal school buildings. Yet, if such methods are not established immediately the social problems that must follow will place an impossible burden on any government in the future.

Baruch Hirson

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## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NON-EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT: — AN INSIDER'S VIEW

Baruch Hirson

### *Where is the Non-European Unity Movement?*

The Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) was launched in 1943, split in two by 1957 and went into terminal decline shortly thereafter. Inactive, if not dead in South Africa during the 1960s and beyond, both sections seem to have been revived in the late 1980s, but have played little part in the political activity of the more recent period.

It might seem extravagant to cover more than thirty pages in this issue of *Searchlight South Africa* to write an account of a movement that seems to have disappeared as a political force. However, besides the fact that it is important to gather together the history of past struggles, there is a more pressing reason for discussing the history of the NEUM. Many of the leaders who were present at the birth of this movement and steered it through its period of activity, were drawn from the pre-war Trotskyist groupings. They tried to conceal their Marxist background, used a nationalist rhetoric and in the process became nationalist leaders. The concealment of their socialist philosophy left them with a false ideology that dominated the work they undertook, undermined their original vision and led them into unnecessary splits. That is now history but the flirtation by socialists with the nationalist movement has never ceased. There were stalinists and socialists of various hues in the ANC (and its ancillary movements) before it was banned in 1960 and socialists in the exile movement. More recently the Inqaba group of Congress Militants and, of course, the Communist Party and the trade union movement Cosatu, have been active participants in the ANC. In every case it has been nationalist ideology which has governed their activity.

Unless socialists can cut themselves adrift from the Nationalist movements and advance their own socialist programme there can be no talk of pressing for socialist objectives. This was something that the leaders of the NEUM ignored in their day-to-day activities and, in so doing, they misled countless men and women who believed that they were working for socialist ends.

### *Recovering the History of the NEUM*

Whatever did happen to the organisation which once claimed to be the premier liberation movement in South Africa and programmatically in advance of all other organisations — in Africa, no less — asserted its right to provide the leadership in the coming struggle for liberation in

South Africa? They claimed that they had formulated the strategy and tactics that would lead to freedom and attracted talented men and women to its ranks. Included in the movement were the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA), the Cape Coloured Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA), the Cape African Voters Association (CAVA), and the Transkei Organised Bodies.

Its supporters abroad, at one stage, included such celebrated personalities as George Padmore and CLR James, two of the most prominent black politicians in the west, and most Trotskyist group in the US and Europe. Its publications, included news-letters, journals, pamphlets and books.<sup>1</sup> There is no shortage of information on the origins and progress of the NEUM but there is only one incomplete history and few memoirs from its members.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Problem of Origin*

In tracing the origins of any nation-wide organisation there are obvious problems. The delegates who gather to launch a movement do not come with empty agendas. They represent groups with their own presuppositions and programmes and their own conceptions of what should or could be done. Each has its own set of demands, its own constituency and its own social background.

In the case of the Non-European Unity Movement, the name provides one clue to its early history: it was a body which aimed to unite, on a federal basis, members of the three main 'ethnic groups' — Africans, Coloureds and Indians — irrespective of religions, castes, or 'tribes',<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, it was said, white groups would also join to help in the formation of one large federated movement. The unifying factors would be a programme of democratic demands and a method of struggle based on 'non-collaboration' and the use of the boycott.

The basis for the programme of the NEUM was conceived within the ranks of the Workers Party of South Africa (WPSA), a small group of Cape Town based Trotskyists<sup>4</sup> who stressed the centrality of the land question and the demand for the vote in their programme. In 1935, shortly after the WPSA came into existence, there was widespread agitation among the African people over the new 'Native Bills' (to be discussed below), which led to the convening of the All African Convention (AAC). Members of the WPSA saw in this the possibility of propagating their views in a larger constituency than they could otherwise have reached.

Because the credo of the WPSA is so crucial for explaining some of what follows, a brief account of its contents is essential. The WPSA was a Trotskyist organisation and many of the points in its programme were similar to that of other anti-Stalinist, socialist, groups. It attacked international finance capitalism, warned of an impending imperialist war,

condemned fascism, and so on. In analysing South Africa the WPSA tried to break new ground, partly to condemn the Comintern instruction that the CPSA work for a 'Black Republic', a slogan that the WPSA found repugnant.

The WPSA programme commenced with an account of land possession in South Africa and pointed to the concentration of land holding in the hands of big capital. The vast majority of farmers, particularly African cultivators, owned little land. Consequently the programme writers concluded that the central question in the country was the land question, which was 'the alpha and omega', the axis around which the revolution in South Africa would revolve. They called on the white workers to support the black peasants in their demands if they were to have any stake in a transformed society, but gave little attention to the black workers, viewing them mainly as peasants who worked temporarily in the mines.

When the WPSA programme was first drafted in 1934 the great depression was lifting in South Africa and the new industrialism that followed — situated mainly in the Transvaal — had barely commenced. Many of the newly urbanised workers were fresh from the country and were not viewed as a potential base for socialism. Nor did the authors see any place in the coming struggle for the Coloured workers, despite their long history as artisans and workers in light industry. Long afterwards members of the WPSA — now leading leaders of the NEUM — looking exclusively to rural conditions, and continued to speak of the workers as if they were only peasants temporarily in the towns or the mines.

Even more erroneous was the continued description of the Africans in the Reserves as peasants even though they did not produce commodities for the market — and supplied manpower rather than food for the towns. It was only Trotsky's criticism of the WPSA's programme that led to their reexamination of the role of the workers in any future struggle, but this was a concession that was not reflected in their activities. The WPSA also accepted the criticism that their rejection of the Black Republic slogan had been a polemical exaggeration arising from their criticism of the Comintern. But this too did not lead to any changes: the Black Republic slogan was not used in WPSA propaganda nor is it certain that this slogan ever persuaded members of the WPSA to concentrate their work in the nationalist movement. Yet there were links between work in the WPSA and later activities in the AAC and NEUM.

A letter published in the *Spark* in 1938 on problems facing people on the land was to become the basis of policy pursued by members of the WPSA when they worked in the AAC. That is, members of the WPSA had decided that the next step in the reserves was the struggle against the government's plan for rehabilitating the denuded and impoverished Reserves.<sup>5</sup> There were also innumerable occasions in which members of

the WPSA, in presenting an address to a NEUM assembly, would first quote extensively from one of the WPSA's position papers (which they called 'theses') before turning to the subject under discussion without mentioning that they were quoting from party documents.

Yet crucially, the position the WPSA took, prior to the formation of the NEUM, was socialist — even if their socialism was open to criticism. At no stage did they try to construct a philosophy of nationalism, nor did they resort to crude racial stereotyping and they never claimed that the basic conflict was between white and black. They worked among blacks because they believed that it was from these communities that the forces for change would emerge. Also, unlike members of other movements, they put no faith in American black leaders. They rejected the ideas of the US black leaders, Booker T Washington, Marcus Garvey and du Bois and the west African Aggeri as being reformist or reactionary.<sup>6</sup> Nor did they espouse any of the ideas, then or later, that have come to be associated with black nationalism. They did not appeal to pan-Africanism, nor to a glorification of blackness; they did not discuss problems of language, or of common nationality, because these were not issues that were thought to bear on the future struggle.

Also, unlike members of the ANC, they did not pay tribute to any religious group or church. Indeed the book *The Role of the Missionary in Conquest*<sup>7</sup>, widely distributed in NEUM circles was, as its title suggests, an attack on the role of missionaries in South Africa as the progenitor of conquest and of mental shackling.

### *Agitation over Land and the Vote*

General Hertzog, Prime Minister of South Africa and leader of the Afrikaner based National Party, had since 1927 urged upon Parliament the need to complete the segregation of the country. He proposed to do this by legislation removing the limited franchise enjoyed by the Africans of the Cape Province, finalising the area of land that Africans could own (collectively), restricting the number of Africans who entered the urban areas and controlling their movements and, in addition, extending the Coloured people's franchise. The last measure was a crude attempt further to widen the gap between the expectations of the Coloured and African people but it was dropped following internal differences in the ruling National Party.

There was opposition to the Hertzog Bills from white liberals and from African groups when the plans were first made public, and again in 1929 when the Bills were placed before Parliament. On that occasion Hertzog failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament, sitting together, for the removal of entrenched clauses (that is, the vote) and the Bills were withdrawn.

However, in 1935, the fusion of the National Party and the opposing South African Party of General Smuts made it possible for General Hertzog to secure his two-thirds majority. Yet, despite opposition, reaction across the country was fractured. Some African leaders outside the Cape where there had never been the vote, or where it had been minuscule, were more concerned about the new land division than the loss of the restricted Cape vote. On the other hand there was much agitation among Africans in the eastern Cape who had the franchise — particularly as it depended on their right to individual land holdings.

The most active agitation against the removal of the African vote came from liberal whites, many of them associated with the Joint Councils of Natives and Europeans and the South African Institute of Race Relations and, through the Councils, with the more moderate Africans.<sup>8</sup> The liberal concern was many-faceted, ranging from those who wanted to retain the *status quo* to those who sought a widening of the Cape franchise and the addition of more land.

Because there was no effective African national organisation at the time it was suggested that Pixly ka I Seme, President of the ANC, together with Professor DDT Jabavu (of the University College of Fort Hare), should convene a conference of African leaders in Bloemfontein, to find means of stopping the implementation of the Hertzog Bills. When Seme withdrew, Jabavu took the initiative and summoned the assembly, known henceforth as the All African Convention, for December 1935.

Delegates arrived from across the country, some representing large groups, others coming as individuals, to deliberate on their response to the Hertzog Bills. They were probably divided on many issues but the official minutes, written and published by Jabavu, reflect only his views. Fortunately there are other accounts. For example the journal *Spark*, organ of the WPSA, describes acrimonious disputes. Jabavu and the leadership wanted a 'respectable' gathering, that would act in a 'responsible' manner and pass anodyne resolutions. The 'young Turks', drawn from the WPSA, the CPSA and others, wanted a more militant stance with the right to reject the Bills *in toto*. Eventually there was a compromise: it was agreed that a delegation should meet with Hertzog in Cape Town, voice the assembly's opposition and report back to a reconvened Convention.

Details of what happened when the delegation met with Hertzog were never fully disclosed but separate meetings of MPs of the eastern Cape secured acceptance of a compromise plan<sup>9</sup> providing for the election, on a separate roll, of three white 'Native Representatives' for the Cape Africans in Parliament and three Senators to represent the Africans of the remainder of the country. Africans would be elected and nominated onto a Native Representative Council and would be given the opportunity to discuss all projected laws affecting Africans.

Convention met again in 1936 and 1937 and once again the official minutes differ from the accounts given in *Spark* and also in the recently published diary of Ralph Bunche, the black American who spent three months in the country.<sup>10</sup> The editors of *Spark* of February 1936 said that the gathering of December 1935 was 'such a farce, with features so disgraceful, that we would prefer not to write about it at all . . .' But discuss it, they did, and they lambasted Jabavu and his clique for stage-managing the proceedings. The authors said they did not believe that conferences could solve any ills: 'We believe only in the class struggle, in the revolutionary struggle of the masses, and not in resolutions and speeches of so-called national leaders.' A crucial statement which was to be ignored by Tabata and his friends when they took control of the National movement.

Jabavu, a deeply conservative man, meant to steer the Convention along moderate lines but resorted to radical words. It was this that led to him using his presidential address at conference in June 1936 to attack the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. The radicals were furious. This, they said, was meant to conceal the betrayal in Cape Town. They wanted to know what had led to the compromise but the answer was evasive.

Tabata with Janub Gool (later his wife) and Goolam Gool were delegates at the earliest gatherings of the AAC. Significantly, in their report in *Spark* of August 1936 and contrary to later practices in the NEUM, they condemned the leadership for maintaining the AAC as a federal body. This would not allow the African people to speak with one voice, they said. What the WPSA had proposed in its preceding issue was:

a permanent and central body, with a permanent secretary, with branches in every locality, community, district. It must be from the masses, with the masses, for the masses.

Even more significantly, the journal condemned those who said: 'Let us first organise. . . Then, when we are fully organised, we can think of something to DO!! (*sic*)

Given the state of the Reserves at the time<sup>11</sup> and the extent of discontent, it was incumbent on a socialist movement to address this problem in earnest. Therefore, despite criticism by the WPSA of the men who convened the conferences and their declaration that the gatherings were farcical, they continued to stress the primacy of land possession in the struggle for socialism in South Africa.

Meanwhile, after years of inactivity, the ANC was formally revived in the Transvaal in 1937. There was no indication then that the organisation had any future. At first its activities consisted of little more than an annual conference attended by a small number of delegates. Its President, Rev Mehabane, was also an office holder of the nearly dormant AAC. However the revived ANC elected Dr Xuma as its President in 1938 and, although he was no militant and did not lead the organisation in any action, he recruited a number of intellectuals.

When the AAC was next convened in 1939, Dr Xuma, its vice president, resigned without offering any reason. The CPSA, having decided that the Convention would be ineffectual also withdrew its support. In the years to come their leaders were the most determined opponents of the AAC and used their influence to prevent unity with the ANC.

### *The Prelude to War: 1935-1939*

There were several factors that made the western Cape a centre of political activity in the second half of the 1930s. There had been the organisation of new trade unions among semi-skilled and unskilled Coloured workers and there was some anti-war activity by persons associated with the CPSA. Working mainly among the Coloured people the party focused on events in Europe and the threat of a world war.

There are few details of the involvement of the trade unions in the political agitation of the time. The one exception being the dock workers who were actively engaged in refusing to load Italian ships when Ethiopia was invaded in 1935/36. The war against Italy generated fury and excitement, most particularly when Ethiopian troops inflicted an initial defeat on the fascist armies. This died away when the Ethiopian army was overwhelmed and defeated. Partly as a reaction to the advance of fascism in Europe (and to a lesser degree in South Africa), there emerged organisation of two mainly Coloured movements, the National Liberation League (NLL) and the Non-European United Front with general democratic, anti-war and anti-fascist demands.

The leadership included several prominent communists and Goolam Gool of the WPSA, but the NLL collapsed in 1938 following large-scale demonstrations in Cape Town against threats to remove the Coloured vote from the common roll. There was an attempt to march on Parliament and the police used considerable force to stop the demonstrators. The leaders, mainly members of the CPSA, sped away in a car, leaving the marchers to take the full brunt of police brutality. Amid recriminations there was large scale resignation from the NLL. James La Guma, leading Communist, and Goolam Gool of the WPSA both left: the former condemning the whites on ethnic grounds, the latter describing the desertion in class terms. But despite the collapse of the NLL Coloureds were exuberant because the legislation was temporarily withdrawn. Some of those involved in the demonstration were to play a part in the movement that was formed in 1943.

### *South African Entry Into The War*

When war was declared in September 1939 in Europe the South African government was split. Leading members of the National Party urged neutrality but more right wing elements, including the main architects of

apartheid after 1948, declared their support for Germany. In a close vote in Parliament those who support the western Allies won and General Smuts became Prime Minister. Troops were recruited but for many months there were rumours about revolts by Afrikaners (many of whom pro-Nazi). There was also Communist agitation, against the war until German troops invaded the USSR, and then calls for African to be armed and used as soldiers in the 'fight for democracy'.

In a joint statement the committees of the ANC and the AAC, supported the war aims of the British Commonwealth of Nations, while urging upon the government that it grant Africans full citizenship rights and mobilize them for the full defence of the country.<sup>12</sup> There can be no doubt that Tabata, following the line of the WPSA, rejected this statement on the war but when addressing the AAC conference on 16 December 1941 he did not condemn the war but restated what (white) Native Representatives were reporting to the government: that all meetings called to discuss the war had flopped. Neither threats nor sweet promises could break the hostility. 'The masses did not wait for Convention to decide that is was not *their* war.'<sup>13</sup>

The AAC now consisted of little more than a few local committees in the Cape and Tabata used his address to attack those who had led the AAC to near extinction. The collapse was not the fault of Convention, he said, but of its leaders who had done nothing and achieved nothing.

Surveys show that throughout the country the African nationalist movement was dormant. Groups that existed and were active were confined to local areas, representing their members in the event of difficulties, providing what leadership was possible, but not linking up with a larger national body. Africans were by no means content: their scope for large scale activity was limited by the collapse or near-collapse of the older organisations like the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa (the ICU) and the ANC. Besides the newly burgeoning African trade unions, the struggles of the time appeared as sporadic riots, local agitation, local rural organisations, and so on.<sup>14</sup>

The NEUF, which had first opposed the war, and then switched policy when the USSR was invaded by Germany in 1941, faded into oblivion and, except for the trade unions and the Communist Party, there was little overt political activity inside the black communities. The AAC was inactive and did not seem to exist outside the western Cape committee.

Nonetheless, behind the scenes there was activity. In 1943 the Congress Youth League (CYL) was formed in the Transvaal and was formally launched the following year. Tabata, as will be seen below, must have been aware of this initiative, but he seems to have dismissed the CYL as having no political weight. Dr Xuma, conservative and opposed to innovations, might have felt the same way when he agreed to its formation – but few had noticed the cumulative effects of war on the local economy, leading to an enlarged work-force and massive inflation.

There was a wave of strikes by African workers and this created a mood in which radical thinking could find a niche, allowing the CYL to lead the demand for more militancy from within the ranks of the ANC.

### *Developments in the Cape*

On 26 August 1943 the National Executive Committee of the AAC issued 'A Call to Unity' urging all African groups to unite. Existing African bodies were urged to send delegates to a conference of the Convention. This time there was no attack on the old leaders of Convention, and the Native Representatives in Parliament and the Senate were attacked more in pain than in anger. This was a 'Call' to repair the damage caused by Tabata's attack in 1941.

When the Conference gathered it was proposed that the AAC join with similar organisations of Coloureds and Indians in a Non-European Unity Movement on the basis of a newly published 10-point democratic programme which demanded the vote and covered most of the democratic demands of the day. A Coloured federal organisation had already been planned by members of the WPSA in their campaign against a government plan to set up a Coloured Affairs Department (CAD), similar to the Native Affairs Department, to regulate the lives of the Coloured people and tighten the segregation laws.<sup>15</sup>

If it had not been for Kies it is conceivable that nothing would have been done to resist the government's designs, but it seems that he (together with other members of the WPSA) had more grandiose ideas. They conceived of a movement of Coloured people that would operate on the same lines as the AAC and, furthermore, that this new organisation would federate with the AAC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) in a broad Unity movement. It was a plan that was far ahead of its time but it seemed to its architects to be realisable.

A preliminary meeting, urged to accept a new federation with Africans and Indians 'to forward our national demands', ended indecisively with a call for a further meeting with other representatives.

In December 1943 a conference of Coloured organisations, including political bodies, sports clubs, community organisations, church groups and others, was convened. There were representatives from the Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA), the NEF, the APO (African Peoples' Organisation) and so on. As in the case of the AAC in 1935 it is not certain that any of the political groups were active. It is also uncertain what presence at the conference implied other than that some committee members arrived. Whether this presence was reported back to the rank and file members is uncertain because there were few occasions on which the groups met. The conference endorsed the democratic programme that the AAC adopted, agreed on the need for a federated movement of Non-Europeans and on strategies to combat the

Coloured Affairs Council (CAC). The new organisation was first named the Anti-CAC. Then, when a Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) was established by the government, confirming the worst fears of the new organisation, it changed its name to that of Anti-CAD.

Years later leaders of the AAC and the Anti-CAD both claimed the credit for launching the NEUM and, although that was a trivial issue, it was a sign of an inner tension that would eventually lead to a split in the movement. Meanwhile it could be claimed that the African and the Coloured people's organisations had been formed or revitalised and that they were united. Yet the unity of the blacks was far from complete. It is doubtful whether groups affiliated to the AAC and ever met together, except at the yearly conferences of the NEUM or an occasional local gathering. The one exception was a joint conference of the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA) and the TLSA.

### *Where Were The Indians?*

The drive for a unified black organisation still required the recruitment of the provincial Indian Congresses. From the outset the NEUM failed to win their allegiance despite early hopes that this could be achieved. This was related, in part, to the style of the Indian leadership, and also to the false hopes placed in new forces within the Indian community.

For some time the larger section, the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) was led by man who belonged mainly to the merchant class. Under constant threat of further restrictions, which would harm their businesses or property rights, the leaders responded by sending petitions or delegations to the government and avoided any signs of 'irresponsibility' or militancy. In this, the policy of the NIC was only marginally different to that of the ANC, the APO, and the AAC. But so complete was the control of Kajeer and Pather, the Indian leaders, that it seemed to be the most backward of all the movements.

A rank and file movement, impatience with the old leadership, emerged just before the war. They campaigned against the government's proposed restrictions on trading and other rights in the centre of Durban's old Indian centre. The campaign was aborted when war seemed imminent but it was the onset of war that led to changes, this time in the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Natal section

Dr Dadoo took up the cry against imperialist war and this was acclaimed, particularly by the Indian youth, who supported the campaigns of Gandhi and the Congress movement in India. He then called for the removal of the conservative leaders in the Transvaal and won a resounding victory. His next goal was for change in the Natal based SAIC. Needing assistance, he met the leaders of the NEUM and claimed that a reformed SAIC would affiliate to the NEUM. Consequently Tabata, Gool, Kies and others assisted in the campaign which led to the election of a

new more radical leadership in Natal. This was a victory that the Cape Town contingent relished. They had assisted in the removal of a timid and compromised leadership and were certain that they had won over the Indian Congress.

The SAIC never joined the NEUM. Precisely what led to the abrupt change was never disclosed. Leaders of the NEUM said privately that Dadoo's membership of the CPSA (which was always obvious) had acted as a barrier to affiliation. This was naive. The members of the WPSA knew that the CPSA had long since decided that they had little to gain from co-operation with the 'Trotskyist' leaders and this was the period in which the Comintern's international campaign against Trotsky's followers had reached its peak. Naive or not, the NEUM, which was supposed to rest on three (ethnic) pillars was left without any support from the Indian organisation. Stalinism had triumphed again and this gap was never filled.

There was one further absence from NEUM ranks. At an early stage the triumvirate (Tabata, Gool and Kies) had travelled to Johannesburg to win the affiliation of African trade unions to the federal body. If they had succeeded they could have claimed that they had working class support, although it is uncertain what they could have offered the trade unions in their struggle for legal recognition, higher wages, or better working conditions.

It was a crucial period for the unions which had just faced a toughening of anti-strike regulations, and new measures that made it more difficult for them to secure higher wages.<sup>16</sup> However, the only trade unionist who responded to the invitation from Tabata, *et al*, was Dan Koza of the African Commercial and Distributive Workers Union but although he gave his personal support to the AAC and the NEUM he did not enrol his union members. He attended one conference of the NEUM as a delegate of a small Trotskyist group, the Fourth International Organisation of South Africa (FIOSA) and reappeared in the annals of the AAC in December 1948 when he joined other leaders of the organisation in talks about unity with the ANC. At that stage he had already decided that there was nothing more that he could do inside a trade union movement that was about to be proscribed by the government.

Despite appeals to trade unions to join the NEUM, there were few discussions at NEUM conferences that focused on trade union problems. Those who spoke about trade unions at conferences seemed to know little about the problems and, significantly, the leaders of the AAC were not present at the important conferences of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions in 1944 or 1945, when Koza and his friends called for a national trade union body. Leading members of the ANC and the CPSA were there and played an important part in addressing the conferences, delivering messages, and drumming up support against a national body. It was left to individual members of trade unions (Koza

in particular) to urge the Council to ally itself with the AAC. Given the in-built ANC/CPSA majority this was always vetoed.

*The Programme and Strategy of the NEUM.*

The leaders of the NEUM, from the platform and in their paper the *Torch*, always claimed that their 10-point programme was the most advanced in Africa. This was absurd. The demands started with a claim to the vote and included a call for full and compulsory education, freedom of expression, the right to untrammelled trade union organisation and similar demands. These were not radical demands for a Nationalist movement — even if unattainable at the time. It certainly did not call for any radical social or economic transformation of the country and the attainment of the vote was meaningless inside a conservative parliamentary system.

Privately leaders of the NEUM claimed that the 10-point programme could only be made effective inside a socialist revolution, but such statements were always made discretely. The one 'concession' to socialist thinking was their attack on 'capitalist imperialism' (and with this they associated the Chamber of Mines). They also claimed that the USSR was a workers state and that the leaders of the USSR, despite problems in the way the state was controlled, was on the side of the oppressed people of the world. But no strategy followed from this and there were no public statements from the NEUM on the war in Europe or Asia. The one-time militant stance of the WPSA on the war was swept under the carpet and a discrete, if dishonest, silence was maintained.

Yet the 10-point programme which was spoken about with such reverence was not only potentially reformist but in its abbreviated and best known form its terms were vague or non-specific. Point 7 on the programme, which dealt with the land question stated: 'the redivision of the land in terms of the above [democratic demands].' It was only in the lesser known 'Explanatory Remarks' that it was stated:

Relations of serfdom at present existing must go, together with the *Land Acts*, together with the restrictions upon acquiring land. A revision of the land in conformity with the existing rural population, living on the land and working the land, is the first task of a democratic state and Parliament.<sup>17</sup>

The programme (in its expanded form) was probably more advanced than in any other programme — but avoided all the questions of how the new democratic state was to be brought into existence and, consequently, how the land would be redivided. But, in fact, that was not the crucial question that had to be posed at the time. If the movement was serious in its intent it had to send its organisers across the country to speak to those 'working the land' and provide tactics for opposing existing land legislation. Except for one corner of the eastern Cape this was never

done. Point 7 remained abstract and academic without organisational content. Not unnaturally this was eventually one of the points on which the NEUM split in 1958 – Tabata saying that land could be bought, Kies and others claiming that there could be no private property in land.

The leaders of the NEUM did not advance traditional working class methods of struggle, instead they adopted as their main slogan the call for non-collaboration. That is, they declared that no member or group attached to the organisation could support any government institution or accept membership of the government's 'dummy' bodies. More specifically, the NEUM rejected 'Native Representatives' in Parliament or the Senate, the Native Representative Council, the Coloured Advisory Council, township Advisory Boards, the (Transkei) Bunga or any other body established to advise on events in the Reserves. Any person who co-operated with the government (or its institutions) was a 'quisling' and should be personally boycotted.

This was an austere policy which only had limited success and was often ineffectual. The treasurer of the AAC, Dr (Chief) Moroka, stood for the Native Representative Council and, until that body dissolved itself in 1946, resisted all calls by the AAC assembly to resign his seat. Other members of Advisory Boards were members of the AAC, and remained such, despite appeals to them to resign. Yet persons who were not members of the NEUM were castigated and boycotted when they refused to accept NEUM policy. Members of the CPSA who claimed that they were using the electoral platform to make their demands for change and were elected (despite the 'boycott') to the Cape Provincial Council, or Parliament, were also condemned – for participating in elections and only secondarily as Stalinists.

The boycott was also used to cover the government sponsored pageant in 1952, when the NEUM condemned the 300th anniversary of the arrival on South African soil of the first white settlers under Jan van Riebeeck. Either because of the campaign to boycott the celebrations, or out of apathy, the Coloured people stayed away from the 'celebrations'. For years this was acclaimed as a great victory by members of the NEUM: the fact that at the same time there was a 'defiance campaign', organised by the ANC, which members of the NEUM also condemned and 'boycotted' is ignored. This left the AAC isolated in the rest of the country – but that is still in the future and will be discussed below.

The writings and speeches of the NEUM were redolent with a number of words or phrases that marked them indelibly. All those who were part of the ruling class were 'herrenvolk', there were 'collaborators' [and they were 'quislings', the only principled way forward was through 'non-collaboration'. Yet, again looking forward, when leaders of the CYL called for the boycott of schools to reverse the new Bantu-education, instituted by Dr Verwoerd, Tabata wrote a book condemning the new

blue-print for illiteracy, and also condemned the boycott.<sup>18</sup> The fact that his objection was valid, and that the boycott of schools was a disaster did not lead the members of the NEUM (or those who were most vocal) from calling at every turn for boycotts. It became a universal principle that had to be upheld, irrespective of the situation, or the occasion.

Although the initial leaders came from the WPSA there was no discussion of the social forces that could bring about change, even though the programme of the WPSA following Trotsky's criticism, had spoken of the role of the advanced workers in leading the peasants in their fight for land. In their writings these erstwhile Trotskyists never mentioned class divisions in any but the vaguest fashion. They did say that the leaders of the old SAIC had been 'merchants', and of course the ruling class was capitalist, but there were seemingly no class divisions among Africans. When Tabata wrote his book on the AAC in 1949<sup>19</sup>, he avoided any mention of class differentiation except to declare that after 'liberation', the workers would have the right to trade union organisation.

The NEUM had little to say about the struggles of workers or the innumerable strikes during the war years, most of them illegal. They were never able to advance the cause of the workers' organisation except in the broadest terms and they never commented on the bitter fights between the Progressive Trade Union bloc led by Dan Koza) and those who opposed them from within the ANC and the CPSA. Not a word about the worker's leading role in the struggle for liberation that had once been allocated to them in the writings of the WPSA. The one-time revolutionary socialists had adopted the role of populist nationalism using catchwords taken from socialist programmes.

There is little purpose in listing all the struggles that the NEUM ignored or condemned. There was no comment on the bus boycotts in the Transvaal, nor the many eruptions in townships over lodger's permits, victimisations, rentals, and so on. In the Cape, where the leadership was centred, the Anti-CAD agreed to co-operate with the local communists to resist the imposition of apartheid on the trains by courting imprisonment. Yet, when the day of action arrived members of the NEUM withdrew and refused to enter 'White's only' compartments. In a word, this National movement stood aloof from, and was unable to see the need for struggles on the ground. When challenged over this (privately) the contention was narrow and sectarian: it was not our task to enter into every struggle provoked by the ruling class. The aim, it was said, was to prepare a trained cadre that could challenge the state and bring the system down. How this was to be done if they never engaged in popular struggles was never explained.

What I have said does not negate the fact that non-collaboration and the boycott could be powerful weapons, and if used appropriately could be most effective in advancing some struggles. It was the failure to analyze each situation (as in the school boycott) and apply such tactics appropriately, that calls for criticism.

### *The Rural Population*

Before 1943 there were few Africans in the Workers Party and there were few contacts in the Reserves. This altered when the revived AAC won the support of the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA). Lines of organisation in the eastern Cape were now opened to the NEUM – despite the restriction that stopped all open political work by teachers. Tabata, who was a full time organiser (and undoubtedly paid by members of the WPSA), spent part of his time in the eastern Cape, visiting and speaking to students at the University College of Fort Hare, to teachers, and to organisations in the Reserves.

There are few details of Tabata's itinerary, or of his contacts. One story told by Godfrey Pitje, then a lecturer at Fort Hare, is of interest. Tabata met with some members of the CYL who were then students or lecturers at Fort Hare in the 1940s and he outlined the programme and tactics of the AAC. At the subsequent meeting Tabata was informed that those present had been impressed by what he had said but would not join the AAC. If however the members of the AAC joined the ANC and they worked together, they would ensure that Tabata was elected to a top office when they took control of that organisation. Tabata replied indignantly that the AAC was the 'mother body' and, as such, could not possibly join a subsidiary movement.<sup>20</sup>

The students involved were among those who subsequently supported the 1949 *Programme of Action*, voted Dr Xuma out of office, and effectively took control of the revamped ANC. What might have happened, assuming the veracity of this story, lies in the realm of speculation, and whether Tabata would have reverted to the path of revolutionary socialism if the AAC had entered the ANC must also remain an open question. But it would certainly have altered the subsequent history of black struggle in many respects.

Little is known of Tabata's contacts with peasants but he spoke privately of some he had approached. There it emerged that Tabata was actively agitating against the rehabilitation scheme, urging the policy of non-collaboration and stressing the need for organisation so that resistance could be extended. Tabata spoke of being arrested, described prison conditions and discussions he had when inside the prison yard.

Tabata's position, which he described in the AAC newsletter was the claim that the land was not overstocked, as asserted by government inspectors, but that the land was over-populated. He showed, time and again, that the plans for the future was the creation of camps in which the youth would be concentrated, prior to their being sent out as labourers.<sup>21</sup>

It is not certain what effect he had. The papers and journals that served the ANC and the CPSA never mentioned the problems facing the

people of the Reserves — nor would they quote from Tabata's many articles on the subject. Some peasant movements, including one which called itself the Kongo, did respond. Its leaders appeared at one AAC conference and spoke against the plans being implemented in Pondoland.

When news came of a 'revolt' in the Witzieshoek Reserve (inside the Orange Free State) in 1952, following protests against the compulsory culling of cattle and the erection of fences to keep land fallow, Tabata's main contention seemed incontrovertible: there was a need to organise against the Rehabilitation scheme and against the other regulation being introduced in the Reserves. The snag was that the NEUM had no contacts in the Reserves outside Pondoland. And even there, the loose structure of the NEUM did not lead to tight or consistent organisation.

Indeed, the NEUM never had a realistic plan for organisation, either in the Reserves or elsewhere. It was stated in 1957 that there were to be no centralised campaigns across the country. Instead there were to be regional committees of the NEUM, composed of representatives of all groups in the area affiliated to the central body. These committees would take decisions on local campaigns and organise them. It was the dream (or the nightmare) of people who did not have the slightest idea on how, or where, or when, to organise. Except for one or two districts (or towns) there were often no more than one or two groups connected with the NEUM. They had few resources and could do little more than call on their limited membership to campaign on a specific issue in a restricted region. Nor was it clear what the teacher's organisation was to do if it wished to mobilize its members over a large region. But even if that was sorted out, what was the purpose of a national body, federalised or centralised, if it was not to come to the support of its member groups, or prepare such groups for action?

Yet the 1957 plan was hailed as the master plan: diagrams were drawn to show how it was to work. The whole country would eventually be covered by these regional committees all ready to engage the government in battle. Provided, that is, that there were functioning regional committees. It was in the nature of the NEUM that once it laid down a 'plan' its superiority over all other plans was proclaimed. Although there was no campaigning there was little or no internal criticism, and those who found themselves in disagreement were soon excluded from the movement.

### *The National Extension of the NEUM*

In 1943 the NEUM consisted of groups in the western Cape, Kimberley and in the Reserves of the eastern Cape. One of the first groups outside the Cape to affiliate was the Workers International League (WIL) in Johannesburg, a small Trotskyist group whose main activities were

centred in the African trade unions and the townships. After some debate over the programmatic issue of attachment to a Nationalist movement – a subject that had taxed previous left-wing groups but of which the new League was unaware, the WIL applied for affiliation.<sup>22</sup> The debate at the time was determined pragmatically: affiliation to the NEUM was sought in order to reach a wider constituency.

But there was no wider constituency, nor were there campaigns in which to participate. Membership involved attendance, by two or three delegates, at the annual conference of the AAC in Bloemfontein, and then of the NEUM in Kimberley, the geographic shift made necessary by the hope that Indian delegates might arrive.<sup>23</sup>

The WIL collapsed in early 1946 and for over a year there was no further presence of the NEUM in the Transvaal. Then, in 1947 a small group, composed mainly of students, met at the University of the Witwatersrand. It attracted some prominent young intellectuals and was known as the Progressive Forum (PF). It functioned almost exclusively as a study group and its activities consisted mainly of selling the *Torch*. In 1952, after the Society of Young Africa (SOYA) was launched by the AAC, a group was formed from adherents of the Forum and branched out into the townships. Furthermore a number of young Indian graduates who were in the PF left Johannesburg for Durban. There they set up the first branch of the NEUM in Natal in the style of the Johannesburg group.

These new groups cut right across the organisational basis of the NEUM: they were not based on the so-called (ethnic) pillars on which the NEUM had prided itself. Nor could they form co-ordinating committees, but that was of little importance because, through the 1950s, there is no record of any significant campaign.

The year 1958 was one of splits and expulsions. SOYA had been wracked by internal wrangling and the leadership of the AAC, determined to control a now troublesome body, expelled the secretary for flouting discipline and supposedly using Marxist analysis in his pronouncements. He was the nephew of Cadoc Kobus (also a former member of the WPSA). Kobus was furious and this precipitated a wider split in the NEUM. At the annual AAC conference in December 1958 the NEF and SOYA were debarred and an Anti-CAD delegation walked out in sympathy. The split was now irreversible. Three years later, with the NEUM irreparably split Tabata launched APDUSA (the African Peoples Democratic Union of South Africa) to replace SOYA.

The Transvaal and Natal groups were involved in no political activity but were affected by the split. Prior to this they had stayed aloof from Congress, from the stay-at-homes and trade union activities. They even stayed aloof from the bus boycott of 1957 in Alexandra Township. This last event is still a mystery. The boycott committee was taken over by former members of the PF, together with an Africanist and the ANC, led

by Alfred Nzo (the current foreign minister) was effectively isolated. There is little doubt that township residents were firmly behind the committee and that they were prepared to fight on. Yet when members of the PF in Alexandra, who were participating in the boycott, were invited to join the committee they refused.<sup>24</sup>

### *The Banning of Marxists*

In 1950 the government passed legislation banning movements that followed the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. In a step that was condemned as cowardly the Central Committee of the CPSA met and, with only two dissentients, resolved to dissolve the party. It was claimed that the membership was known to the police and any other step would have led to the mass arrest of all members, whether open or secret. To protest against the imminent passing of the legislation the CPSA called on workers to strike on the 1st of May and, despite opposition from the ANC, received a fair response. The NEUM stayed aloof.

The Trotskyists never stirred. The WPSA had gone underground by 1939, had closed its journal and channelled its activities through the non-socialist NEUM. It is said that the WPSA finally ceased activities as an organised entity in 1953 but this is unconfirmed. FIOSA closed its doors in 1948 and although there are reports about disagreements with the International executive of the Fourth International (supposedly because it would not condemn the existence of the state of Israel) there are other accounts, none of them confirmed.

After the formal closing of FIOSA, the last open group that claimed to follow Trotsky, Hosea Jaffe, one of its senior leaders, found a niche for himself alongside Kies as a leader of the Anti-CAD and of the NEUM. Those that disagreed with the decision to dissolve FIOSA formed a series of discussion groups in Cape Town, usually with the same personnel, but under different names: The Forum Club, the Cape Debating Society, and so on. Although the groups were tiny and the influence of its members was limited there were pungent criticisms of the NEUM leadership. There were also new discussions of the history of South Africa (including a reappraisal by Kenneth Jordaan, of the meaning of van Riebeeck, in answer to the boycott of the government's celebrations) and new answers to the meaning of the colour bar in South Africa.<sup>25</sup> The latter appeared as criticisms of essays by Kies and W van Schoor (both leaders of the NEUM) on the origin of colour discrimination and although there were no replies to the papers of Jordaan and no debates in Cape Town, the impact of the essays was felt even in Communist Party ranks in Johannesburg.<sup>26</sup>

But even more important were the trenchant criticisms of NEUM tactics, on NEUM principles, and on NEUM failure to campaign on vital local issues. Dr Arthur Davids (formerly of FIOSA) was effective in his attack

on the federal structure, and on the description of the boycott weapon as a 'principle'; he was also critical of Tabata's potted history of the formation of the AAC but he did not offer an alternative history and seemed unaware of the criticisms that had appeared in *Spark* when the first AAC conferences were reported.

### *The Teacher Dominated Movement.*

One of the difficulties faced by the Anti-CAD and NEUM — and by the Forum Clubs — was the high percentage of teachers in its ranks. They were restricted by government regulations from participating in political movements and also faced by the possibility of discrimination from conservative headmasters. Obviously, the same problem was faced by the TLSA, the main source of recruits for the Anti-CAD.

Furthermore, teachers were more inclined to discuss and debate than to participate in open political activity. Those who were in the TLSA were remarkable in having taken a radical stance on the question of segregation (or apartheid), on the demand for the vote, and for their alliance with African teachers. All this was part of their armour, but they lacked offensive weapons. They were petty bourgeois and this was reflected in their inactivity and their ideological approach, whatever the radicalism of their words.

Not all the teachers were in the TLSA, but the influence they exerted on their pupils was vast — partly because of their devotion as teachers and partly because their students could respond to their words of defiance. Had they been able to go beyond talk they might have built a movement to challenge the government. However, from the beginning their position was ambivalent. Their task was to educate the youth and in this they were excellent. But the purpose of their teaching was to secure better results and provide the means for their students to integrate into a society that they wished to destroy. They never resolved this paradox.

### *Anti-imperialism.*

All colonial nationalists have used anti-imperialist slogans and this, seemingly, has put them in the anti-capitalist camp. In the light of early proclamations by Lenin and the Comintern such an orientation has led many such groups to a pro-Soviet stance and placed them, again seemingly, firmly on the side of the USSR and against the imperialist powers.

The unstable nature of that allegiance was demonstrated repeatedly when the Nationalist movements achieved their aims and became the bulwark of capitalism, both locally and internationally. This was demonstrated in Turkey, Persia, India, China and so on. The acid test had come in China in 1927 when Chiang Kai Shek turned on the com-

munists and organised workers and murdered them. Several Chinese Communist leaders, and Trotsky in the USSR, had warned of this danger in advance and declared that it was impermissible for revolutionaries to surrender their identity in the Nationalist movement. Such a policy did not exclude the possibility of working in co-operation with Nationalists on specific campaigns, nor an entry into the nationalist movement for a limited time for specified ends. However, at all times, socialists had to maintain the right to criticise the Nationalists and, if necessary, break with them and oppose their activities.

In South Africa this was repeatedly ignored by the CPSA (or SACP as it became after 1953), in early movements like the NLL and the NEUF, and then in the ethnic Congresses. Communist controlled papers became the mouthpieces of the Congress movement. And in turn, members of these movements, subjected to pro-Soviet views in Congress papers and also reacting against attacks on communism in the bourgeois press, adopted an anti-capitalist and pro-Soviet position. Any criticism of the USSR was rejected as bourgeois (or even fascist) in orientation. Members of the SACP encouraged that view.

The position of the NEUM was at once more complex and more simple. The socialists had actually formed a national movement and were organically tied to it, could not (and did not wish to) break free, could not criticise itself and, equally, never did, or could not, conduct a thoroughgoing nationalist campaign.

Although it was severely critical of the SACP's local politics, particularly in its demand that people accept the policy on non-collaboration and the boycott weapon, it changed tack when viewing events internationally. In line with its anti-imperialist orientation, it was anti-capitalist and pro-Soviet. Furthermore in its interpretation of Trotsky's slogan, 'For the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union' it was remarkably uncritical of what was happening in 'the Socialist Sixth of the World'. Similarly, FIOSA, which also accepted the slogan of 'unconditional defence' was almost equally vociferous in defending the USSR against world imperialism. During the Cold War the NEUM was pro-Soviet and a vigorous critic of the USA and its allies.

The acid test to attitudes on international events became evident in 1956 when the USSR sent its troops into Hungary on the pretext that American troops were preparing to invade the country. Although the SACP initially maintained an embarrassed silence in its front paper *New Age*, the *Torch* appeared with a defence of the Soviet action. It was also no accident that the *Torch* condemned Tito and repeated Stalin's strictures against his regime.

On one account there was an initial difference: unlike the communists the leaders of the NEUM did not support the Nationalist regimes of Asia or the new governments in west Africa. Tabata was scathing in the early 1950s in his (private) comments on Nkrumah and other

African leaders and he was sceptical about their abilities to maintain their regimes. This changed radically by 1958 as expressed by W Tsotsi in his Presidential address to the AAC conference — discussed below

Filled with slogans about imperialism, but little grasp of the class struggle or of the basic tenets of Marxism, the teachers mouthed the appropriate slogans and helped create a political culture that was superficial and self-serving. The nationalism of the NEUM was justified, the tactics and strategy were confirmed, and the members debated in classrooms and in their meetings in the NEF. Furthermore they claimed to be Trotskyists (although this was not for public consumption), thought of themselves as Marxists and as part of an international socialist movement. Many spoke of the need for a 'political' revolution in the USSR which would remove Stalinism and provide the leadership for the coming world revolution.

### *A Personal Intervention*

I had joined the NEUM as a member of the WIL, and again soon after the formation of the Progressive Forum. Because of my long association with the movement I confronted Tabata in Cape Town after the *Torch* supported the invasion of Hungary in 1956 and demanded an explanation. None was given and my disaffection was undoubtedly noted.

There were signs of dissatisfaction in SOYA in 1956 and the internal disputes got increasingly acrimonious. Sastri Mda, the secretary of SOYA was suspended, ostensibly because he employed Marxist terminology in his writing and this, it was claimed could get the AAC into grave difficulties under the terms of the Suppression of Communism Act (of 1950). In fact there was a rift inside the NEUM which was not generally known at the time. A wing of the movement under Tabata, embracing a large section of the AAC, had taken a more nationalist position and had adopted a two-stage position on change. First there would be a democratic revolution in which blacks would have equality inside a capitalist state: thereafter there would be a new struggle for socialism. A section of the AAC (including Cadoc Kobus, an early recruit to the WPSA and uncle to the suspended Sastri Mda) and most of the NEF and Anti-CAD, followed Kies and Jaffe who still spoke primarily about the need for the liberation movement to work for socialism. The split enveloped the movement in the Cape and had been taken up inside SOYA. However, although the PF had information about the wrangling in SOYA there was no discussion (at least openly) about the larger problems inside the NEUM. The issues in which I became involved were undoubtedly connected with the general malaise inside the organisation but took a different route.

In 1957, as a member of staff at the University of the Witwatersrand, I joined in the public protest against the proposed closing of the Univer-

sity to blacks. At a meeting of the PF I was condemned for daring to march with staff and students. Did I not know, said my accusers, that I was providing a radical cloak for the 'liberal' establishment? Had I considered the effects of such action? Did I not realise that other members of the PF had all stayed away? It was absurd and I did not return to the Forum. Shortly thereafter I wrote a long essay, under the pseudonym R Mettler, criticising Tabata's book *The Awakening of a People*. In it I took the author to task for failing to provide an economic analysis of the country he was describing, for not offering a class analysis of society and ignoring class divisions among the African people. I also criticised the method of organisation and the 'principle' of non-collaboration.<sup>27</sup>

The response from leaders of the NEUM to most criticisms was usually total silence but in 1958, faced by internal turmoil, it was felt expedient by the AAC to mount an attack.<sup>28</sup> In his presidential address, W Tsotsi — always a supporter of Tabata — used my Mettler article to attack the Kies-Jaffe position, even though there was little resemblance between them and myself. My analysis of South Africa in class terms was rejected by Tsotsi who declared, *inter alia*, that the African professional and business class had to be championed in its demand for a share inside a capitalist democracy.

Following his criticism of Mettler, Tsotsi placed the AAC squarely inside the nationalist camp by reversing Tabata's previous rejection of Nkrumah and his achievement of political independence. He said that he deplored the failure [by Marxists] to recognise that emergent African nationalism was a progressive political force, was genuinely anti-imperialist and anti-colonialism.

In 1957, in line with this reversal, Tabata had raised the agrarian question afresh. The existing policy is was inscribed in point 7 of the 10-point programme, one of the key issues on which the NEUM had always prided itself and which had led Tabata to his concentrated attacks on the rehabilitation (or betterment) scheme. Hitherto it had been assumed that when the programme was put into effect (after liberation) the redivided land would be held collectively. He now announced that land that was to be redivided could be sold as private property.

This shift, which added to the other points of disagreement, split the NEUM in two, was consistent with the embargo on the use of Marxist language and the reconsideration of national movements in west Africa. Nonetheless, alongside the newly enunciated policy, highlighted by Tsotsi's address in 1958, leaders of the AAC reverted at times to the socialist rhetoric of the 1930s.

Looking at the land question with some hindsight it is noteworthy that there were no new investigations of land possession or of population distribution in the rural areas. Nobody seems to have noted that the rural population was neither homogeneous in composition nor uniform in its demands. Yet information on demands was available. Those work-

ing on the white farms (or plantations) were divided between those that said the land had belonged to their forefathers before the settlers came and they wanted the land returned, others who were land labourers demanded better working conditions and higher wages. And on the Reserves the complaints extended from those who wanted more land to those who wanted an end to the new system of Bantu Authorities. In the light of such multiple demands the debate over the right to individual land plots covering a tiny proportion of rural farmers was an indication of the isolation of Tabata, *et al.*

### *The NEUM and the Congress Movement*

Among the campaigns that were condemned by the NEUM was the Defiance Campaign of 1952. In general the criticism was correct. It was absurd to demand that seven unjust laws be repealed when no organisation had the strength to secure that end. The NEUM, furthermore, refused to believe that the government would be forced to repeal any laws by men and women breaking the law in order to be imprisoned. Consequently the *Torch* carried articles describing the campaign as a sham. It was subsequently claimed that the police distributed copies of the paper to passive resisters in the prisons.

Despite subsequent claims the campaign was not successful. Of the 8,000 volunteers who went to prison — some being counted more than once if they defied on several occasions — the vast majority came from the eastern Cape. Except for a few centres outside the East London/Port Elizabeth region the campaign made little impact on local communities. The reason for the relative success in the eastern Cape is open to question but does raise questions about NEUM influence.<sup>29</sup> This was one region in which the AAC/NEUM had contacts but did not seem to influence events. Nor was there evidence that NEUM leaders were present, while the campaign was in progress or when it ended in a horrific riot.

From 1950 to 1958 the ANC called a number of stay-at-homes. Some received wide support, others were miserable failures. Each event needed discussion and some warranted support. Others had to be exposed as opportunistic and even contrary to the best interests of the African people. But generally there was a deadly silence in the NEUM press. The events were not mentioned or were summarily dismissed.<sup>30</sup>

By the mid-50s, or even before, the Forum groups in Cape Town disintegrated. They too fell apart because they never tried to go out to the people with campaigns of action. Arthur Davids and his friends, many of them former members of FIOSA, published a journal *The Citizen*, which was later to support the Liberal Party, condemned the communists (and presumably the Trotskyists) and allowed anti-semitic statements by one of their leading members to pass uncensored.

There were apparently many calls for change inside the NEUM at the time and this led to further divisions. Jaffe called for the end of any reference to racial groups, because it was incorrect to divide people on such grounds. Instead he called for a unitary movement without reference to ethnicity. This was contested by Kies and after a debate Jaffe lost the vote by a narrow margin.<sup>31</sup> The disputes all belong to the past and are of little interest in themselves. What they do illustrate is the failure of belief in the cause that once seemed so certain. In the social upset (inside the NEUM) small differences grew and split the movement irrevocably. To compound the confusion Jaffe left the country without seeking the permission of his colleagues. The ranks were thinning, the leaders were scattering and the NEUM had ceased to play any significant part in the western Cape. When eventually the schools' revolt of 1976-77 hit the Cape it seems that the NEUM was either ineffectual or isolated. Individual teachers might have offered their support, but the movement seems to have played no significant part. The influence of the one-time powerful teachers League was over.

#### *The Rural Revolts - 1958-60*

In the late 1950s there were several rural revolts in South Africa, starting in Zeerust, then in Sekhukuniland (both in the Northern Transvaal), followed by disturbances in Natal and finally a revolt in Pondoland.<sup>32</sup> The immediate causes differed in each Reserve: there was agitation against the issue of passes to women in Zeerust, resentment over the appointment of chiefs in Sekhukuniland, and protests against the dipping of cattle in Natal. It also seems that there were incipient revolts in other Reserves but these were either pre-empted by police action, or have still to be discovered by historians. Although there was no one immediate cause of the uprisings, it was fairly evident that discontent had been growing in these regions over government policy and most of the disaffection could be ascribed to the Bantu Authorities Act, which aimed ultimately to ensure that compliant chiefs would be in place to direct local residents towards full apartheid.

The presence of political groups in these Reserves was small or non-existent, although after the first clashes with the authorities (for example in Zeerust) the residents asked for the 'Congress lawyer', or for members of the ANC. There was no NEUM presence in the Reserves outside the Cape and there was no request for their representatives to intervene. However, these events did not seem to affect members. The fact that there was no NEUM involvement was a sign of the weakness of a movement that had spent so much of its energy urging exposure of government policy and organisation of people in the Reserves.

During this period resistance to Bantu authorities in Pondoland was growing and this was one place in which there was a NEUM presence,

and one area which Tabata knew well. How informed he was on events in this Reserve has never been disclosed yet it is inconceivable that he was ignorant of the growing anger. There is nothing in the NEUM press to indicate that a revolt was brewing and the first published information appeared many years later in the book *Armed Struggle*, written by Karim Essak, one of the founder members of the Johannesburg Progressive Forum.<sup>33</sup>

The book is generally uninformative and is a strange amalgam of eulogies to Kim il Sung (of North Korea) and varied accounts of the importance of guerilla war. In one brief chapter Essak refers to the people of Pondoland and gives an account of his meeting with members of The Hill, the organisation of Pondo peasants who rose in revolt against the Chiefs and the administration.

Essak says that the men told him that they were preparing for armed revolt and requested assistance from the NEUM. Essak claims that he informed them that a revolt could not possibly succeed and that they should think again. Obviously there would be no assistance from the NEUM. It is doubtful whether Essak would have taken the decision by himself but he provides no further information.

It appears from other sources that the delegation also met with the Congress lawyer, Rowley Arenstein, who was later to appear in court to defend the men, and through Arenstein they met Ronnie Kasrils and Anderson Khumani Ganyile.<sup>34</sup> That is, NEUM reluctance to assist led to Congress intervention — although the revolt had to fail and the NEUM was formally correct in warning that the peasants would be defeated. This was once again a classical example of political abstentionism that left the NEUM isolated, nursing theories that might or might not have been correct but with no constituency willing to accept the passivity that was advised.

The story of the revolt, the mobilization of superior armed forces to break the warriors and the co-operation between chiefs and the police has been told elsewhere. What is of particular interest in this account is the split in the ranks of the NEUM. Obviously there were members in Pondoland who could not accept the leadership's directives.

It is not known why the NEUM group in Pondoland rejected official policy and seem to have sided with those that revolted. The most plausible reason would be that local residents were better acquainted with the mood and they responded to the people's action more positively. The one account about this is deposited at the University of Nanterre.<sup>35</sup> A document, signed 'Anderson' which appears to be a fourth or fifth carbon copy was sent by the writer, possibly dispatched from outside South Africa, appealing for assistance for the peasants. Extracts are printed as an appendix to this article.<sup>36</sup>

The most important political events of 1960, outside the Pondo revolt, were those that followed the calling of the anti-pass campaign by the PAC. The call for the destruction of the passes was probably irresponsible and certainly ill considered. The response across the country was sparse and only at Sharpeville in the southern Transvaal and at Langa in Cape Town were gatherings of any size recorded. Inevitably the police shot at a defenceless crowd, killing or maiming a large number. This was followed by a march on Cape Town at which a young member of the PAC, Philip Kgosane, placed himself at the head. Soon after that the government banned the PAC, the ANC and associated groups, A new phase of South Africa's political life had opened up.

The response of the AAC and NEUM, when the campaign was announced, was immediate. In leaflets they condemned the PAC, its policies, and in particular the anti-pass campaign. Having done their duty they retired to the sidelines. There is no record of their participation in any of the events that followed. Phyllis Ntantala (Mrs Jordan), in her autobiography<sup>37</sup>, tells of hastening to the city centre of Cape Town in her car when she heard the news of the march. This leading member of the NEUM had one objective, to find her husband, Dr AC Jordan, and her son Pallo. She mentions no political objective and does not discuss AAC possible intervention. She was present as an anxious wife and mother. Whether other members of the NEUM did likewise is not known but there is no mention in any document of their preparing any activity.

The ANC was little better. It was in complete disarray, unprepared (despite statements to the contrary), and unable to cope with the events in Sharpeville and Langa. Only the call by Chief Luthuli, the ANC President, for the burning of all passes gained any support. Then, when the police rounded up leading political figures and placed them in detention there was complete paralysis. One attempt at calling a general strike<sup>38</sup> was effectively suppressed by members of the SACP and ANC who had escaped the police dragnet. It was this collapse of legal politics, more than anything else, that led to the campaign of sabotage. But that was still a year or two away. There was still the state of emergency to weather.

During the demonstrations by University students in Johannesburg, calling for the release of the detainees, the members of the NEUM in Johannesburg were never to be seen. Kenneth Jordaan and his friends produced a lengthy analysis of the events of 1960 and journeyed to Johannesburg to find friendly contacts in order to intervene. However he was isolated, and did not make contact with the small groups in existence. Then he returned to Cape Town and some time later was in contact with a group that had also emerged from the NEUM and was discussing the possibility of engaging in sabotage. That group, known as the Yu Chi Chin Club, led by Neville Alexander, produced a number of

discussion documents outlining their reasons for turning to such action.<sup>39</sup> The members of the group were known to the police, were arrested, and sent to Robben Island. Jordaan, who would have been called to provide evidence for the state escaped from South Africa and his contacts scattered.

But such activity was distant from the remains of the NEUM. At some time Tabata, Janub Gool, and leading members of CATA found it necessary to leave the country. There is a dearth of printed information on those that went into exile and claimed to be leading the movement from afar. Problems that they faced forced Tabata to adopt new positions. Confronted by the Organisation of African Unity's scepticism about his request for funds, Tabata was required to produce evidence of action in South Africa. It is not certain whether this led to an about turn in policy but it is claimed by disillusioned members that this led to the mobilization of some young cadres as a sabotage group. The action was poorly organised, the group was arrested and several were sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island. This, apparently, did secure funds for the exiled UMSA (Unity Movement of South Africa), as it now called itself.

But the period of exile was fallow. There are few instances in which anything was achieved, either by Tabata, or by Jaffe, or by others who tried to organise support for their cause abroad. Indeed, like all exile groups, and particularly groups that are not engaged in practical and active work, they wrangled, they disagreed, they split or they expelled each other. Those who were once widely known were forgotten by all but the few, and age and illness took its toll. Alongside a movement that is barely remembered, the men in exile (who are still alive) have little or no role in events today, and no place in the politics of tomorrow.

## APPENDIX

### THE UNITY MOVEMENT IN PONDOLAND

In 1961 a faint carbon copy of a statement from the Publicity Department of the Pondoland Anti-Bantustan Movement was received by the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International in Europe. It was signed by 'Anderson', who was apparently well known to the Secretariat, with an appeal for help and a request that the document be translated into French, obviously for distribution and publicity. It has not been possible to check the assertions made about AAC/NEUM involvement and we are sceptical about the claims made. Nonetheless we print a short summary in the hope that others might be able to supply further information about the events referred to.

Pondoland, as the writer said, is 16,000 square miles. At the time its population was two million Africans and two thousand whites.

The writer commenced with a lengthy account of the events, since the mid-1950s, which had angered the local population. Yet they were refused permission to meet, to organise or to demonstrate. It was, he said, not possible for more than ten persons to assemble without the magistrates permission.

The issues, said 'Anderson', included 1) The influx Control Act of 1956 which prevented free movement in and out of Pondoland. Over 300 young men, unable to seek work outside the region were forcibly removed to white-owned farms as labourers and subjected to whipping and torture. In 1957 an additional clause made it an offence for young men and women to resist transportation to farms as labourers.

2) In 1957 a Stock Limitation Act forced the compulsory disposal of stock in pursuance of the government's 'betterment scheme'. Shortly thereafter taxes were increased and levies imposed on the people, the proceeds of which went to Chiefs and sub-chiefs. 3) In 1958 the Self-Governing Act was passed — as the first step of the grand apartheid scheme. At the same time press correspondents were refused entry to Pondoland. 4) In December 1959 many young intellectuals, studying or working outside Pondoland were sent back home. Unable to voice their complaints openly they worked covertly, embarked on a house to house campaign and aimed at a mass revolutionary struggle. 'Anderson' said that there was no branch of the ANC in Pondoland and that members of the AAC and NEUM were prominent in the newly formed Pondoland Anti-Bantustan Movement. It was resolved that 'the revolutionary struggle would continue until Pondoland had direct representation in a South African Parliament with an African majority or seceded from South Africa.' It was also resolved that no person would pay taxes or levies.

On 6 June 1960 there was a march of 2,000 residents to Lusikisiki to present the peoples' demands to a government agent. The march was intercepted by police, with a helicopter cover and in the shooting 31 people were killed and 200 injured. The others ran into the adjacent forest and the revolt had begun.

In the ensuing struggle Chiefs were assassinated (or fled), the houses of known collaborators were burnt down as were many government administration offices. Bridges were blown up and telephone lines cut.

The government brought out the air force and apparently US ships were asked to guard the seas lest Chinese submarines brought in food and military supplies(!)

'Anderson' mentioned the names of prominent men who supported the revolt and concluded with the grim statistics of the unequal war. After 15 months of struggle 43 persons were dead, 500 were in prison with sentences up to 15 years, more than 600 still faced charges for murder, arson and incitement. 7,000 were detained in camps without charges being laid.

If the account is accurate many new questions need answers and the course of events need rewriting. However, if the account is false or inaccurate the veracity of NEUM accounts will be still further discounted.

## References

1. These included I B Tabata (1950), *The Awakening of a People: The All African Convention*; (1960), *Education for Barbarism*, and (1945) *The Rehabilitation Scheme: the New Fraud*; *Anti-CAD Bulletin*; *The Voice* (of the AAC); *The Torch*.
2. Lee, Franz John Tennyson (1971), *Der Einfluss des Marxismus auf die Nationalen Befreiungsbewegungen in Suidafrika, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Trotskismus und Stalinismus*, Frankfurt Among the very few memoirs there is a typescript by Joe Rassool. See also chapters in my autobiography, *Revolutions in My Life*, WitsUP, (1995).
3. I use the terminology current in the Unity Movement in the 1940s and 1950s. There were few if any objections at the time to describing communities in ethnic terms.
4. See *Searchlight South Africa*, No 10, or *Revolutionary History*, Vol 3, No 3, for a history of the early Trotskyist groups.
5. This letter was found in the files of the Workers Party. It is quoted more fully in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 10
6. The ideas of the US black leaders ranged from those who wished to find a place for Afro-Americans inside the US, to those who called for a 'return to Africa'. Agger was a West African who called for the co-option of blacks into the structure of colonial society.
7. Nosipho Majeka (Dora Taylor) (1952), *The Role of the Missionary in Conquest*. SOYA, Cape Town.
8. See my unpublished seminar paper (1979), 'Tuskegee, the Joint Councils, and the All African Convention', *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Vol 10, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London.
9. This is apparent from a letter by AB Payne, MP, to A Makiwane, 20 February 1966. Originally in Rheinallt Jones papers, Box 100.
10. See the diary, edited by Robert Edgar (ed), *An African American in South Africa: The Travel Notes of Ralph J Bunche, 28 September 1937-1 January 1938*, Ohio University Press, 1992.
11. This had been described in Government Blue Books and was well known in the country.
12. T Karis and G Carter *From Protest to Challenge, A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, Vol 2, p 339.
13. *Ibid*, p 142.
14. The development of the trade unions and the nature of war time struggles are described in B Hirson (1989), *Yours For the Union*, Zed, but that work only offers a glimpse into a much wider picture of local disaffection and reaction.
15. R Hoedermaker, General Secretary of the National Council of Coloured Welfare Organisations, who wrote occasionally in the *Cape Standard*, called a meeting in August 1942 to discuss the implications of the new proposal. He urged that a federated council of Coloured organisations be formed to oppose the proposed CAD. His letter of invitation and the minutes of the meeting are on the microfilm of the Hoover Institute Microfilm Africa 484 DT779ST26, (Rhodes House), Reel 13. SG Maurice and Ben Kies was among the few who attended that meeting as representatives of the New Era Fellowship (NEF), a cultural club established in 1937 and attended mainly by Coloured teachers and students.
16. This is discussed in *Yours for the Union*.
17. Karis and Carter, Vol 2, p 357.
18. IB Tabata (1960), *Education for Barbarism*, Pall Mall.
19. IB Tabata (1950), *The Awakening of a People: The All African Convention*, People's Press, Johannesburg. [This press was set up by myself to publish the book].
20. I was told of this incident by Godfrey Pitje, when he talked about his indecision over joining the PAC and, reflecting back on the origins of Africanism, mentioned Tabata's appearance at Fort Hare. I had no reason to query the veracity of his account.
21. See the AAC newsletter, *The Voice* and his pamphlet, *The Rehabilitation Scheme: The New Fraud*. Tabata's exposures of plans for the Reserves were unique. He seemed to be alone as a propagandist opposed to government plans for the rural population.

22. South African documents outlining earlier arguments against working in the nationalist movement were only found in the late 1980s. See *Searchlight South Africa*, No 10.
23. Because the passage into the Orange Free State was sealed to all Indians (except under exceptional circumstances) the NEUM met in the nearby town of Kimberley, which was in the Cape.
24. See Dan Mokonyane (1979), *Lessons of Azikwelwa*, Nakong Ya Rena, London, for an account by the man who assumed control of the boycott committee.
25. K Jordaan, 'Jan van Riebeeck: His Place in South African History' in *Discussion* (1,5), June 1952.
26. A Johannesburg discussion club was started by members of the Communist Party, but open to members of other groups. Some of the talks were printed in the club's journal
27. R Mettler (B Hirson), 'It is Time to Awake', Johannesburg, 1957.
28. Reprinted in T Karis and G Gerhart (1977), *From Protest to Challenge*, Vol 3, Hoover Institute, p 493
29. See my analysis in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 1.
30. I wrote three documents from inside Congress under the title 'Analysis' (2 issues), and one as 'Lekhotla la Basabetsi'. I also wrote a general survey during the state of emergency in 1960 and subsequently reprinted in 1961 in the British journal *International Socialism*. Produced as a publication of the Socialist League of Africa it was entitled 'Ten Years of the Stay at Home'. A follow-up article 'Once Again on the Stay at Home' appeared in the same journal a few months later.
31. Thanks to Joe Rassool for this information.
32. See Charles Hooper (1960), *Brief Authority*, Collins, Peter Delius, 'Sebatagoma: Migrant Organization, the ANC and the Sekhukuneland Revolt', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, (15,4) Oct 1989; John Copelyn (1977), 'The Mpondo Revolt of 1960-61' unpublished BA(Hons) dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, and James Fairbairn (Jack Halpern), 'Zeerust: A Profile of Resistance' *Africa South*, Apr-Jun 1958. See also Appendix to this article.
33. Karim Essak, *The Armed Struggle*, Dar-es-Salaam.
34. See Jack Halpern, *South Africa's Hostages*, Penguin.
35. Documents of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International housed at the Modern Documentation Centre, University of Nanterre.
36. Anderson was the name used by an Australian Trotskyist who spent some time in South Africa. This might be a coincidence but has not been confirmed.
37. Phyllis Ntantala (1992), *A Life's Mosaic*, David Philip, Cape Town, pp 171-73
38. Details of this event (in which I was involved) can be found in B Hirson (1995), *Revolutions in My Life*,
39. There is a full set of documents of the Yu Chi Chin club at the Modern Documentation Centre in the University at Nanterre.
40. Julie Frederikse (ed) (1990), *The Unbroken Thread, Non-Racialism in South Africa*, Ravan, pp 39-40
41. See for example my article on Kenny Jordaan in *Searchlight South Africa*, No 2

**INDEX**  
**SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA: Vol 3 (Nos 9-12)**

The numbers in brackets below refer to issue number and page.

**Fine, Robert**

Civil Society Theory and the Politics of Transition in South Africa, (9,19).

**Haysom, Lou**

Olive Schreiner and the Women's Vote, (11,30).

**Hirson, Baruch**

Ruth Schechter: Friend of Olive Schreiner, (9,47).

Nationalisation: A Matter of Slogans? (9,79).

The Talks that Descend Into Hell, (10,2).

The Trotskyists of South Africa, 1932-48, (10,53).

Review Article: South Africa Dissected? (10,117).

The Little Lies of 'Comrade Bill', (11,53).

The General Strike of 1922, (11,64).

Searchlight South Africa: The End of a Series, (12,1).

The Election of a Government, (12,6).

South Africa - The State of a Nation, (12,16).

Youth in Crisis, (12,60).

A Short History of the Non-European Unity Movement: An Insider's View, (12,64).

**Editorials**

Death in Boipatong, (9,1).

Restating our Policy, (9,9).

Chris Hani: Murder Most Horrible, (10,1).

A Note to Our Readers, (11,1).

The Negotiations in the Middle East and South Africa, (11,3).

Apartheid Laws & Regulations, (12,14).

**Mngqibisa, Olfie Samuel**

Sexual Abuse of Young Women in the ANC Camps, (11,11).

**Rassool, Y S (Joe)**

Quo Vadis the Unity Movement?, (10,34)

On the General Strike of 1922, (12,52).

**Shange, Vusi**

With the PAC in Exile, (10, 31).

**Trewhela, Paul**

The Mistrial of Winnie Mandela: A Problem of Justice, (9,32).

A Can of Worms: The Imprisonment of Hubert Siphon Mbeje, (9,72).

Beneath the Boulder (Review), (9,89).

The ANC Prison Camps: An Audit of Three Years, 1990-93, (10,8).

A Massacre of Innocence: The March at Bisho, (10,39).

Mrs Mandela, 'Enemy Agents!' . . . and the ANC Women's League, (11,17).

Women and Swapo: Institutionalized Rape in Swapo's Prisons, (11,23).

The Dilemma of Albie Sachs: ANC Constitutionalism and the Death of Thami Zulu, (11,34).

State Espionage and the ANC London Office, (12,42).

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