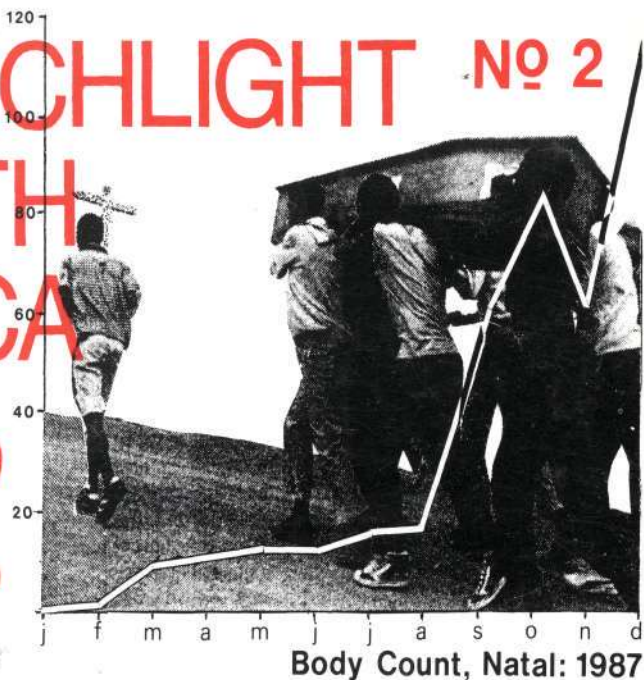


SEARCHLIGHT No 2

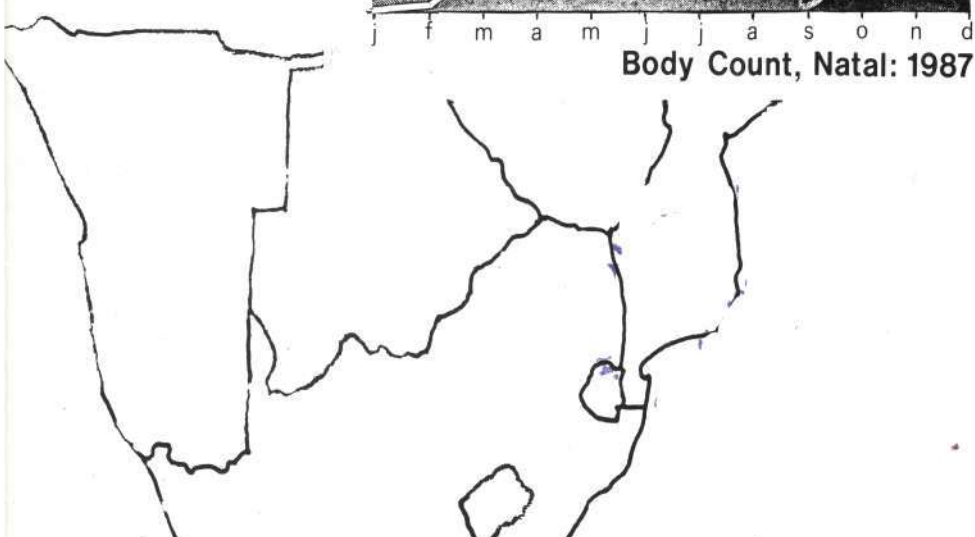
SOUTH AFRICA

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Body Count, Natal: 1987



SEARCHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA

FEBRUARY 1989, No. 2

Searchlight South Africa is an independent Socialist journal focussed on Southern Africa, but mindful of the broader world context. *Searchlight South Africa* will offer analyses from a critical Marxist standpoint, and will open its pages to debate on the central issues affecting the country. There will be place for articles on political economy, politics, and history, and for literary criticism and book reviews.

The editors have differing views on events inside South Africa, and this needs no apology. There is need for debate, and for informed discussion on the many problems that face South Africa. But whatever our differences we are agreed that the struggle in South Africa is for socialism, and that the working class will form the vanguard in the movement to transform the country. The struggle is against capital, and in leading the forces that must replace the existing system by a socialist democracy, the working class will remove the oppressive regime, colour discrimination and class exploitation. We believe that our role in this struggle is not to dictate, nor to lay down the rules by which the struggle must be pursued. Rather, we see ourselves as engaged in a dialogue with those working for change, and to this end we will carry surveys and offer analyses that deepen an understanding of the forces at work in the country. We will discuss socialist theory, and show that events in South Africa are part of the wider struggle against capital, all ultimately aimed at building an international socialist commonwealth.

The problems that have to be faced in reaching an understanding of the role of the working class face are legion. We have to confront the issues of nationalism, of religion, of racial domination and ethnic parochialism, and provide meaningful answers: we also have to remove all traces of stalinism from the struggle, since this poison makes a mockery of all that the revolution aspires to.

We have a central view of positions we wish to defend, but only honest debate will allow us to understand events as they unfold. For this we will offer not only articles on contemporary issues, but also on problems inside the history of struggle in South Africa, together with reprints of socialist writings that appeared in earlier publications. We need to regain our past, recognize the difficulties faced by earlier socialist thinkers, and understand their contributions in terms of the situation in which they found themselves. Only by absorbing the lessons they had to learn will we find the means to deepen our own understanding of the issues faced by socialists in South Africa today.

CONTENTS

Editorial	The 'Post-Apartheid' Society	1
-----------	-------------------------------------	---

ARTICLES

Brian Oswin	NewsView: South Africa	7
Baruch Hirson	A Question of Class: The Writings of Kenneth A. Jordaan	21
Paul Trewhela	Golden Dreams: The Sanctions Campaign	36

HISTORY

Baruch Hirson	<i>Spark</i> and the 'Red Nun'	65
---------------	---------------------------------------	----

ARCHIVE

	Selections from <i>Spark</i>	79
--	-------------------------------------	----

DOCUMENT

	Zephaniah Mothopeng: A personal account	87
--	--	----

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Notes to Contributors:

Articles and reviews (accompanied by Apple [any format] or IBM ASCII files on disc if possible), should be submitted to the editors, typed or printed out, in one-and-a-half, or double spacing. The editors will adopt a flexible policy on the length of submitted articles: ideally they should be between 3,000 and 6,000 words, but longer pieces will be considered. Short articles (other than letters) will only be accepted if they are of exceptional interest. We will accept pseudonyms but, unless there is an obvious security risk, would like to know the author's identity.

If substantial alterations would improve the article or review, the editors will communicate with the author before proceeding with publication. The editors reserve the right to alter grammar, spelling, punctuation, or obvious errors in the text.

Where possible references should be included in the text (as in this issue), with all essential sources listed at the end of the article — giving author, title, publisher, and date.

So far as possible, publication dates will be adhered to, and early submissions will ensure early inclusion. Letters commenting on recent articles in *Searchlight South Africa*, or relating to current events in South Africa, will be printed as soon as possible. These contributions should not exceed 1,000 words. Reviews of books will be by invitation and must be ready for the following issue of the journal.

EDITORIAL

The 'Post-Apartheid' Society

Through our postbox has come a multitude of articles, some in journals, others in typescript, about the 'post-apartheid' society in South Africa. We read this literature with some scepticism and have been forced to ask ourselves whether this outpouring has any meaning, and if so, whether we are out of step with reality. Have we really reached the stage where it is possible to talk about the annulment, the renunciation or the overthrow of the apartheid system?

If this is indeed the case, then there is a case for this flurry of papers, discussions, seminars and conferences — although we would still need to know what events might lead to this change in the near future. Is Mr Botha about to resign? Because indeed he must go if the country is about to change its basic structure. And what about all the extreme right wing white parties. Surely they too must go. There can be no place in a post-apartheid society for the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), the Conservative Party, and the host of small right wing groups that clamour for the intensification of apartheid regulations. Come to think of it, there is no place in that society for the present armed forces, or for the State Security Council, or the Joint Management Centres (as discussed by Brian Oswin in this issue). Presumably they too will all disappear in a puff of smoke in the very near future.

The writers of those learned papers must inform us on these questions. In our search for change in South Africa we believe that the construction of a new society must depend on the way in which the country rids itself of apartheid. If the whites were prepared to hand over power to an assembly elected by the population, and accept a position in a democratic society, we could only cry *Hosanna*. After all those years of oppression and discrimination, a new society has come in to being, and all by the stroke of a pen. But is this really so? Are the rulers of that country about to sign away their control of state power?

Before we leave that point we would still have to ask a few more questions. These need an answer from our post-apartheiders.

Firstly: Will the mining corporations, the banks, and big business still have a place in the post-apartheid society?

Secondly: Will the land still remain in the hands of agri-business and white farmers?

Thirdly: Will the wealth of the country remain in the hands of a small

minority, and if not, how will the population share in the new prosperity?

The answer to these questions, and to many more that need to be answered, must depend on the way in which apartheid is ended. But on this there is hardly a word. If the transition is not peaceful — and this is not a matter that most of these writers discuss — then how is the new state to be ushered in, and by whom? Unless this question is answered all the writings in the world cannot take us one step further.

The problem is that the government does not intend resigning; the AWB and the far right have their own ambitions, and these do not include disappearance; Anglo American, the banks, big business and agri-business do not contemplate capitulating; and the army and police are entrenched, and have no intention of handing over power to their enemies.

The talk of the post-apartheid society, the learned papers and conferences on the subject, reflects the dreams of politicians and academics who saw victory in the uprising of 1984–86 and who failed to recognize the reality of defeat at the hand of the government. There was a time in 1985/6 when the thought of victory went to the head of many scribes. Those were the days when people seemed to believe that victory would come with the ‘comrades’ and their tyres and matches (the notorious ‘necklaces’), or would follow instructions from afar to make the townships ungovernable. The illusion arose from exaggerated beliefs that the trade union movement could paralyse part or all of the country’s economy. In sum, it emerged from impressionistic belief that the government tottered on the brink of defeat. No thought was given to the armed forces — who were about to snuff out militants in the townships; to the vigilantes who were about to wipe out opposition forces in squatter camps, townships and the ‘Homelands’; or the resurgent right wing parties among the whites.

We know that we will be told that ‘power lies ultimately in the hands of the people’ and that ‘a battle might have been lost, but the struggle continues’. Ultimately we too hold by those slogans, but in so doing we have to take account of the banning of thirty political organizations, of the detention and imprisonment of militants, of the muzzling of writers and speakers and the cat-and-mouse game played with the lives of imprisoned political leaders, many of whom have remained behind bars for over a quarter century. The latest move in which Nelson Mandela has been placed in solitary confinement in a prison house represents a worsening of his position — and certainly not the anticipated release that was so confidently expected.

No amount of equivocation can escape the fact that there has been a defeat. This demands that responsible political thinkers find new answers to

the conditions that exist and cease their fanciful scribblings about a society that is still far from achievement.

By way of light relief, but not without sorrow, we turn to one of the zanier publications that has emerged on the post-apartheid society. Leon Louw and Frances Kendall, a man and wife team, have produced a best-seller that has apparently gripped the imagination of some South Africans. Their book, *South Africa: The Solution* (Amagi, Ciskei, 1986/7) claims a sale in South Africa of over 25,000 copies, and has also been translated into several languages. We would not have spent many hours on this work, and would not have mentioned it here if it had not been for the enthusiastic introduction by Winnie Mandela. She commends the work,

as an extraordinary and long overdue challenge to South Africa to come to terms with the tragic apartheid blunder of a century ... They offer South Africa what they need most — a broad alternative we have been looking for ... In the ensuing impasse, Frances and Leon's vision is an excellent historical alternative all freedom lovers embrace ... Here lies hope for a shattered nation ... Here lie some of the efforts of the African National Congress.

If this does represent the 'hope' of the nation, and the efforts of the ANC, the people face a grim future. Louw and Kendall (on first name terms to Ms Mandela) propose a canton system, based on the 306 magisterial districts in SA, all autonomous, linked by a strictly limited central government which 'entrenches equality at law for every individual' but without the subjugation of minorities or individuals (p.129). The Homelands and national states could decide whether they wish to join the canton system or become independent. Most of them form sensible units as they are (p.134). We will not detain our readers over this absurd text, but the flavour needs to be indicated. On p.113 they say 'A free society has a free economy, governed by market forces. It is characterized by individual planning, entrepreneurial activity, competition and spontaneity. There is rapid wealth creation, and living standards are high. In an unfree society, the economy is centrally planned and people with the ability and resources are compelled by the state to provide the needs of others'.

This kind of thinking, which outstrips anything that Hayek has written, is remarkable in its call for a canton system only in its resemblance to the 650 mini-Joint Management Centres that the government proposes establishing in South Africa (see the description of the JMCs in this issue). The solution that this pair offers is obviously different from the literature on the post-apartheid state discussed by those who consider themselves socialists. To us the latter would say: 'Do we not want an end to apartheid?' However,

that is not the question which must be addressed. Yes! Apartheid must go, but to achieve that there must be an analysis of the power of the state and of the class forces involved in the struggle. This does not follow from some strange idea that we hold — but from the need to understand the strength and resources of those opposed to change in the country, and an examination of the class forces that are available to effect a change.

To make our point quite clear. We believe that the struggle in South Africa is not for a reformed capitalist society: that would not provide a solution for the vast majority of the population. What is required is a programme that will lead to the working class taking power in South Africa and building a socialist society. The immediate question is not the nature of the post-apartheid society, but how the existing society can be changed. It is to this programme of action that the people of South Africa must turn.

Again we hear the impatient accuse us: 'Do you not wish to know what that "liberated" society will look like?' And we repeat. In the first instance, that society will be shaped not 'after liberation', but by the way the society is liberated. If there is some miserable compromise in which talks (secret or otherwise) lead to some blacks joining the administration of a so-called post-apartheid society, then whoever such blacks might be, the struggle will not have ended, even though the nature of the enemy might have changed somewhat in colour. It is to protect against any back-room deal, by the ANC or any other organization, that we called in our first issue for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly (or National Convention). Not a mass meeting or Freedom Rally, in the shape of an updated Kliptown gathering (and a fresh 'Freedom Charter'), but an *elected body responsible to its electors and presenting their demands*. We do not believe that 'freedom' will be won that way, but it is our only protection against a sell-out.

Yes, we do have ideas of what we would like to see replacing the present regime. We demand an end to all racism and all segregation (in the towns and on the land); we want workers control of production in collaboration with consumers and distributors; we want a socialist democracy that will act against all bureaucratic perversions, and root out any signs of Stalinism; we want trade unions to protect the rights of workers against any 'party bosses' and the state itself; we want the right of expression for any group that fears the loss of its liberties. Above all else, we want a workers' state that will forge links with the proletariat of other lands and build an international socialist commonwealth — because our perspective is global and not parochial. These are big 'wants', but this is the only way in which liberation can be won in South Africa. All other talk about building freedom is little more than cant — unless it can be shown that alternative measures can secure not only political freedom, but also economic equity and social equality (for men and women; for black and white; for old and young; and

for every creed).

In our first editorial we pointed to some of these requirements. Among the criticisms that have come back to us was our failure to call for a revolutionary proletarian party. That omission was not accidental. We do believe that there is a need for such a party if socialism is to be established (although we probably differ with some of our critics on the way in which such a party would function — particularly in the light of the degeneration of many small sects into miniature Stalinist bodies). However, a call for such a party now, if successful in South Africa, would only lead to the formation of another splinter group and further confusion among the working class. The paucity of Marxist thought in and out of South Africa and the stagnation in the international working class movement suggest that our most responsible path is to deepen Marxist understanding, and by this means encourage groups of revolutionaries to band together, so that the nucleus of such a party can be shaped. We want a party informed by the ideas of Marxism, but we cannot force the pace, and our object is to engage in a dialogue with men and women who see the need for forming such an organization. We certainly have no intention of dictating policy, and no intention of building a party that has no support among the workers of South Africa. At some stage the party must be built, and it will have to learn how to function in a police state and avoid being wiped out. The era of amateurism must end if a revolutionary movement is to be organized, and is to survive. We know of no short cut for the building of a cadre. Our contribution for the present must be the analysis of the problems of socialism and socialist struggle, both internationally and in Southern Africa.

We continue in this issue to present accounts and documents from the history of socialism in Southern Africa. This includes the story of Clare Goodlatte, together with articles from *Spark*, the journal she edited in 1935–39. This is not only the story of the political evolution of a remarkable woman, but it also provides one of the first accounts of the left opposition in the Cape province. While collecting material for this issue we heard of the death of Kenneth Jordaan in Harare, a friend and comrade of the 1950s. In writing an appreciation of his work we realized that his work constituted a summation of the work started in the 1930s: not as the 'last word' in socialist theory, but as a decided step forward in our understanding of South African problems. From Ivon Jones and S.P. Bunting to Frank Glass, and from Goodlatte and the groups inside the Lenin Club through to the writings of Jordaan, there was a development of ideas that must be retrieved in order to take the next step forward.

We believe that the contributions of Goodlatte and Jordaan are unknown to most students of South African affairs, and we print these as a contribution to the preparation for a revolutionary socialist party. In saying this we

wish to appeal to our readers. Our essays are as accurate as we can ensure. However, if errors are spotted we would welcome communication so that corrections can be made. Two errors were brought to our notice in the Glass essay, relating to his publishing activities in China, and one incorrect title noted in the bibliography. We are grateful for this information.

In our effort to provide analyses of contemporary events we print articles on events inside South Africa today (something which readers have asked for), and also a long article on gold and the call for the extension of sanctions against South Africa today. It is the contention of Paul Trehwela that the commodity gold is still the universal equivalent as understood by Marx. He argues that sanctions cannot work without the boycott of gold — but that it is precisely such a boycott that is unrealistic. Most proponents of sanctions, do not discuss the nature of gold, South Africa's chief export, as money incarnate, while some Marxists claim that the role of gold in this period of late capitalism has been downgraded. That is, they argue that the world monetary system does not necessarily depend on reserves of gold for its continued functioning. As Trehwela says, such critics need to argue their case theoretically, and we will open our pages to readers who wish to contribute articles on this topic.

We end, as we did last time, regretting that as yet we carry no articles by persons outside our small circle. *Searchlight South Africa* has only been distributed recently, and it is probably too soon to expect other contributors. We hope this will change, before readers tire of us! One document, written by Zeph Mothopeng, president of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), was sent to us by a reader and is printed in this issue. We do not agree with many of its sentiments, and do not believe it adds to our analysis of South Africa, but it is an account by a leading political figure who suffered at the hands of the government and its agents, and needs to be known. No other organization (including the PAC) and no other journal seemed prepared to print it. We would willingly consider other documents if submitted, and hope that readers will send us items with this in mind.

NEWSVIEW: SOUTH AFRICA

Brian Oswin

BODY COUNT, NATAL

Nationalism and the Reign of Terror

Over 600 Africans were killed in the Pietermaritzburg district in the Natal midlands between September 1987 and October 1988, and the carnage continues with weekly, if not daily, reports of more deaths. These murders were (and are) perpetrated, not by police and not by whites, but by blacks on blacks. By any standards, the death of so many people (and this excludes those assaulted, maimed, wounded, and burnt out of home) is exceedingly high.

In Natal the carnage was initiated by vigilante groups associated with the Zulu nationalist movement *Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe*. But not all deaths were at their hands: groups of youth claiming affiliation to the United Democratic Front (UDF) retaliated, and some of the casualties fell to them. Nonetheless, all available evidence points to members of Inkatha as the initiators of violence, and behind them have stood members of the (white) police force and the *kitskonstabels* (black auxiliary 'instant' police) providing arms and support.

The violence perpetrated by Inkatha did not start in 1987, but extends back to its reconstruction in 1975 on the initiative of Chief Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi (and the blessing of the ANC). However, before tracing its particular path of mayhem, that movement (and its opponents) must be viewed against the screen of total South African terror. Any country in which the hangman sent 1,330 persons to their death between 1978–88, and 164 in 1987 alone, is a land in which violence is endemic. Statistics, extracted from the events of a country, tend to sanitize the violence that is omni-present in South Africa, but they do provide an overview of what occurred. In the year June 1984–June 1985 the *Race Relations Survey* (1986) quoted the Commissioner of Police as saying that there had been reports of 8,959 murders, 123,100 serious assaults, and 16,085 rapes (p.854). Most were criminal deeds, reflecting a society in which life is held cheaply. According to the same source, the police shot and killed 624 adults and wounded 1071, and killed 92 juveniles and wounded 387 in 1986. Furthermore, in that year there were 1,298 deaths due to political violence. Half died following inter-black violence, 454 were killed by the security forces (see p.518).

Vigilantes and the 'Homelands' Rulers

The setting up of 'Homelands' in South Africa opened up a new layer of terror in South Africa that has yet to be fully explored. The new rulers of these regions arrogated to themselves the old chiefly authority (but without any traditional safeguards) plus that of the police and army, and the backing of the South African armed forces. The legislation in most 'Homelands' is even more draconian than that of the central South African state. In these territories the police harassed, imprisoned, tortured or killed those who opposed the ruling clique. Over and above the officially recognized forces of coercion (backed by South African police or soldiers), vigilante groups were organized and smashed opposition groups in a brutal reign of terror. Whether it was the Transkei, the Ciskei, Bophutatswana, or Vendaland, all political rivals were silenced or removed. In the style of old China, war lords established areas of suzerainty and exploited the local population, and used their positions to amass individual fortunes through control of amenities, or by bribery and corruption. It was not long before details emerged of the peculations of 'Homelands' officials and their hangers-on. Those that protested were imprisoned, banished, or otherwise silenced.

Before this fortune hunting could commence, potential ruling groups rounded up opponents and took command of the administration. With the opposition effectively silenced, there was no accounting for personal enrichment, and only partial records are available of what was salted away. Furthermore, it is apparent from the granting of concessions, the licensing of businesses and the control of land, that individual members of the governing group have prospered while the average citizen's fortunes deteriorated. It is only when thieves fell out, and governments were toppled, that the press published information about personal aggrandizement and enrichment.

We cannot be certain that this is happening in all the 'Homelands' but it is quite apparent that the chiefs who control these mini-territories follow a common pattern in organizing guards to 'protect' their territory and destroy all opposition. They have also mobilized fellow clansmen, in towns and villages, to attack any person suspected of involvement in anti-government activity.

The pattern of repression established in the 'Homelands' was also employed by the more conservative leaders in townships and squatter camps, Vigilante groups were mustered to drive out the radical youth and 'trouble makers'. The only qualification for joining these urban gangs was a willingness to obey commands and wipe out the opposition (behind a shield of police support). Some joined voluntarily, expecting payment or reward, others were press-ganged and then remained, unable to extricate themselves.

A comprehensive account of vigilante gangs, even in the period 1984-6,

would fill several volumes. A summary of their activities by Nicholas Haysom of the Centre of Applied Legal Studies, *Apartheid's Private Army: The Rise of Right-Wing Vigilantes in South Africa*, presents some documented cases in urban and rural centres. Speaking of the vigilantes in the townships, he said:

The bands of conservative right-wing township residents that have mushroomed in numerous black townships in South Africa, have uniformly been called 'vigilantes' by residents and the popular press alike. They have generally come to be associated with a right-wing response to popular and anti-apartheid urban organizations. In general their victims have felt powerless against the vigilantes because of a perceived relationship between such organizations and the police (p.12).

The vigilantes were most often associated with township or village councils, and their targets have been the anti-apartheid activists who were involved not only in opposing the councils as useless bodies, but also in the rent boycotts, the consumer boycott of white shops and the boycott of schools. After initial action against activists by the police, the vigilantes moved in, assaulting and whipping, mugging and killing, attacking persons and property. Houses were gutted if any one of its occupants was suspected of opposing the Council or its members.

The appearance of vigilante gangs is not a new phenomenon. Such groups were formed by shanty-town leaders in 1945-6, and the government encouraged such groups in the suppression of unrest in the Reserves in the late 1950s. They appeared in more recent times during the Soweto revolt of 1976-7 when migrant Zulu workers opposed, or were used to oppose, stay-at-homes and attack school youth. Some of the migrant workers' resentment arose from their dislike of work stoppages and their lack of political consciousness. They were *amagoduka* ('those who go back' or target workers) intent on earning money and returning to the Reserves, who viewed political activity with suspicion. But it seems that Chief Buthelezi, as chief minister of KwaZulu, used their irritation for his own ends, and rather relished the attacks by 'his men' on the radical youth. In Natal, there was more direct involvement of Inkatha members in attacks on opposition elements in the colleges, and there were struggles for the political control of the campuses.

In 1980, when youth organized a nation-wide boycott of schools, they were joined by students at a few schools in KwaZulu. The Inkatha leadership condemned the action, and in May a number of students, alleged to have been involved in the boycott, were attacked by a mob armed with spears and assagais. Thereafter Buthelezi called for the formation of vigilante

gangs to protect the schools, and there were numerous attacks on those suspected of supporting the boycott, or said to be critical of Inkatha.

A fuller record shows that the pattern of events had become part of the political scene in Natal, with Inkatha bringing its forces to bear against anti-apartheid activists. The press provided tacit or open support for Inkatha when its brigades hunted down the members of more radical movements.

Inkatha and the UDF in the Natal Midlands

The pattern of vigilante violence in South Africa appears to have worsened over the past two years in the Natal midlands. In focussing on this region, it must first be stressed that this is the one area from which information has become available. Other regions of Natal/Zululand have been affected by violence that might well surpass that of the midlands, and refugees in towns around Durban have claimed that Inkatha vigilantes have been responsible for widespread harassment and killings.

The first clashes between Inkatha and the UDF/COSATU (as distinct from earlier attacks by Inkatha in 1976-7) were in 1985 when the entire workforce of about 1,000 in Howick, near Pietermaritzburg, came out on strike at BTR Sarmcol (a subsidiary of the British Tyre and Rubber Company). They were all dismissed and, in response to white shopkeepers support for Sarmcol's management, called a boycott of white businesses in Howick. When scabs were brought in by Sarmcol and independent arbitration was rejected, the union called a one-day stayaway at Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas, which received widespread support. After months of agitation, the workers went back defeated, but meanwhile they also had to contend with the antagonism of Inkatha and its 'trade union', the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA). This led to the petrol bombing of houses, and ultimately in December 1986 the assassination of five union members by members of Inkatha. Then came fresh conflict when COSATU/UDF leaders called a stay-a-way for 5-6 May to protest against the all-white parliamentary elections. Inkatha turned its wrath on local bus drivers, claiming that the response to that call was aided by their refusal to work, and at least 12 drivers were killed in attacks by Inkatha backed vigilantes. But this was still not the start of the major clashes, even if the COSATU/UDF initiative was seen by Inkatha local leaders as a threat to their control of the region. In September a dual campaign was launched: to recruit members for Inkatha, and to oust COSATU/UDF.

The conduct of the recruiting drive only succeeded in antagonising many householders. A joining fee of R5 was demanded and those who refused saw their houses burnt down. Furthermore, people would be press-ganged at night and forced to participate in the attacks on households. To meet this

harassment, local committees were organized and there were clashes in which the radical groups seem to have triumphed. Inkatha lost ground in the urban centres, particularly in the Edenvale complex where freehold rights were available and the population more settled. As a consequence, Inkatha turned to the semi-rural townships, some of which fell within KwaZulu, but here too there was resistance, even if less well organised. The conduct of the anti-Inkatha campaign was not appreciably different from that of Inkatha itself. The 'defence' committees were not accountable to any organization and they were responsible for wounding or killing Inkatha supporters, and furthermore, no political organization put out a call for the blood-letting to stop.

In all the clashes the police were absent or seen to be supporting the Inkatha gangs. Also, when auxiliary police (the 'kitskonstabels') were recruited, they were all members of Inkatha. Consequently, Inkatha members were rarely apprehended by the police, and if arrested, generally released after a short period. Those held in detention in the Pietermaritzburg area, and this was estimated as about 1,000, included no member of Inkatha.

Between September and January, according to Aitchison, the level of violence was horrifying. He continued:

Clearly associated with some of the violence is the element of revenge and the participation of criminal groups. Varying estimates have been made by some commentators of the extent to which poverty, unemployment and criminality fueled the fighting that had started.

Inkatha leaders were obviously involved. They were often called 'warlords' by their opponents — whether in imitation of old China or Japan is not clear, but the title was remarkably apt. In those countries there was the same bid to control territory, exact tribute or taxes, and use patronage to maintain local power. And when that power was not secure, criminal gangs were used to destroy any enemy — real or imagined.

There was a steady background of clashes (fighting, arson, murders and so on) through January–August 1987, each clash leading to one or more 'incidents' (where incident refers to any reported case of intimidation, assault, abduction, rape, injury or murder). Besides the difficulty in obtaining accurate figures for the more obvious crimes, like murder, Aitchison points out that estimates of intimidation or injury were bound to be grossly underestimated.

Nonetheless, the events that were monitored through to August showed that the incidence of attacks on persons was high. Then, in September, the number of clashes mushroomed and the death rate (that had not exceed 17 per month) suddenly jumped to 60. Thereafter there were 83 deaths in

October, 61 in November, 113 in December and 161 in January 1988. There was a partial respite as deaths dropped to 50 in February and 14 in March, but the lull did not last. Averaging about 30 a month from April to June, it then rose to a steady 50 per month in July to October, the last months in which totals have been reported from the Centre for Adult Education. In 1987 there were 895 clashes, involving 1,160 incidents. A count of those killed during the year showed that 62 were members of Inkatha, 126 were from the UDF, and 202 were unknown. The size of the last figure reflects the fact that members of households could be attacked and even wiped out because one of the children was implicated, or thought to be implicated, in UDF activity.

The most recent violence (on 4 December 1988), was reminiscent of the St Valentine Day's massacre in Chicago in the 1930s, when mobsters controlled the streets with sawn-off shot guns. At 3.0 a.m., on the morning of the 4th Inkatha vigilante swooped on a wake for a baby at Trust Seed, near New Hanover in Natal. The gang attacked and killed at least eleven persons: two men, seven women and two children. As in most such cases, the attack had its roots in local conflicts, but was used by Inkatha to take control of the area and force residents to join the organization and pay the R5 fee. If that had been all, the killing would have been significant only in the ruthlessness with which it was executed, and the number of victims executed in one fell swoop. But it was the deep seated nature of the conflict in the region that drew attention to what had happened, and the alliance between black landowners and the 'war lords' that gave added significance factor to this attack.

According to an account in the *Weekly Mail* on 8 December, the story extends back twenty years when Trust Feed was declared a 'black spot' and the residents threatened with removal. A 'crisis committee' that was formed to stop removal was successful and greeted the conversion of the region into a 'black development area'. They won the support of the farm tenants and pressed for improvements on the land — a factor which inevitably antagonised the black land owners. Local Inkatha leaders gave their full support to the landowners, and also called for the imposition of a tribal structure in Trust Feed, and for the appointment of chiefs and *indunas* (or headmen).

When Trust Feed was declared a development area in March 1988 Inkatha launched a major recruitment drive. It also appointed a body to oppose the crisis committee and started a campaign to drive its rivals out of town. The killings of 4 December was part of the concerted attack on members of the crisis committee and their families, and one further step in entrenching Inkatha control. On this occasion with the open support of the black landowners.

The Warlords and Nationalism

In describing the acts of terror in South Africa, it is all too easy to see the issue as being specific to local conditions, and it is certainly the case that the nature of the struggle in South Africa, and the strategy of the government, promotes such gangsterism. Without wishing to suggest that the focus of the killings exist outside the immediate area (whether the clashes were in the squatter camps, the townships or the Homelands), it would be overly parochial to see this as a particularly South African phenomenon.

Many of the most vicious criminal gangs operating in the world today emerged from local self-protection groups (such as the Sicilian Mafia) or from patriotic societies (such as the Chinese Triads). Their transformation from socially 'responsible' groupings into self-seeking racketeers has a parallel in the history of many national movements. The use of gangs and retainers was a regular feature of Chinese history until the mid-30s, when provincial war-lords ruled their territories by means of terror. Chinese gangs were responsible for the most brutal killings, and tens of thousands of trade unionists and communists in 1927-31 were slaughtered at the behest of Chiang Kaishek and his ruling nationalist movement, the Kuomintang.

Central to Chiang's strategy, and that of the nationalist leaders in Asia, Africa and Latin America (and also those in eastern Europe who pursue similar politics), was the use of national institutions for personal enrichment and the construction of a capitalist state in which their riches would be protected. This has been the guiding star of nationalists everywhere in the 19th and 20th centuries through Asia, Latin America and Africa; and this became the policy of the Homeland leaders, including Buthelezi of KwaZulu. There was nothing remarkable about the direction such men took. They had decided where their class interests lay when they embarked on their particular brand of politics. However, the appearance on the Inkatha platform of Rowley Arenstein (one-time leading member of the Communist Party and later leading Maoist) does suggest that nationalist leaders have been able to utilise the concept of nationalism once favoured by Stalin and his disciples. This point is taken up in this issue of *Searchlight South Africa* in the discussion of the ideas once favoured by the Moscow Institute of African Studies (see 'A Question of Class'). Arenstein's role stems in part from his acceptance of Stalin's simplistic definition of the nation, in terms of which he has called for the recognition of the claim of the Zulu people to nationhood. This led him to a defence of capitalist 'development' in KwaZulu, support for the launching of a tribal trade union and then ultimately a rejection of talks with the UDF/COSATU because of some supposed misdemeanour on their part. This, then, is the end result of a man who has allied himself to Stalinism (and its war-time variant, Browderism),

Maoism, and now Zulu nationalism, and could see no wrong in the crimes perpetrated by his heroes. The progression has a logic of its own — taking Arenstein through a range of reactionary ideologies, and depositing him finally in the ranks of provincial nationalism.

The use of violence to settle accounts with opponents has taken a variety of forms, varying with the local configuration of political forces. In viewing the destructive path of Inkatha it must be noted that the organization was reconstructed by Buthelezi on the suggestion of the ANC, and that Buthelezi claimed to be a long standing member of the Congress Youth League, and then of the ANC. He has always called for the release of Nelson Mandela as a precondition for any talks with the government. Although he heads a Homeland government, he has steadfastly refused to ask for 'independence', and his political philosophy is little different to that of other Congress leaders. The conflict with the ANC has more to do with political fiefdom than with principles, and future alliances between the ANC and Inkatha — or at least a tolerance of each other — is not to be discounted. On this account we have every cause to fear that the ANC and its present allies could follow the same path nationally as Inkatha does regionally, if they ever got near the reins of power. The possibility of their being better than the present regime is no compensation. Like nationalists everywhere, committed to a capitalist society (even with welfare statism written into their programme), the trajectory of their political path is determinable. It is for this reason that the comparison with events across the world becomes important. There is no reason to believe that the ANC would act any differently from nationalists elsewhere, and that its record would be any better than those leaders who permitted, or even encouraged: the massacre of Muslims in India and Hindus in Pakistan after partition; the attacks on Palestinians by Israelis (once so proud of their 'socialism'); the carnage that has destroyed Lebanon; the attacks on Karens by Burmese; the elimination of Chinese by Indonesians and of Tibetans by Chinese; the fighting between Sunni and Shia Muslims in the Gulf; the fighting between Turks and Greeks in Cyprus; of Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka; of Koreans, Chinese and others by Japanese; and the long list of inter-ethnic fighting that includes the Punjab, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Serbia, and on, and on, and on.

Each case must be discussed separately to show the precipitating factors, and to trace the roots of acts of terror. Ultimately it will be shown, in almost every case, that the antagonisms are compounded of immediate deprivation and/or poverty and long standing ethnic (or religious) hostility. The history of the past sits heavily on any generation, but it is the immediate difficulties confronting any population that leads to the outbursts of violence — assisted of course by ideologues who have an interest in these eth-

nic clashes. And when the clashes come, it is against the background of nationalist myths which are used to mobilize sections of a people against their opponents. How revealing then to view the myths, sent out on South African television in December/January 1986-7, of the prowess of the Zulu king, Shaka.

The vastness of the problem on a global scale indicates that generalizations are difficult, but there can be no doubt that nationalism has been invoked by local leaders to secure control of given territories, the better to exploit local resources and the population. Through nationalist propaganda, political leaders acquire the control of patronage, the right to tribute, and obviously, formalization of the control of coercion.

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BIG BROTHER AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

The National Security Management System (NSMS)

The power structure of the South African state has been refashioned over the past few years. In line with most modern states, and particularly those based on dictatorial powers, ultimate control rests on a balance of power between the governing party, the armed forces and the security police. The issue of who should manipulate the institutions of state depends on the relative strength of these three bodies, and that, in turn, will depend upon the stability or perceived stability, inside the country.

After the unrest of the early 1960s, and the emergence of sabotage groups in South Africa, the security police and the army established separate information bureaus and had their own information collecting networks.¹ From

the mid-60s a number of attempts were made to centralise the state's security force, with the police securing the central position under prime minister Vorster. This altered with the succession of P.W. Botha (previously Minister of Defence) to the premiership. Because of his close association with the army, Botha shifted the central focus of state security to the army, and Magnus Malan, the army chief, was given a cabinet position. Then came the liberation of Mozambique and Angola, and the state responded with a programme of 'total strategy', aimed at destabilizing neighbouring states and crippling internal opposition groups.

The government did not seem to have a preconceived plan for its total strategy — rather, it proceeded pragmatically, improvising as it moved along a tortuous path that promised reform, while maintaining a repressive system of controls.

Following the strike wave of 1973-6, and the Soweto revolt of 1976-77, two government commissions (those of Riekert and Wiehahn) proposed plans for the stabilization of the black urban population and the legalization of African trade unions. These provided the basis for an urban programme that was reformist in scope. Furthermore Indians and Coloureds were brought into a watered down parliamentary system through representation in ethnic 'parliaments' in a tri-cameral constitution. At the same time, following the formula of the ex-police chief General Johan Coetzee, low level protest organizations were to be allowed to exist, and controlled by the use of infiltrators, bannings and detentions.

But this strategy failed to rid the government of its opponents and it met new opposition from the black communities. The trade unions spread rapidly and demanded better wages and work conditions, and also showed a readiness to enter the political domain. Parallel to this, and complementing immediate worker demands, black communities rejected Community Councils, organised rent and consumer boycotts, and students boycotted schools. Street committees and youth groups gained control of townships and squatter camps, and umbrella bodies such as the United Democratic Front and the Azanian Peoples Organization could not be silenced by the old methods. The use of force could stifle some voices, but the effect of unemployment, social deprivation, and political oppression led to the uprising of 1984-87.

'Winning Hearts and Minds' (WHAM)

The failure of existing strategy led to a reformulation of methods to suppress opposition. Its open manifestation was the organization of a nation wide shadow administration and the appointment of new personnel to head the new body or bodies. How the relative position of security police and

army was adjusted in this rearrangement is not yet clear, but it would seem that the armed forces now dominate the security forces in the country.

The state, according to Major General Wandrag of the South African Police Riot Control, had resolved to pre-empt 'hot-spots' or uprisings wherever trouble was expected — not through negotiations (which were to be avoided) but through adequate communication and education. The state believed the population was interested in better opportunities, clothes, bread and so on, and 'not...in political organizations'. It would channel resources into 'oil-spots', as areas of potential trouble were called. The first four to be chosen were Alexandra, Mamelodi, New Brighton and Bonteheuwel. The system was to be implemented through the National Security Management System (NSMS), which would also ensure a massive presence of the security forces in the black townships. There would also be a crack-down on political bodies.

Consequently, effective power in the country has been shifted to its central body, the State Security Council (SSC), which meets before every cabinet meeting and advises on all security matters. The SSC heads a chain of bodies that extends into every township in the country. Its information comes directly from twelve Joint Management Centres (JMC), each one headed by a member of the army. Its members are all appointed by state departments, and they represent the security forces and state 'welfare' departments. Under the JMCs are 650 sub-JMCs, and they in turn are to receive their information from mini-JMCs situated in each township.

Thus is Orwell's nightmare *1984* come alive, in which every person is placed under continual scrutiny. In this bureaucratic jungle it is planned that every JMC will set up Community Liaison Forums to meet with local capitalists, local councils and collaborative Africans. Each JMC will have three committees: one for intelligence, one for political, economic and sociological information, and a third for communications. The task of the third committee is to feed the Bureau of Information with reports of any unrest. The 650 sub-JMCs will each have Monitoring Committees on 24-hour standby to advise the authorities of any impending trouble. Officially, the role of the JMCs is described as providing resources to meet perceived needs so that disaffection is avoided. More to the point, the purpose is to stifle popular protest, spread disinformation and kill off any opposition movement.

A booklet issued to leading politicians and state functionaries by the SSC has the enlightening title: *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary Warfare*, which carries more than a faint whiff of US policy in Viet Nam. This is a manual, it is claimed, for all those who want to 'defeat the revolutionaries'. The techniques to be employed are simple:

Task 1. Seek out the enemy and destroy him (sic).

Task 2. Establish an effective and well motivated administration which will deny revolutionaries the initiative.

Task 3. Initiate the 'Winning Hearts and Minds' (WHAM) campaign by: Creating good working relations between the administration and the masses by identifying problems and applying correctives. Train loyal leaders (who must be well paid). '[Take] the lead ... with the organization of social, career, sport, education, medical, religious and military activities'. Create special constables with the support of local leaders to form the basis of self-defense. They will constitute an armed local militia, and form a bridge between the administration and the masses. Establish an effective (and covert) intelligence system with roots among the masses. In this way, 'revolutionary and non-revolutionary organizations' will be identified.

It is to secure these ends that the JMCs and the National Security Management System have been established. To take care of 'area defence', the military has been ordered to work in close co-operation with the local administration and assist 'with the building of roads, dams, irrigation schemes, schools, churches, etc'.²

Despite these disclosures, the entire system is run on a cloak-and-dagger basis. There is no declared budget — despite the fact that money is spent lavishly on its activities — and its members are sworn to secrecy.

Applying the System

The central features of the State Security system have been in place for some time. The SSC and (presumably) the 12 JMCs are functioning, and money has been poured into some townships. Also, there has been some relaxation of laws relating to movement in the urban areas by Africans; African trade unions have legal status, and the tri-cameral constitution has been implemented. However, like all 'reforms' instituted by an oppressive regime, they carry a sting. Their objective, as explained in *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary Warfare* is to destroy any political activity of which the state disapproves. That has been amply demonstrated by the regulations and laws restricting trade union rights, by the banning of the main political organizations and the establishment of state sponsored sports and cultural organizations. Furthermore rent and economic boycotts have been broken, trials against leading activists have continued, activists have disappeared and many trade unionists and political leaders have been assassinated.

Also, the JMCs have made no statements on the activities of the vigilante gangs. They have said nothing about the killings in the Homelands,

have encouraged vigilante activity in the squatter camps, and have taken no effective steps to stop the weekly death toll in the Pietermaritzburg region. Inkatha vigilantes were not stopped or impeded by the police. The arrest and arraignment of two leading Inkatha men on charges of murder indicates that only the most blatant of episodes have forced the state to act.

The programme for the townships is also open to question. Besides the fact that any alterations in black townships is in keeping with the philosophy of segregation and must be questioned on that ground alone, there are also restrictions on what is being attempted. Only the so-called 'oil-spots' are to be upgraded, and the vast majority of townships will be left unaltered.

The application of JMC strategy in Alexandra Township, a one-time militant centre of community action in Johannesburg, and earmarked for removal in earlier strategies, is outlined by Karen Jochelson.³ Working through a newspaper and a comic strip (in which young Alex confronts 'Comrade Rat' a scruffy creature who denigrates all township development) the mini-JMC for Alexandra has set out to sell a new development plan for the urban renewal. This can be broken down as follows:

Task 1: Rents are to be collected and the rent boycott broken.

Task 2: The township is to be improved through the building of sports fields, play parks for children and so on.

Task 3: Business finance is to be employed to finance housing, sponsor skills training centres, assist small business development and youth programmes, and help clean up the township.

In its programme for 'progress', the JMC is to provide the training ground for future black manufacturers and industrialists, supplemented by 'the fostering of an individualistic ethic where self-upliftment and hard work guarantee success'. So the illusionists would have it. More to the point, local political groups have been rendered inoperative — either driven underground, or severely restricted in their activities.

Approximately one quarter billion rand has been earmarked to improve Alexandra — one of the medium sized townships in South Africa. Despite the raising of this sum the financial constraints on development makes its progress doubtful. The raising of similar amounts for other townships must remain in doubt.

Ways of combatting the stranglehold by the mini-JMCs in a township like Alexandra will be one of the major problems facing the inhabitants in the years to come. This will be a task that will tax the most persistent and most courageous — but it is a task that will have to be undertaken.

NOTES

1. This was disclosed in 1964, during the trial in Cape Town, of members of the African Resistance Movement.

2. Information has been extracted from Mark Swilling, 'Whamming the Radicals', *Weekly Mail*, 20 May 1988; and *Southscan*, 13 January 1988, reporting a talk to the Institute for Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria and a confidential briefing to businessmen by Major General C.J. Lloyd (chair of the SSC).

3. 'People's Power and State Reform in Alexandra', *Work in Progress*, No. 56/57, November/December 1988.

A QUESTION OF CLASS: THE WRITINGS OF KENNETH A. JORDAAN

Baruch Hirson

The Quest for a New History

It is with regret that we record the passing of Kenneth (Kenny) Jordaan in Harare on 30 September 1988. We commemorate his continued belief that the struggle in South Africa would triumph and lead to the establishment of a socialist society: we remember him for his belief that it was necessary to understand the historical forces at work in a society if tyranny was to be overthrown.

It was his concern with such understanding that led Jordaan to his endless probing into the events that shaped South African society, and although much of his historical writing has been rediscovered by later researchers, his articles remain unacknowledged or unknown. It is time to set the record straight, and in making this claim for Jordaan it must also be acknowledged that he would have been the first to say that his early work was only exploratory, and needed correction and refinement. Over the past two decades he was engaged in writing a Marxist history of South Africa — but in his search for accuracy he found it necessary to revise his manuscript again and again to take account of new publications. Despite the urgings of friends he does not seem to have completed that work.

In reviewing his search for historical understanding the conditions under which he worked must be understood, and the nature of his quest be stated. For this I must start at the beginning.

Kenneth Jordaan was born in the Cape in 1924, and educated at the Livingstone High School — one of the premier secondary schools for Coloured students. He then read history for a Bachelor degree at the University of Cape Town, and dissatisfied with the content of the subject as taught at college, he devoted the rest of his intellectual life to rewriting the subject. While still at school he shone as a rugby player, and was later selected to play for the Western Province Coloureds' team. After completing his first degree he acquired a Secondary Teacher's Diploma and taught History and German at his old school. He was also the school coach in rugby and swimming.

Jordaan joined the New Era Fellowship, a discussion club which nurtured radical thought among Coloured students, and which provided many of the founders and leaders of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). In

1942 he joined the Fourth International Organization of South Africa (FIOSA), and deepened his knowledge of Marxist writings. FIOSA went out of existence in the aftermath of the Anti-Communist Act of 1950, and some of its members regrouped in the Forum Club. They hosted lectures, and printed transcripts in the journal *Discussion*, but the former FIOSA members did not stay together. M.N. Averbach (the main theoretician of the group) left South Africa, and Hosea Jaffe (its leading publicist) left the club to join the leadership of the NEUM. Jordaan continued to work in the Forum Club, and when this collapsed, a succession of discussion groups were formed. There are few records of the subsequent activities of this group of people, and only a handful were left together in 1960 during the state of emergency that followed the Sharpeville massacre.

Jan van Riebeeck's Place in History

Jordaan achieved prominence among small groups of socialists in the early 1950s through his contributions in *Discussion*. It is these that will be discussed below, and although Jordaan was not a 'man of action', it must not be thought that he stayed aloof when vital decisions had to be made. He agreed with the break from the NEUM after its paper, the *Torch*, refused advertisements for Forum Club meetings; and he condemned the NEUM after it withdrew from the Trains' Apartheid Resistance Committee and refused to defy the new segregatory regulations.

In commending Jordaan's early articles it must be stated at the outset that he wrote them without consulting primary sources. It is not certain whether Coloureds were allowed to use such material in the late 1940s, but it was certainly unusual for any but whites to have access to the state archives. It was also the case that undergraduate students were not trained in the use of primary sources, and Jordaan only used state archives after he arrived in Britain in 1964. Consequently, he quoted only from published material, and given these limits, his historical insights were most impressive.

One of his earliest projects was an examination of the place of Jan van Riebeeck, the first Dutch commander of the Cape, in South African history. This led to two papers, one delivered at the Cape Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA) early in 1950, and then at the Modern Youth Society (a leftist club) in 1951. A revised version was presented at the Forum Club and appeared in *Discussion*, in June 1952. This was not an academic exercise, but was concerned with the call to boycott the official celebrations of the tercentenary of the landing of van Riebeeck at the Cape.

Jordaan declared in his talks, and repeated in *Discussion*,¹ his belief that the celebrations should be boycotted, in order to educate the people, and 'organize them against their rulers.' This was necessary because the

majority of the people were exploited by a 'political dictatorship.' However, he cautioned:

We do not boycott because van Riebeeck was white or because he began the white colonization of South Africa. We are not chauvinists or racialists nor do we wish to wage a war against the historical record.

Paraphrasing Marx he said that 'primitive societies' were bound to be conquered to 'make progress possible', and in anticipation of the publication of Marx's *Grundrisse* in English, he continued:

In this case, however, history presents us with a gain as well as a loss; a gain in the sense that the dissolution of primitive tribal society makes possible the free untrammelled development of the productive forces, the spread of civilized habits, customs, and of human knowledge; but a loss in the sense that such developments in human evolution take place only on the basis of the expropriation of the land and goods, the destruction of the liberties and equalitarian relations of primitive people.

In a future emancipated society, he said, when capitalism had been destroyed, all the people might mark together, with the 'white and Coloured progeny of van Riebeeck' the man who had 'no inkling of the strange historic mission Herrenvolkism and black racialists alike were to assign to him three hundred years after his arrival.' He elaborated on this theme, drawing the lesson again and again, that van Riebeeck was neither the 'great agent of civilization', nor the bearer of 'coloured hatred and racialism.' Such ideas could only appeal to those who

cannot see race as an economic factor, that is, as the ideological reflex of basic contradictions in the productive processes of a heterogeneous society. Thus they invest race and racialism with the *raison d'être* of history.

To make his point explicit, he delineated four 'social systems' in (white) South African history, coinciding with distinctive productive processes. These, he said, were the period of the Dutch East Indian Company's rule (1652-1795); the British occupation (1795-1872); the control of the north by 'petty Boer Republics' (1836-1870) and the period of industrialization following the discovery of diamonds and gold (1870 onwards). Racism in South Africa, he said, was not a product of the first three periods, but was 'the outcome of a new set of historical conditions which arose after 1870.'

Much of the article was devoted to a discussion of van Riebeeck's brief

from the DEIC, the development of this policy, the social composition of the men assigned to the Cape as servants of the Company, and the use and misuse of the Khoi people by the Governor and his men. It was a story of 'friendly overtures' and force and rapine, and of the 'irreconcilable conflict between two mutually antagonistic communities which could not come to any *modus vivendi*.' The contact led to emotional conflict and alienation, and Jordaan illustrated this in the case of the Khoi woman Krotoa (or 'Eva'). Krotoa was raised as a servant in the van Riebeeck home, was an interpreter at the age of 15 and, encouraged by the commander, married the surgeon Baron von Meerhof. Such marriages were seen by van Riebeeck as 'promoting goodwill between the two races', but for the women the story was often one of misery. Both before the marriage, when she was used as an intermediary to take possession of Khoi cattle, and after the death of her husband, Krotoa oscillated between the customs of her people, and that of the society in which she had been partly reared. She never reconciled herself to either society, torn between two irreconcilable social systems with conflicting values and mores.

Jordaan had to cut his way through the one-sided historical texts he read, and was one of the first to bring Marxist analysis to bear on the complexities of South African development. He also turned to Rosa Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*,² accepting, albeit critically, her belief that capital would absorb the pre-capitalist societies in the colonies, in order to continue the process of capital accumulation. This led him to the conclusion, incorrectly, that pre-colonial African institutions had been effectively destroyed and that only a facade remained.

Much that appeared in this early article has been superseded by contemporary historians using archival material in Europe and South Africa, but Jordaan's insights have stood the test of time. He declared unequivocally that the Coloureds were neither a race or a nation. They were, he said, 'a disinherited group of people, a statutory category', and he linked the liberation of Coloureds with that of the Africans. Without the emancipation of the latter, the Coloureds would continue,

an oppressed and disheartened group of people. It is this inescapable political fact, and not such anthropological nonsense as the racial affinity of the Coloureds and the Africans, that justifies the political unity of all oppressed sections.

Defining Racism

In the lectures on van Riebeeck, Jordaan touched on the origins of modern racism in the late nineteenth century, but the effects of industrialization on

racism begged further exposition. A discussion of the problem followed the publication of a pamphlet by W. P. van Schoor, based on a lecture delivered at the TLSA in October 1950.³ Van Schoor was a leading member of the NEUM and no apologist for the ruling class and the status quo in South Africa, and Jordaan began by stressing the importance of this departure from the work of 'official historians' who served the system. He recognized that a pioneer work would have shortcomings, and set out to explore the factors that led to 'the process of our enslavement.' In so doing he discounted the belief that South Africa's historical and political problems could be understood 'in terms of race, racialism and colour.'

One facet of Jordaan's essay was concerned with the criticism of van Schoor's arguments. He rejected the replacement of white 'heroes' by 'heroic' black chiefs, and dismissed as crudities van Schoor's failure to distinguish between Dutch and British administration, or between capital and the white workers. He also devoted some space to the erroneous belief that feudalism had been imported into South Africa — a social system for which he could find no evidence in South Africa, and he denied van Schoor's contention that labour tenants or squatters were 'serfs.' This was not a matter of academic interest, but central to the criticism of the thesis of the Workers Party (of the mid-30s) and their contention that the rural situation was at the centre of the South African struggle.

He dismissed van Schoor's contention that the Act of Union in 1909 was a 'mere move for white unity to crush the Africans.' Union, he said, was a move 'by the mining magnates to create a centralized authority which could protect and legislate in the interests of the capitalist economy.'

In contrast to van Schoor, Jordaan's purpose was to show that the modern colour bar was qualitatively different from any differentiation that had existed previously. In the Boer republics, for example, there had been mutual economic antagonism between Boer and Bantu 'that expressed itself, first of all, in the separation of the two groups on territorial lines.'⁴ The modern colour bar (with its social and political segregation) was the product of the *integration* of blacks and whites to provide the needs of industrial capitalism. Two societies were brought together by the needs of capital, assimilating and integrating them on the one hand, and yet erecting within the new society social barriers to separate the races. South Africa had developed from 'a slow tempo under commercial capitalism' in which 'the tribal mode of life' could survive, to modern industrialism in which they were needed as wage earners:

The dependence of the mines on cheap labour made the task of expropriating the Africans from their tribal lands the unpostponable demand of the incipient capitalists. The disintegration of African tribal

life was accordingly effected by taxation and wars and the subsequent need for European coinage and goods. In the course of a few decades after 1870, the Africans were violently hurled into the streams of capitalism by sword and fire. The Industrial revolution in South Africa gave them no opportunity, no breathing space to settle down with the dissolution of tribal life as private landholders. Under the tremendous impact of capitalism, they were forced and absorbed into the economic veins of capitalism, bearing heavily the scars of tribalism. The Africans knew of no stage between tribalism and the cash nexus.

Nonetheless, he said, capitalism had not destroyed every vestige of tribal society:

Imperialism, for social and political reasons, has found it expedient to assiduously preserve and even revivify the relics of the old society it had destroyed. In South Africa the industrialists have judiciously preserved the outer forms of chieftainship, tribal categories and combined and integrated these with modern industrial forms. But the preservation of the shells, of the relics of the past are not the fundamental characteristics, the essence of the social order. They are mere incidentals, mere remainders of the past.

The industrial revolution had made it impossible for an African peasantry to emerge in the future, said Jordaan, cutting across any argument for the redivision of the land, and the creation of a stable black peasantry. Modern South Africa had come into existence when precious gems and metals had been discovered, and a new capitalist class, a white labour aristocracy, and a black (unsettled) proletariat had been formed. Racialism, he said, was the outcome of

the peculiar conditions and circumstances under which the industrial revolution developed in the country ... The peculiar disposition of black labour, on the one hand, and white labour on the other hand, produced the idea that the division between skilled and unskilled labour and high and low rates of pay was a natural, permanent and immutable one ...

These short extracts do not do full justice to the strength of Jordaan's analysis. He made it clear that the Chamber of Mines viewed the claims of the white workers with ambivalence, and he also indicated that the white workers had fought bitter struggles to maintain their privileged position. But even where his arguments were open to criticism, the article was a *tour de force*. There was an excited response from dissident members of the Communist Party, (as indicated by the exchange between Jordaan and the

writer who signed herself Dr Sanders)⁵ and the formation of the Johannesburg Discussion Club, in imitation of the Forum Club. The project failed because those invited, including the Progressive Forum (affiliated to the NEUM) rejected an invitation to collaborate, and orthodox members of the SACP had little interest in exploring new ideas. But, in the mid-50s, Jordaan's ideas influenced the newly formed Socialist League of Africa, a small group of Trotskyists in Johannesburg and Cape Town, who established close contact with him.⁶

The 'National Question'

In June 1954 a liaison committee of the Forum Club and the South African Club (consisting mainly of former members of the CPSA in Cape Town) convened a meeting to discuss the 'national question.' The speakers were L. Forman, T. Ngwenya, Jordaan, and Dr H.J. Simons.⁷ Forman, who had spent some time in Prague, and returned to South Africa as editor of *New Age*, opened the discussion. He took as his point of departure the ideas of Professor I.I. Potekhin, director of the Africa Institute in Moscow, who maintained that local peoples (like the Zulus) would demand the right to self determination, and it was the task of politicians to accept such claims. Forman was a protagonist of Potekhin's ideas and was criticized by Dr Simons on the grounds that the oppressed peoples of South Africa looked askance at any suggestion of separateness, because this was the slogan used by the government to impose segregation. What was needed, was a unified liberation movement, and with this Ngwenya concurred.

Jordaan's contribution followed somewhat different lines. He discussed the two forms of modern nationalism, the one emerging in Europe and representing the aspirations of oppressed nationalities (Poland, the Slav peoples), and the other stemming from the demands by colonial people (as in India) for independence from imperialist powers. Both these movements were bourgeois democratic, and when political independence was acquired, new capitalist states emerged in which the workers were exploited by their own bourgeoisie. South Africa was engaged in a different struggle, because the question was not independence, but the freeing of people of colour from race discrimination. This struggle would be led, inevitably, by the largest class — the proletariat, and the revolution would become 'permanent': that is, the democratic revolution (which did not require a restructuring of society) would grow over to a socialist revolution in which new social institutions would be needed. Once again Jordaan maintained that the old societies had been swept away by colonialism, and there would be no demand for separate cultural development. If at the end of the day there were such demands, they could be satisfied, but in 1954 such ideas were not

relevant to the political struggle. In a brief rejoinder Forman said that it was not his intention to raise the idea of national self-determination as an immediate demand — but this was a possibility after the consummation of the revolution.

The liaison committee did not seem to have met again, and the debate was not resumed, but it had helped Jordaan establish a Marxist position against his erstwhile friends in the NEUM. He was a firm proponent of the theory of uneven and combined development, and he believed that this opened the way for an 'uninterrupted revolution', in which talk of national liberation could only act against the interests of social restructuring in South Africa, and the need to overthrow capitalism.

The Land Question

The next printed contribution from Kenneth Jordaan appeared in the journal *Points of View*, Vol.1, No.1. published by the Cape Debating Society in October 1959. By this time the Forum Club had disbanded, and many of its members had formed the 'Citizen' group, which was involved mainly in community politics, and was to join the Liberal Party at a later date. Jordaan disassociated himself from this group, and continued to argue for the position he had formulated over the past decade. He joined with a small group in a new society, and it was here that he presented his article on 'The Land Question in South Africa', an investigation of land holdings in South Africa comparing local conditions with those in Mexico and Czarist Russia. The arguments presented in this article, despite its length (43 typed foolscap sized pages), added little conceptually to the previously published articles.

But, as in other contributions, Jordaan was responding to political trends in the Cape. In this case, the acrimonious debate that had torn the NEUM apart. One of its constituent parts, the All African Convention, led by I.B. Tabata, declared that the struggle in South Africa was bourgeois democratic, and that after 'liberation' land would be open to private appropriation, and there would be no imposition of collectivization. Ben Kies and Hosea Jaffe, the leading members of the Anti-Coloured Affairs Department (Anti-CAD), the other major arm of the organization, condemned this 'departure' from previous declarations, and said that the NEUM's programme provided that the land would be equally redistributed after liberation.

Jordaan rejected both arguments. The question for South Africa was not one of land, and he did not believe that after a revolution people would leave the towns in large droves to return to the (impoverished) countryside. Such a move would mean the end of an industrialized South Africa, which he deemed impossible. The struggle in South Africa, he repeated, was one that would be led by the black working class, and their demands were rooted in

the modern means of production. He went further. The demands by both sections of the NEUM were reactionary because the land question was viewed in racial terms, with demands that the Reserves be extended and redivided. A democratic society would have to be shaped without reference to outmoded racial boundaries, and to suggest otherwise was to set the political struggle back. Jordaan's conclusion (couched in language to by-pass the Anti-Red Act) was that:

Social democracy must necessarily distinguish between the two phases of the same struggle: the democratic and the non-exploitative, each of which call for a different solution to the land question ...

Social democracy is the most resolute ally of the peasants in their struggle against the old order. It will therefore support their demand for land and the security of tenure in so far as this calls into question the extant political arrangements and the existence of the land barons and the 'morgenheimers.' But social democracy cannot support such demands as the fragmentation of the land or the unfettered ownership rights as a solution to the land question. The illusory nature of such solutions must be pointed out in advance. In a word, we support the peasantry only in relation to the capitalists and the State.

Call for a Revolutionary Party

On 21 March 1960, 69 Africans were killed and 180 injured at Sharpeville when police fired on a peaceful crowd that had gathered to protest against the pass laws. For seventeen days thereafter strikes, demonstrations and pass burning shook the country. There was shooting at Langa, and attempts at self-administration at Langa and Nyanga (both in Cape Town) leading to blockades by the armed forces. The initiative throughout the country was in the hands of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), and in Cape Town, where Phillip Kgosane of the PAC led a march from the township to the centre of Cape Town, the Liberal Party emerged as a more effective political body than the SACP or the Congress Alliance. The trade union movement SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) failed to fulfil its promise that it would call the workers out in the event of a governmental assault. Other groups, like the NEUM, played no effective part in the events that followed.

In Cape Town, Jordaan and his friends were isolated, and stood by powerlessly during the entire period. For them, as for similar small groups elsewhere, this was a period of frustration. They had ideas of what should be done, but there was nobody to listen to them. The Socialist League issued a long document, 'Ten Years of the Stay at Home' which discussed the

ineffectiveness of ANC policy during the 1950s. After the ANC and the PAC had been banned, and when the state of emergency was lifted, an organization calling itself the Workers Democratic League emerged in Cape Town, and issued a Bulletin summing up the lessons of the 'March Days.' Jordaan was the main contributor to this mimeographed publication, but as important as it was in analyzing the situation, it reached only a few hands, and its impact was limited. Despite the insights in the document, the authors had no obvious allies, and the Bulletin disappeared from sight, leaving no ripple on the political surface. Yet, whatever reservations the reader might have today on some of its pronouncements, and the phrasing of some of its analyses, it was one of the few attempts at analyzing the situation, and stands shoulders high above most other statements on the events of 1960.

The document set out to ask why the events of March, which visibly shook the state, and even secured the temporary removal of the pass system, failed to achieve any of their demands. In their discussion the authors reviewed the conditions (as stated by Lenin) necessary for a successful revolution. Firstly, they said, the masses had to be in a state of ferment because of the intolerable conditions in which they lived. This existed. Secondly the ruling class had to experience a failure of nerves, and find that it could not continue in the old way. This was not the case in 1960, and it could have been added that the forces of coercion (the police and the army) stood solidly behind the government. Thirdly, they said, there had to be a revolutionary party behind which the workers could be mobilized, and this was nowhere in sight.

The crisis in the country, they said, was 'the crisis in the relations between capital and labour.' The unfree working class had moved against the laws curbing their freedom of motion and restrictions on the labour market. This was a

struggle for economic integration and hence also for political and legal equality by the labouring masses ... [this] had shattered the idea that the national struggle [was] the demand by certain non-class racial groups for democracy ... The national struggle is rather the form in which the class struggle is expressing itself.

Throughout the document the authors stressed the class nature of the struggle because: 'The colour bar is, in sum, both the mode of operation and mode of domination of capitalism in South Africa.' Consequently, it was the rootless workers, harried by the authorities, and facing eviction from the towns, who showed the most tenacious resistance to the administration. It was for this reason that the western Cape was the centre

of the struggle, and it was the landless men who could survive only by staying in the towns who were the most intransigent and sided with the PAC.

The African workers of Cape Town had fought courageously, but to succeed they needed the support of the Coloured worker — and except for one region, this had not been forthcoming. Yet everything had worked against such support. The PAC had spurned the assistance of any other ethnic group; the Cape trade unions had made no effort to assist; and the political parties to which Coloureds belonged, including those mouthing the most radical phrases (namely, the NEUM) had avoided action.

There were no parties that escaped the wrath of the authors. The PAC had courted arrest, ignoring other means of struggle; had played the nationalist card, and had accepted without analysis the false slogan of the United States of Africa, without asking how states at different stages of industrialization, different levels of dependence on the metropolitan powers, and different class formations could unite together. Nonetheless, the PAC had at least given a lead in the struggle. The other parties, the Liberals and the ANC, had either misled the people or served as intermediaries for the ruling class. A sweeping set of condemnations, supported by arguments that were current at the time (many with justification), but requiring further comment today. The central point made by Jordaan, that remains beyond doubt, is that none of the political groups placed the working class at the centre of the struggle, and in this they paved the way for the defeat in March 1960.

Despite the massive strike action, and the many demonstrations, the workers had been defeated. Nonetheless the authors believed that out of the action could come a new understanding by the working class of its strength, and its ability to take over and reconstruct the state. If there had been a revolutionary movement, to which the working class responded, an analysis such as that offered by the Workers Democratic League might have speeded the reconstruction of the political movements. But there was no such party, and the Bulletin reached only a small group of intellectuals — most of whom had long been converted to Jordaan's views.

Into Exile

In 1964, Jordaan was arrested in connection with a case against Neville Alexander and others. To avoid being called as a witness by the state against his comrades he left South Africa covertly, and travelled through Zambia and Tanzania, arriving ultimately with his wife Erna in London. He taught history and geography at schools in London, and worked on the history of South Africa, which had long been his ambition. Initially he hoped to take the history up till the 1960s, but when he realized that the project was far

too large, decided to take the work through to 1870, but even this proved too big a task. His manuscript grew ever longer, and was rewritten several times, but does not seem to have reached completion.

He wrote several reviews and articles, including an account of the CPSA in South African history (*Tricontinental Press*, 1966); on the plunder of the Third World, and on class and race in South Africa (*Africa and the World*, 1967); on the origins of the Afrikaners and their language (*Race*, 1974); on the 'Bushmen' (*Race and Class*, 1975); on industrialism and racism (*Nation*, 1973); and on the new trade unions in South Africa (*Race Today*, 1974).

Jordaan was never completely happy in Britain, and he did not find a political group in which he could find a home. He rejected the South African exile groups — of the ANC/SACP, or NEUM variety, but at one stage, when the PAC flirted with Maoism, he joined with them. There is little information about this alliance which was contrary to all his previous political commitments — but it did not last. Unfortunately he did not speak about that period, and there appears to be no record of what led to the growing gap between him and the PAC. He found companionship among members of the Institute of Race Relations, and was a member of the editorial board of *Race and Class*. But he pined for Africa, and finally went to Harare in 1981, where he returned to teaching history. There, he also found persons active in the South African struggle, with whom he could discuss political problems.

In an interview with Al Richardson and C. Chrysostom (attributed at the time to 'comrade "D"' and printed in *International Bulletin of the Revolutionary Communist League*, No.3, Spring 1971) he restated his basic thesis on racism, namely that: 'The whole evolution of South Africa shows that racism is an essential component of capitalism, that it has been the driving force of intensive industrialization, and that it was the actual means whereby the South African working class was formed', and from this he was to conclude that:

This shows that a neo-colonial solution, the handing over of the country to an administration of the Kaunda variety, is out of the question in South Africa. The whole state and economic structure must be destroyed, as racism is so crucial to the continued existence of South African capitalism, and is its chief generator.

In his comments on South African politics he turned to the question of the NEUM and disputed the claims made in exile by Tabata and his followers, that any section of that organization was Marxist in orientation. They all worked inside the framework of the 'national liberation' movement, he said, and they denied the central role of the black working

class in the struggle. He might have added that in their public statements in South Africa they had vigorously denied any connection with Marxism or Trotskyism.

Jordaan rejected the path of guerilla warfare, as well as the path of reform. He condemned the call to boycott South African goods as an illusion, initiated by members of the SACP and by liberals, who hoped to avoid a revolutionary situation by spreading the illusion that such action would precipitate a crisis and bring down the Nationalist government. In so far as a boycott helped highlight the situation in South Africa, it had a part to play, but the only really effective step would be an organized campaign by workers to refuse to unload South African goods at ports of entry.

In discussing his ideas on racism, Jordaan was less clear than was usual in his pronouncements — and for his most considered discussion of the subject it is necessary to turn to his article on 'Class and Race in South Africa' in two parts in *Africa and the World*, August and September 1969. A summary can do scant justice to Jordaan's insights on the subject, and at a later date it might be possible to reprint the entire piece.

In his article Jordaan traced the development of racism in the country. He repeated his previous contention that racism was not the creation of 17th century mercantilism. However he found in slavery and the master-servant relationship the origins of racism, and quoted from Eric Williams' work, *Capitalism and Slavery*: 'A racist twist has been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born of racism; rather racism was the consequence.' Furthermore, Jordaan found the origins of segregation in the need to justify the seizure of land and goods as the whites drove back the blacks. The defeated blacks were not incorporated as a dispossessed social class, partly because the labour requirements of the Boer economy were too small, and partly because the rudimentary social structure of the Boer community was too small to assimilate another people.

The emergence of capitalism after the discovery of diamonds and gold brought together two labour forces: the small body of skilled white artisans from abroad, and the cheap unskilled labour that was near at hand. The conjunction of these two forces, one highly paid, and the other at low rates of pay established the industrial colour bar, and this 'coincided remarkably well with the country's race traditions that had come to equate black labour with manual work which the whites despised.' The white miners were the most 'voracious champions of the colour bar' struggling to maintain the differential in pay. The mining magnates' aim was to cut the costs of labour, and to shed white labour. They also wanted to push blacks off the land while maintaining a migratory base to keep wages low. In this they found allies (and adversaries) among the land owners who wanted their quota of labour for the farms. For the new capitalists the industrial colour bar

played 'a crucial role in the primitive accumulation of capital.' This led Jordaan to conclude that Africans suffered

from a double exploitation: as workers who produce surplus value; and as blacks from whom an additional surplus is extracted by special race legislation ...

Here the last word in modern technology is combined with the most barbarous form of exploitation and oppression; traditional backwardness with the most sophisticated forms of life.

This 'uneven development' affected the political struggle. Advanced revolutionary and sluggish reformist methods were combined; tribal and proletarian ideologies were found side-by-side, because the 'level of political consciousness [was] spread very unevenly.'

Jordaan's article was continued in the September issue with a quotation from Cortez, conqueror of Mexico: 'The Spaniards are troubled with a disease of the heart for which gold is the specific remedy.' For Europe in the late nineteenth century the opening of the deep level mines coincided with the opening of the new imperialism. The war of 1899-1902 was part of the drive to carve up Africa, and more specifically to gain control of the gold deposits, and despite its archaic language, the Manifesto of the Transvaal Republic (as quoted in the article) saw the issue in modern terms:

If it is ordained that we, insignificant as we are, should be the first among all people to begin the struggle against the new-world tyranny of Capitalism, then we are ready to do so, even if that tyranny is reinforced by the power of Jingoism.

Despite the insights in this declaration, the Transvaal and Orange Free State republics stood in the way of capitalist development, and the entire force of British Imperialism was unleashed to pulverize them. Thereafter, a centralized state was established, in which mineowners and Boers could share in the exploitation of the black working class. Or, as Jordaan put it, when both 'agreed to the division of the yellow dust, the Africans were nailed to the cross of gold.'

Much of the remainder of the article deals with the emergence of the Afrikaner bourgeoisie, using the calls of republicanism and nationalism to promote its interests as a class. And it succeeded where later African groups failed in their 'independent' states — partly because it had the initial capital and technology, but mainly because the new South African state incorporated the emergent Afrikaner bourgeoisie, and part of the profits from the gold mines was used to subsidize less profitable white agriculture.

As always, Jordaan wrote with a political purpose, and if it were possible to situate his position in one short passage, it is to be found in the opening paragraph of the article just quoted:

Since World War II many revolutionary movements, based on people's war, have signally failed. Some are currently stagnating or being wiped out before they can get off the ground. One reason for these reverses is that a commitment to the armed struggle is no insurance against reformism. Another — and this is weightier — is that the leaders of these struggles lacked a clear grasp of the on-going historical process in their respective countries. For if men are to break the chains that bind them, they need to understand the forces which forged them.

Some of Kenny Jordaan's conclusions need further discussion, but it is not my purpose in this commemorative essay to point to places where I think he was wrong. Whatever his errors, they were small compared with the width of his vision, and his insights into the working of South Africa. His contributions were not matched, in breadth or in depth, by other South African revolutionaries. A reading of his works still illuminates areas that others have failed to explain, and it can only be hoped that future generations will seek out and read the articles he wrote, and find their way to continuing the work that he pioneered.

References

1. 'Jan van Riebeeck: His Place in South African History', *Discussion*, Vol.1, No.5, June 1952.

2. The writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky were banned and could not be quoted in the early 1950s. However, Luxemburg was not banned, and he might have used her name to by-pass the censor.

3. 'A Critique of Mr W.P. van Schoor's "The Origin and Development of Segregation in South Africa"', *Discussion*, Vol.1, No.4, June 1951.

4. A quotation from 'A Reply to Dr Sanders' Historical Criticism', a rejoinder by Jordaan to a letter from a member of the SACP, writing under a pseudonym; *Discussion*, Vol.1, No.4, December 1951.

5. *Discussion*, Vol.1, No.4, December 1951.

6. Information from founding members of the Johannesburg Discussion Club, and personal recollections. The CPSA was dissolved formally in 1950, and later resurrected as the SACP.

7. 'Symposium on the National Question: What are the National Groups in South Africa?', published by the Liaison Committee of the South African Club and the Forum Club, June 1954.

GOLDEN DREAMS: THE SANCTIONS CAMPAIGN

Paul Trehwela

Gold: Key to Sanctions

Gold 'holds the key to any sanctions campaign', according to Joseph Hanlon, co-author of *The Sanctions Handbook*. He states that 'if it were possible to halt South African gold sales, that alone would break the economy' (1987, p.255). This is a view widely held by organizations seeking change in South Africa, among them the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It is the view also of the former British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healy, a leading figure in the Labour Party. Speaking before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons in July 1986, Healy argued that the 'best thing' to bring rapid change in South Africa was to 'go for gold, diamonds and metals'. In more detail he explained: 'If the countries with large gold stocks used them to depress the gold price, it would have a massive impact on the South African economy', but 'without such a threat no changes will take place' (quoted in Hanlon, pp.137-38).

The aim of this critique is to examine whether this project — fundamental to the campaign for economic sanctions — is possible and whether it promotes a real transformation.

The centrality of gold to the sanctions campaign was first stressed by Simon Clarke at a conference on sanctions in the late 1970s. Previously, Charles Diggs, then chairman of the US House of Representatives subcommittee on Africa, had called in 1972 for a ban on South African gold sales to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Diggs' call was taken further by Vella Pillay, a former close associate of the South African Communist Party (SACP), former vice-chairman of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and official of the Bank of China. In a study, *Apartheid Gold*, published by the AAM in 1981, Pillay argued that a 'successful boycott of **apartheid gold**' would 'constitute a major step toward breaking the back of the apartheid economy', and that the AAM had consequently 'initiated a major campaign' against South African gold sales abroad. But he qualified this bold assault: 'This is not a campaign against gold *per se*, nor does it involve any proposals on the larger question of the monetary role of gold or the reform of the international monetary system' (Pillay, pp.5-6).

More recently, Peter Robbins — a precious metals dealer for 20 years — was interviewed on British television as chairman of the World Gold

Commission (WGC), a body connected with the AAM. Robbins (1988) threw Pillay's banker's caution to the winds. 'We want to stop the price of gold rising', he said, adding that gold was 'very important to the South African economy and not very important to the rest of the world'. According to an earlier report, the WGC is 'supported by the main Southern African liberation movements and anti-apartheid groups in Britain', and aims to 'encourage an official ban on the import of newly-mined South African gold, hitting at the heart of the apartheid regime's economy, without damaging the world's gold markets'. Robbins hoped that the scheme 'would eventually be supported for sound commercial reasons by the gold market' (*Guardian*, 9 June 1988).

This notion of the 'not very important' place of gold in world economy appears also with Hanlon, who states that 'officially, at least, gold plays a very minor role in the world monetary system. It is supposed to be only a reserve against the total collapse of the international financial system' (p.256). To be 'only' a reserve against the total collapse of the world financial system is, of course, not 'very minor'. According to Hanlon, world bourgeois society is governed by the occult: 'Gold's importance is entirely mystic'. It has 'an essential psychological place in the world economic system', where its 'mystic significance' is the result of a certain 'spell surrounding gold' (pp.256,322). Here we have, as Marx wrote of Proudhon, the 'metaphysics of political economy' (Marx 1966, Ch.2)¹

Whereas Robbins and Hanlon think gold plays a negligible part in world affairs, Pillay argues the opposite. The fact that world bullion stocks remain predominantly in the hands of central banks and governments proves, for Pillay, 'the signal importance of gold as an international reserve asset and its continuing monetary role in the world economy'. Gold remains 'a much preferred asset' of the central banks, and since the early 1980s has become 'steadily important' in place of dollars in central bank reserves. This 'gold-preference factor' of central banks and governments 'provides powerful underpinnings to the gold market at present' (pp.17-18).

Nevertheless, Pillay calls on 'all governments to freeze' the import and use of new-mined gold from South Africa. Hanlon, a financial journalist, goes further. For him, 'there is no need for South African gold', and he endorses the proposal by Robbins and Ian Lepper (a financial consultant) for:

*A ban on all imports of newly mined South African gold.
The release from national reserves of a quantity of gold equivalent to that
which would normally be imported from South Africa
(Hanlon, pp.256-57).*

The aim is for 'the United States, alone or in cooperation with other governments, to sell enough gold to depress the price substantially', to about \$300 per ounce (p.259).

This was also the view of the *Economist* in its lead editorial of 19 July 1986, when Healy was arguing the case before the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. Under a picture of a bar of gold stamped with the words 'Free Nelson Mandela', the *Economist* declared that 'the most achievable quick sanction would be to threaten to cut the world price of gold'. Similarly the economics correspondent of the *Guardian*: 'A temporary depression of the gold price to half its present level would cut South Africa's export earnings by a quarter ... Gold could be the way to the White Regime's jugular' (12 September 1985). Here then is a remarkable common front: the banker, the precious metals dealer, the financial consultant, the journal of the financial bourgeoisie, two financial journalists and a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, all agreed on the possibility and necessity of a cut in the world price of gold for an overturn of existing conditions in South Africa.

The love affair between representatives of financial capital and the AAM has since received a bizarre consummation. During the recent £2.9 billion takeover bid for Consolidated Gold Fields (the 'second largest free world producer' of gold, in the words of its chairman) by Minorco (representing the Oppenheimer empire, the biggest gold producer), the AAM 'asked ConsGold to distribute a letter to shareholders calling on them to reject Minorco's bid in their own interests and in the "interests of freedom in Southern Africa"' (*Guardian*, 24 October 1988). In the 'interests of freedom in Southern Africa', the AAM snuggles up to the British gold-producing corporation (and slaver in South Africa) against the South African gold producer and slaver, imagining itself to be thus isolating the golden riches of South Africa from the embrace of world economy.²

Golden Money

Despite his appetite for mystery, Hanlon is correct in one point: boycott of South Africa's gold production is indeed 'the key' to the AAM's campaign for economic sanctions. A society producing a single commodity whose share in its gross domestic product 'rose from 5.5 per cent in 1955 to 9.1 per cent last year [1987], while its share of total export revenue rose from 30 to 37 per cent over the same period' (*Financial Times*, 9 June 1988) cannot be subjected to effective sanctions unless that single product is blockaded. In South Africa, the revenue accruing to the Chamber of Mines from gold production almost trebled between 1979 and 1987, from R5.7 billion to R15.8 billion, despite a decline in tonnage of gold mined, the

result of working inferior grade ores. There follows the conclusion:

Fortunately for South Africa ... the steady decline in gold production over the past 28 years has been more than compensated for by higher dollar and, above all, rand prices. This has ensured that gold's relative importance to the overall economy has continued to increase (*FT*, *ibid.*).

Here, then, is the *salto mortale* or fatal leap for the sanctions campaign.

The campaign has this advantage: if the dollar gold price does not rise, or if new reserves accessible to relatively low cost production are not discovered, South African revenues will in any case suffer serious decline over the next ten years. A study published for the major British clearing banks took the view that over the coming period, 'South African output will fall as a result of lower grades and ore reserve exhaustion. This will accelerate over time and be the dominant characteristic of supplies in the 1990's' (Kessel, p.272). Since then, a world-wide expansion in lower cost gold production through open-cast mining (e.g., the Carlin Trend in Nevada, owned by Consolidated Gold Fields through its stake in Newmont Mining) has accelerated the tendency to relative decline in primacy of South African deep level mining. But many of these new mines will have a relatively short existence. South Africa

... still sits on the world's richest known reserves. No gold deposits have been found outside South Africa that can stand comparison ... The country has] proven reserves to cover another 45 years of production (*Economist*, 3 December 1988)..

There is a further key dimension. As Duncan Innes has pointed out, any substantial block to South African gold supplies would result in 'major disruption' for the world monetary system,

... which would in turn reverberate through the international economy. Catch 22: the West does not want to include gold in the sanctions net because it is too important to its economies; but by excluding gold the effect of sanctions is crucially diminished (1986).

Earlier, Clarke argued that an effective sanctions campaign against capital in South Africa 'would probably *magnify*' the tendency towards a higher gold price, 'through the uncertainties it would introduce about the future supplies of gold' (p.116). For Clarke it is obvious that the price of gold is 'determined largely by its role in the international monetary system', and

that 'in times of international financial instability the demand for gold as store of international value increases'. During world recession,

... the international financial system is flooded with money [that] cannot find investment outlets. It is this money that fuels the speculative frenzy exaggerating the tendency for the price of gold to increase in a recession (pp.115,80).

Clarke stresses the dependence of the gold price in its average movement on fundamental international economic conditions. Pillay, Robbins and Hanlon ignore this, and their whole campaign rests on this small omission.

Gold in Bourgeois Society

This thing, gold — or rather, the social relations that make it what it is in the late 20th century — is at once dazzling and yet obscure at the centre of South African affairs. South Africa's chief product is 'god and king of commodities' (Marx, *Grundrisse*, p.230). If the AAM had it in its power to stop the price of gold from rising (or falling), it would have solved the riddle of world economy for an army of speculators. The AAM imagines that if it treats gold as an ordinary commodity, outside its monetary function, therefore gold will conform to its illusion. On the contrary, it is the illusion that conforms to this 'most striking, most contradictory and hardest phenomenon which is presented by the system in a palpable form' (*Grundrisse*, p.240). Supporters of sanctions on gold are mystified by the fetish forms of appearance of this society. Laws governing the place of gold in modern conditions appear for them as forms of freedom, to be altered by an act of will. Through their 'credit and bank fantasies', 'illusions concerning the miraculous power of the credit and banking system' to dispense with the major producer of the metal reserve, they read the real world upside down. They are alien to Marx's insight that 'money — in the form of precious metal — remains the foundation from which the credit system, by its very nature, can *never* detach itself' (*Capital III*, pp.592,594).

For the advocates of sanctions it is irrelevant that world capitalism has entered a period of storms, that Japan has replaced the United States as the greatest power in money-dealing capital and that it is above all this power and its satellites and rivals in the east — especially Taiwan and South Korea — that are drawing in gold.

Who is buying all the new gold, and saving the mines from ruin?
East Asia has come to the rescue ...

... Taiwan alone could take up almost all of this year's excess supply,

all things being equal.

... For the third year running, Japan could yet be the biggest importer of gold (*Economist*, 20 August 1988).

According to the chairman of the gold division of Rand Mines, between mid-1987 and mid-1988,

Strong physical demand from Japan, as well as Taiwan and other Far Eastern countries, was the main support for the gold price ...

... The Far East has become an extremely important market for gold with bankers, investors and individuals buying the metal in all forms (Harmony report, 1988, pp.4-5).

In the wake of a 'massive displacement of money towards the Far East', a survey by Consolidated Gold Fields last year reported that this 'is now being followed by a flow of gold of similar magnitude' (Milling-Stanley, 1988, p.58).

Robbins and his associates wish to believe that the price of gold today is not determined in the end by general objective conditions. These include: the quantity of labour thrown into its production globally; the tendency to world depression of production beginning in the early 1980s; the crash on the world stock exchanges in October 1987, the steepest in history, resulting in a fall-off in stock and bond turnover in many countries; a run of financial failures in the US, the most damaging since the 1930s; the rise to predominance of Japan as a new world pole of financial power, displacing the US in many sectors; the demise of the dollar as a reliable reserve currency. If people wish to believe that such matters are 'not very important', or that they do not exert a determining overall effect on the production and 'price' of gold, then they understand less of the system than the capitalists of South Africa. The AAM's illusion contrasts with Marx's insight that 'Modern society ... greets gold as its Holy Grail, as the glittering incarnation of the very principle of its own life' (*Capital I*, pp. 132-33).

If supporters of the sanctions campaign wish to argue that capitalism has dispensed with what was for Marx the principle of its own life, they should present the case theoretically. So far they have not attempted to do so. The brute fact of South Africa in the world during the past hundred years argues materially against this interpretation. Since gold is virtually indestructible and has been cherished since very early times, the total quantity in existence today (about 95,000 tonnes or 3.2 billion ounces) corresponds roughly to the total ever mined. Of this, about 40% has come from a single country, South Africa, all mined since Marx's death (Green, 1987, p.20). Of the total

in existence, more than half was produced after inauguration of the post-war monetary system at Bretton Woods in 1944 (Kessel, 1984, p.269. House of Representatives, 1980, Table 3, p.127). During the 1950s, central banking reserves took over half of new gold produced in capitalist countries. This proportion declined sharply in the 1960s, and in the 1970s the 'official sector' became a net seller of gold. Between 1980-87 the central banks reversed this trend as net purchaser of about 8% of new capitalist production. In recent years, 'reserve asset diversification by central banks' — i.e., exchange of 'rapidly depreciating US dollars for gold' — has been 'a growing feature' (Milling-Stanley, 1988, Table 1, p.29). Gold forms a substantial proportion of world central banking reserves: over 70 per cent, in the US. Despite its apparent disappearance within the evanescent forms of modern fiduciary currency, invisible bank account money, state paper reserves and international credit notes such as the Special Drawing Rights of the IMF, about a third of all gold ever mined is in central bank vaults, where it serves as bullion or world money (Green, 1987, p.120). In times of global crisis, as in Germany under Hitler, the rings of married women and even Jews' teeth have been converted into bullion. Post-war paper and credit forms of money represent only a conditional and limited emancipation of money from its material basis. To imagine that these will always continue adequately to represent value is a fantasy, in comparison with which the central banking system remains stubbornly materialist.

The greatest test of modern currencies this century took place between 1931 and 1934, when collapse of the Austrian, German, British and US banking systems resulted in a 40% rise in the dollar price of gold and a doubling in the ratio of the gold index to the index of imported goods. A former South African journalist, Lewis Sowden, reported how in the depth of the banking crises of the 1930s, 'all the world's wealth seemed to be gravitating to gold', while in Johannesburg 'the floor of the Stock Exchange was a turned into a wrestler's ring' where 'the brokers' men tore their coats from each other's backs (I saw them)'. Sowden relates his own empirical experience as a newspaperman of those days to the general world conditions of the time:

Boom ... boom ... When the world was still struggling out of the Great Depression ... and Hitler was rallying his gangs of S.S. ... South Africa found itself on the sunny side of the street and basked in the new warmth and brilliance of its gold production (pp.96-97).

The merit of Sowden here was to show empirically the truth of Marx's insight into the alternating, mutually opposed credit and money forms of value, which displayed themselves in 1931-34 as a living social antithesis.

The golden riches flowing from the mines were summed up at the time in the journal *Spark* (reported elsewhere in this issue) as 'the prosperity of the undertaker in a plague'. Frankel noted the 'extraordinarily rapid expansion of the national income after the change in the price of gold', beginning with Britain's departure from the gold standard in 1931 (1960, p.33). At the same time, the 'warmth and brilliance' of the gold boom in South Africa, so lucrative to capital, brought about the working to death of *millions* at Kolyma in the arctic goldfields of the Soviet Union under Stalin. For over 20 years, the 'sunny side of the street' for gold mining capital in South Africa expressed itself within the Soviet Union in these 'frozen Auschwitzes of the North', in the words of the poet Galanskov, who died in the camps (Conquest, 1979, p.214). Here, at the point of gold production, in Solzhenitsyn's phrase, was the 'pole of cold and cruelty' of Stalinist tyranny as a whole (p.126), which the SACP represented to the gold slaves of the Rand as a workers' paradise. But the relation of gold-mining in South Africa to its equivalent under Stalin is the subject of another article.

Money Today

There is no reason to think that since that time the money relation has ceased to be centrally located in a physical commodity. The advocates of sanctions against South African gold production ignore also the history of the 1960s, when every world currency crisis expressed itself as a gold crisis directed against this or that world currency. Sterling, the dollar, the franc, the Deutschemerk, each was weighed in the balance at the court of the money-commodity and each found wanting. Finally, in August 1971, the threat of massive gold withdrawals from the US set against its huge and swelling dollar liabilities abroad became too great for the dollar-exchange system set up at Bretton Woods in 1944, and the post-war order cracked. The fixed ratio of the dollar to gold ended with the ending of the automatic right of central banks to exchange dollars for gold at the US Treasury. Coming after inflationary funding by the US of its war in Vietnam at the expense of dollar-holders abroad, this set in motion further inflationary currents in world economy. These were reflected in the oil price rises of 1973 and 1979, the US inflationary crisis that drove the gold price up to \$850 an ounce in January 1980, its consequence in the extremely severe global recession of the early 1980s, followed by the Reagan state credit boom, the speculative share mania on Wall Street and its collapse in October 1987. World capitalism has survived the ending of a fixed relation of its currencies to gold, just as Britain — when it was the only really capitalist country — survived the suspension of cash payments in gold from 1797 to 1821, arising from its war with France. But the consequences then

and now are the same: 'great currency upheavals', 'great depreciation of paper money' and a 'marked rise in prices' (Roll, p.191).

The years 1973-75 were the period of the most serious world financial disorder since the 1930s. This included what was 'almost certainly the biggest emergency in British banking this century' (Reid, 1982, p.vii), with major banking failures also in Germany, Italy and the US. It followed the inauguration of floating exchange rates and purely managed currencies in 1973, separated from any formal relation to gold, and was preceded by a far smaller expansion of debt-inflated paper values than exists today. The Gold Information Centre, based in Geneva, was not wrong in pointing out that gold

... increased in value during the London Stock Market Collapse between October 1973 and January 1975, when the Financial Times All-Share Index fell by 67% — from 187 to 62, while gilts [government and other official bonds] fell to their lowest value since records were kept (1986, p.11).

The conclusion of this organization, funded by the South African gold producers, remains valid: 'Gold is one of the few investments that has survived — and even thrived — during times of economic uncertainty ...'

Pillay, Robbins and Hanlon neglect to point out that within the last 15 years there has already been one major attempt to depress the world gold price through official sales of gold, which failed dismally. Between 1976 and 1979, US Treasury and IMF gold auctions supplied over 25% of all gold coming on the market in a 'drive to demonetize gold', through official sales aimed at reducing the price (Green, 1982, pp.188-90). Yet far from falling, the price doubled. The result of this attempt to 'refuse the whole concept of gold as a monetary metal' was merely that several European banks (mainly in West Germany and Switzerland) 'lapped up the gold' at bargain prices, strengthening their own reserves at the expense of the US. In addition, two leading figures of the new Bush administration — Secretary of State Baker and Federal Reserve Board chairman Greenspan — came forward publicly last year not for less, but for a more formal, central place for gold in the international measurement of prices. These are poor omens for a campaign relying on official gold sales to depress the price.

For all that, Robbins anticipates victory for his strategy of attempting to turn the market against South African gold production. This follows reported agreement of the Italian jewellery manufacturers — under pressure of the trade unions — to reduce purchases of SA gold. In 1986, about half of all new supplies entering the market went into manufacture of jewellery, in which the Italian fabricators are supreme. Jewellery absorbs about one-

third of South Africa's production. However, the Italian manufacturers agreed on one condition: that 'the price remained the same' (*Guardian*, 3 December 1988). This is decisive. The fraction of new supplies going into jewellery is in decline, the trade has lost its former major markets in the Middle East and the US through adverse economic conditions, the new growth market in Japan is met partly by a growing local fabrication, while gold jewellery sales tend to fall off sharply in the event of a major rise in gold price. 'The jewellery industry will have to run hard just to stand still' (Green, 1987, p.175).

Marx, Proudhon, Keynes

It is a paradoxical truth that the serious bourgeois scholars and practical capitalists of South Africa are closer to Marx's theory of money than the self-imagined Marxists, whose theory of money is not that of Marx but Proudhon³. From empirical observation in the 1930s, Schumann — a real practical capitalist as well as theoretician of the system — developed a theory of the antithetical relation of gold production to the general production cycle. He stressed that profits and employment were maintained and even increased on the South African gold mines during the great depression: expression of what he understood as the 'unique' place of South Africa in the capitalist system, as its decisive gold producer. For Schumann, the effect of this central world role of the South African gold production on its internal business cycle was 'distinctly stabilizing' (p.333). Busschau, a former chairman of Gold Fields of South Africa as well as theoretician of the system, observed in 1960 that

Gold as the final means of settling international indebtedness can enter through doors which import controls close against against other commodities. And hence, from the establishment of the Union, South Africa could pay, without undue difficulty, for the capital goods it urgently needed to expand its total national production.

By comparison with the credit-fantasy of the South African left — its wishful abolition of the money-role of gold, its theoretical de-thronement of gold to a mere average commodity like any other, or an aberration of psychology — the past 20 years has amply justified Busschau's insight. In calling for an 'all-round increase in the official gold prices, including a substantial increase in the U.S. dollar price', and in his expectation of 'further credit inflation' arising out of Keynesian credit expansion which, he predicted, 'simply means another round of trouble', the South African gold producing capitalist proved he understood the system better in its long-range

development than his opponents at the centre of world credit production in Washington (1950, p.139).

Marx clearly distinguished the credit system from the money system, and commented caustically on psychological theories of gold in relation to capital. During his lifetime, Britain and increasingly also the other major countries of capitalism were on a gold standard, in which gold served as the material of coins in circulation as well as the banking reserve. The sovereign passing from hand to hand was a physical commodity possessing a substantial value. For Marx, history had made gold above all the material of money. He considered that money 'necessarily crystallizes out' of the transformation of products of labour into commodities.

In Marx's view,

... it was left to M. Proudhon and his school to declare seriously that the degradation of money and the exaltation of commodities was the essence of socialism and thereby to reduce socialism to an elementary misunderstanding of the inevitable correlation existing between commodities and money (1971, p.86).

He ridiculed

... the craftiness of petty-bourgeois socialism, which wants to perpetuate the production of commodities while simultaneously abolishing the 'antagonism between money and commodities', i.e. abolishing money itself, since money only exists in and through this antagonism. One might just as well abolish the Pope while leaving Catholicism in existence (*Capital I*, p.181, n.4)..

Keynes' critique of gold had something in common with the Proudhonian money-schema, though for different ends. J.K.Galbraith has said that if it had not been for 'the whole Keynesian design', involving state modification of the system, 'capitalism would not have survived'. He pays tribute to what Keynes in particular had 'done to save capitalism' (*Guardian*, 15 October 1988). During and after the great depression of the 1930s Keynes sought to hem in, if not eliminate, the money role of gold. His remark that gold was 'a barbarous relic' (Harris, p.375) is radically at variance with Marx's insight into the necessity of money, grounded in a definite commodity, once value forms develop to a certain level. For Marx it is capitalist production, in which gold as the material of money has a necessary place, that is a barbarous relic. Keynes, and co-thinkers such as Joan Robinson, looked forward to a happy age in which capitalism would 'kill off the gold mining industry' (*ibid.*, p.355). Alas, the renaissance of

gold mining internationally has seen off bourgeois society's former superstitious faith in Keynes. Yet even Keynes was more critical of gold production than is the South African left.

A theory of money abstracted from commodities is foreign to Marx. It is the merit of his theory that he derives money from ordinary mundane commodities, as their necessary form of expression. It is one of themselves, their equivalent, and only thus is it money. For Marx, money is a special kind of commodity, deriving its unique power as monarch from the world of commodities from which it arises, rather in the way that civil society gives birth to the state. While in various functions money is replaced by a token of itself — a process intrinsic to a metallic circulation, as well as paper — it is above all through the central banking system that gold retains in full its character as money through its functions as measure of value, as store of value and as world money. Indeed, all the more is it money *par excellence*, value-for-itself, as Marx analysed for his own day, the more bourgeois society over this century has had to 'economize' its gold. The division between states, reflecting competition on the world market between national capitals, reproduces the basic character of the market as a society founded upon separate isolated individual producers, each treating the other as alien to himself, and establishing their mutual social relations via the mediation of things. The view that competition at the level of the world's central banks has come to an end, and that harmony is all, radically misjudges the nature of the epoch.

Inflation and Depression

In the first half of its history as gold producer to the globe, South Africa sent the product of its mines to Britain, as banker to the world. When British finance capital lost its supremacy, exhausted by two world wars, the gold of South Africa flowed to the new world power of money-dealing capital, the United States, which assumed the role vacated by the Bank of England. For the past 20 years, beginning with the establishment of the 'two-tier' system for sales of gold in 1968, this financial supremacy of the United States as lender of last resort has been breaking down. When fault lines of such depth open up in the world economy, it is foolish to imagine that transition to a new world axis of money-dealing capital — securely grounded in the system — can take place without profound international shocks, both economic and political. The barbaric nature of South Africa, to which Keynes of course was blind, is expressive of the barbarism of the world social form it epitomizes.

The rise in gold price since 1971 was the *second* really major rise in price of bullion this century. The previous rise of 40% in US gold price in 1933-

34 was the outcome of a period not of rising commodity prices but of very low prices, reflecting global stagnation of production: the zenith of profitability. In the last resort, the immense expansion in gold production across the world during the 1980s — with its necessary result, a sharp decline in South Africa's world share — reflects both a response to the inflationary 1970s and anticipation of future worldwide recession. At least two major countries in world capitalist economy, the US and Britain, are likely to enter recession this year. A recent report from the US states:

The bond markets love a recession. They are already sensing the first whiff of a distant storm.

Fixed-income paper holders in the US can thank the central banks for lining up a worldwide deflation ... (*Times*, 17 October 1988).

An attempt to predict the major tendencies of 1989, published by the *Economist* at the end of last year, anticipates an 'impending round of financial collapses' and considers that a 'downturn in the trade cycle is certain some time fairly soon' (Goldring [ed.], pp.5,97). In light of the cyclical tendency towards recession, it continues to be true that gold 'remains the only universally accepted medium of exchange ... the lifebelt for all seasons, especially the dangerous ones' (Green, 1987, p.175).

Malinga, writing in the *African Communist* last year, noted that the dollar had 'ceased to be the most reliable store of value in the world' (p.51) [*was it ever? more than gold?*]. He failed to see that this must result in expanded production of the physical material of money. State, corporate, municipal as well as personal indebtedness in the US has increased all the more easily — alongside debt-racking of whole continents, involving usurious capital transfer to the richest regions of the globe — since the regulator of automatic gold withdrawal by the central banks was ended in 1971. But that does not make the dollars circulating through the vaults any more secure as a paper title. On the contrary, taking rises and falls together, the operation of the markets since 1973 under conditions of floating exchange rates has confirmed the place of gold as measure of values to the system. Alongside rising delirium on the share markets up to the crash of October 1987, the gold price in dollars rose like an avenging nemesis. Under conditions of accumulating disorders to the system, gold is all the more indispensable to it. An immensely expanded credit resting on a comparatively tiny point of gold in the central banks makes this relatively shrinking metal fraction so much the more important.

Marx's theory of money retains its truth today, just as in the long depression from 1873 to 1896, when the 'system was saved' by the sudden outpouring of gold from the South African mines (Kindleberger, p.222), and

in the depression of the 1930s when the devaluation of the US dollar 'had a special impact on gold-producing countries' resulting in 'expansion in the gold industry relative to other industries' (Friedman and Schwartz, pp.467,472). Given the lack of knowledge of Marx's money theory on the part of the South African left, it is important to set this out more fully.

For Marx, there are periods in which money serves not

... as a circulatory medium, as a mere transient agent in the interchange of products, but as the individual incarnation of social labour, as the independent form of existence of exchange-value, as the universal commodity. This contradiction comes to a head in those phases of industrial and commercial crises which are known as monetary crises. Such a crisis occurs only where the ever-lengthening chain of payments, and an artificial system of settling them, has been fully developed. Wherever there is a general and extensive disturbance of this mechanism, no matter what its cause, money becomes suddenly and immediately transformed, from its merely ideal shape of money of account, into hard cash. Profane commodities can no longer replace it. The use-value of commodities becomes valueless, and their value vanishes in the presence of its own independent form. On the eve of the crisis, the bourgeois, with the self-sufficiency that springs from intoxicating prosperity, declares money to be a vain imagination. Commodities alone are money. But now the cry is everywhere: money alone is a commodity! As the hart pants after fresh water, so pants his soul after money, the only wealth (*Capital I*, p.138).

In this contradiction, native to developed capital, lies the secret of the genesis and mature development of modern South Africa: the main world producer of money in its physical materiality, over the whole century since Marx's death. In opposition to capital in South Africa, with its racism and its state and its indispensable place for a century in relation to the money crisis, the sole point of leverage for a thorough-going revolution is its living human producer: that is, the collective social labourer, forcibly bringing the product of his own labour under his own conscious control. In dispensing with Marx's theory of money, the organisers and apologists of the economic boycott of South African goods dispense also with the revolutionary role of the proletariat, the producer of those goods: above all, the proletariat objectifying its labour in gold.

Money and Credit

By its role as gold producer to the globe, the proletariat of southern Africa has possessed a unique but unrecognized significance for the class as a whole. Whether through private or state hoards, the labour of all the world has in the last resort been measured principally against the gold-digging of these proletarians, whose labour three or four kilometres beneath the earth counts as direct equivalent to that of all the rest: as the representative of social labour *per se*, as the concrete expression of general abstract homogeneous human labour as such. It is this relation of equality with all human labour, mediated through its incarnation in gold, that the South African proletariat daily and continuously reproduces under the prison form of South African social conditions. This prison form is no accident, but the necessary expression of world capitalist social relations over the whole century, fixed, hypostatized, in the production of its metal reserve.

The metal reserve as 'pivot of the entire credit system' is essential to Marx's theory. A conception of capitalism without a theory of the necessary place of the metal reserve is a theory alien and hostile to that of Marx, who separates himself at the level of materialist philosophy on this matter from the wishful thinking of Proudhon.

The central bank is the pivot of the credit system. And the metal reserve, in turn, is the pivot of the bank. The change-over from the credit-system to the monetary system is necessary ... [The] greatest sacrifices of real wealth are necessary to maintain the metallic basis in a critical moment ... A certain quantity of metal, insignificant compared with the total production, is admitted to be the pivotal point of the system ... This social existence of wealth therefore assumes the aspect of a world beyond, of a thing, matter, commodity, alongside of and external to the real elements of social wealth. So long as production is in a state of flux this is forgotten. Credit, likewise, a social form of wealth, crowds out money and usurps its place. It is faith in the social character of production which allows the money-form of products to assume the aspect of something that is only evanescent and ideal, something merely imaginative. But as soon as credit is shaken — and this phase of necessity always appears in the modern industrial cycle — all the real wealth is to be actually and suddenly transformed into money, into gold and silver — a mad demand, which, however, grows necessarily out of the system itself (*Capital III*, pp.559-60).

Four times in this paragraph, Marx stresses the essential, necessary place

of the metal reserve — thus suggesting also its production, and its specific proletarian producer — as ‘the pivotal point during crises’ (ibid). For Marx, a pupil of Hegel’s dialectic, a category that he stresses as necessary is not to be excised from his theory by absence of study or a convenient catch-cry. The demise of Marx’s method is the sole means permitting so-called Marxists to advocate economic boycott of the South African gold producer. One has here a prejudice in favour of commodities, in absence of a theory of money.

The special difficulty in grasping money in its fully developed character as money — a difficulty which political economy attempts to evade by forgetting now one, now another aspect, and by appealing to one aspect when confronted by another — is that a social relation, a definite relation between individuals, here appears as a metal, a stone, as a purely physical, external thing ... [The] fundamental contradiction contained in exchange value, and in the social mode of production corresponding to it, here emerges in all its purity. We have already criticized the attempts made to overcome this contradiction by depriving money of its metallic form ... It must by now have become entirely clear that this is a piece of foolishness as long as exchange value is retained as the basis ... It is equally clear, on the other side, that to the degree to which opposition against the ruling relations of production grows, and these latter push ever more forcibly to cast off their old skin [nowhere more so in the 1980s than in South Africa] — to that degree, polemics are directed against metallic money or money in general, as the most striking, most contradictory and hardest phenomenon which is presented by the system in a palpable form. One or another kind of artful tinkering with money is then supposed to overcome the contradictions of which money is merely the perceptible appearance ... [They] are merely an attack on consequences whose causes remain unaffected ... (*Grundrisse*, pp.239-40).

Marx by contrast derives the concept of capital from that of money, which in turn he derives from a concept of commodities, that is, of value. The theory of value, and resting on it the theory of surplus-value, derive in turn with Marx from a concept of labour, the physical creative activity of living human producers. For Marx, in the last resort, the process of exploitation — of alienation of labour — ‘appears as a product of labour itself, as objectification of its own moments’. The tendency towards its relatively increasing impoverishment relative to expanding capital is ‘*its own product and result*’ (*Grundrisse*, pp.452,451). Thus for Marx, the problem presents itself along with its solution, since the chief victim of

this relation is its producer, the proletariat, which not merely objectifies itself in a manner which is loss to itself but is compelled by these conditions to gain control over its own self-production, to produce itself and the world in a rational and satisfying way. This is possible, and necessary, because all forms of abasement of the proletariat are ultimately the result of its own activity, production of self in a self-destructive form which merely requires to negate itself in order to turn the whole process right side up. To dispense with Marx's materialist theory of money is to obscure the exceptionally direct and uncomplicated role of gold-digging labour as revolutionary subject within this process. For Marx,

... labour which directly produces gold directly reveals a certain quantity of gold to be the product of, say, one working day ... In a word, in the direct production of gold, a definite quantity of gold directly appears as product and hence as the value, the equivalent, of a definite amount of labour time (*Grundrisse*, p.204).

It is this directness of form in the production of fundamental categories of bourgeois society that Marx stresses when he deals specifically with gold-digging labour. Such labour performed by wage-workers 'directly reveals' a relation between the productive activity of the workers and solid expanded value, passing from their own hands into the hands of the capitalist. This directness of form involves potentially superior conditions for the coming to consciousness of this proletariat, as a class both in and for itself: as revolutionary. It is no mere academic nicety when Marx insists that 'study of the precious metals as subjects of the money relations, as incarnations of the latter, is therefore by no means a matter lying outside the realm of political economy, as Proudhon believes ...' (*Grundrisse*, p.174).

The vulgarians promoting economic boycott reject Marx's theory, and his whole method, at its heart, pointing to conclusions antagonistic to the interests of the proletariat. The actual history of the system reveals the centrality of South African gold production to world bourgeois society for over a century, exhibiting the essence of capital as coercion of labour — while the proponents of economic boycott promote a notion of exploitation no different from that of bourgeois moralists. Marx died just too soon to see a whole sub-continent organised directly towards production of this pivot of the system in its crisis, through which the essence of the system as such becomes visible in 'the most striking and grotesque form of absurd contradiction and paradox' (*Capital III*, p.561).

The pre-supposition of the sanctions campaign is that world bourgeois economy is rational, but that South Africa constitutes its irrational appendix. The unity of the two is not grasped, i.e., the character of South

Africa as particular representative of the general through its production of the universal equivalent. The specific individuality of capital in South Africa is missed. Principally, it is the relation of gold production in South Africa to the tendency to crisis in the system as a whole that is lost: a necessary relation, growing out of the the system itself.

Just as the British war in South Africa of 1899-1902 was really a war against labour — a war directed towards maximum extraction of surplus labour from the gold-producing proletarians, through construction of a modern, centralized state machinery of coercion, despite all liberal phrases — so too the campaign for economic boycott of South African goods conceals a hostile relation to the proletariat. Through its mass unionization campaign since 1973, through its strike struggles, through its political general strikes and above all with the three-week strike of gold and coal mine workers of August 1987, the proletariat of South Africa has shown itself potentially a contender for power. It has taken a century of gold production in South Africa, with its attendant horrors, to bring it vividly before the eyes of the world. Defeated in its trade union battles on the mines — this is a central interest of capital and its apologists to prevent this class from becoming revolutionary. Capital and the boycotters converge, though not necessarily for the same reasons. Capital knows what it is doing, the boycotters (for the most part) do not.

The miners' strike preceded the global stock market collapse by a matter of weeks. These workers took up their collective test of strength with capital at a moment of acute instability for the system as a whole. If gold remains, as Marx argues, 'the pivotal point during crises', it is no small matter for capital that the subcontinent producing nearly half its annual new-mined gold should give birth at such a time to a potentially communist proletariat. Precisely this tendency towards a revolutionary overstepping of the barrier of capital lies suppressed and hidden in the boycott campaign, which has the aim (conscious or otherwise) not of emancipation of the proletariat but of making South Africa safe for capital, and equally of making capital safe from South Africa, from the threat of a communist and revolutionary proletariat.

It is the international character of capitalism in South Africa that is obscured in the sanctions campaign. South Africa's gold production relates to the system at its weakest point: the downturn of the production cycle, culminating in the money crisis. At the same time, it is the concretely universal role of the South African proletariat that is kept hidden, its tendency towards a communist solution to the emancipation-struggle of the whole class, to which it relates potentially as a detonator of revolution. The South African proletariat, still very far from Marxism, can both trigger off and urgently needs revolution elsewhere. Insofar as economic boycott assists

in breaking down the numbers of this proletariat outside the gold mines, it weakens the specific weight of this class in the society as a whole. Indirectly it assists in raising up the political hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie, supplementing the efforts of capital to set against the trade unions a mass of small proprietors. These, organized now on the basis of their own class interests in groups such as the Southern African Black Taxists Association and the National Association of Hawkers, and spread throughout the country in the so-called 'informal economy', constitute the only sector to show expansion in the combined recession and inflation conditions of the late 1980s. Monitored, nurtured and sustained by the think-tanks and foundations of capital, the economic organisation of the small proprietors promotes the conscious strategy of capital to find yet another mass lever of support among blacks against a potentially communist proletariat, grounded in big industry. Thus also the recent sermonising by the bourgeoisie under the rubric: 'Small is beautiful'.

U.S. and Japan

The critique now moves to an examination of the goal of the sanctions campaign: the goal, not of revolution, but of de-stabilization of capital in South Africa, in the interests of a change of form of bourgeois rule. This campaign has a number of disparate effects. Firstly, it tends towards demobilization of the proletariat through reduced production for export of various non-gold commodities. Because of the central stabilizing place of gold production in South Africa, it is a campaign that is likely to prove fruitless even if individual sections of capital are damaged. Secondly, it strengthens the position of the most anti-union management through transferral of capital from foreign to local hands. Thirdly, it spreads illusions within the working class about the benevolent nature of capital, whereas the opposite is needed: conscious independence of the workers on their own behalf, in relation to all philanthropic schemes. Lastly, but most important, trade sanctions provide scope for more intense ideological poisoning of the workers of the main capitalist countries, at a time when nationalist protectionism is increasingly invoked.

The advocates of sanctions argue that decline in the number of workers, and the corresponding increase in the number of non-producers, is a sacrifice worth the price. It might be so, for some. But aside from the immediate cost to the workers turned out of work, that is to injure the most basic force of revolution in South Africa. The economic foundation to the period of uprisings both of 1976 and of 1984-87 was the expansion of capital during the 1960s, 1970s and in the early 1980s, involving growing strength of the proletariat in production. The confidence imparted to black workers by their

increasing indispensability to capital, especially in semi-skilled and even skilled jobs, in which a sellers' market prevailed, communicated itself throughout the society, not least to the youth. In this light, the sanctions campaign appears as an attempt to negate the revolutionizing side of capital, its creation of a proletariat, much in the spirit of the Russian narodniks at the end of the last century. For those interested in development of the proletarian revolution in South Africa, it is self-contradictory to campaign for a reduction in the working class. This can only swell the already vast reserve army of unemployed workers acting as a brake on the struggles of the employed workers, and as a drag on wages. To campaign for the de-industrialization of South Africa is to campaign for its de-proletarianization, undermining the social base on which the whole movement against current conditions depends. In this, the boycott campaign is directly anti-worker and anti-revolutionary, serving to break down the only class that can carry through the transformation of Africa.

At the same time, transferral of capital from foreign into South African hands (less open to international working class pressure) represents a definite step backwards in freedom of manoeuvre of the workers. Here, too, the results of the boycott campaign are contrary to what its supporters proclaim. In practice, the effect of sanctions is to complement the anti-labour legislation of the state and attacks by capital on the unions, sapping the class gains of the period from 1973 to 1987.

It is in its international consequences, however, that the silly game of sanctions is most serviceable for imperialist political ends. It is theoretically impermissible to abstract the South African question, and thus the sanctions campaign, from decisive movements in world affairs. A major determinant in coming years will be the struggle for hegemony now under way between Japan and the US, with western Europe joined in the EC as third contender. Earlier this century it took two world wars and the depression of the 1930s, including defeat of the proletariat by both Stalinism and Nazism, for hegemony to be transferred from the collective finance capital of London to Wall Street. To imagine that transition to a third, new, firmly grounded, bourgeois world hegemonist — the only possible basis for a new long-range boom — can proceed outside a series of horrors even worse than before, ignores the historical dialectic of capitalism as a world system over this century.

Few in South Africa realise that US economic sanctions were the immediate source of general imperialist war in the far east in December 1940. A recent study by a historian at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, reports that in 1941,

... British Minister of Production Oliver Lyttleton, in a moment of

rare candour, admitted that the Japanese had been provoked into attacking the Americans at Pearl Harbour. Lyttleton's observation was based on his recognition that economic factors [principally sanctions on imports of oil, but also on metals, textiles and foodstuffs] brought against Japan by the Allies left the Japanese with no option other than to fight ... [It] is generally recognized that economic factors were crucial in Japan's decision to go to war ... (Willmott, p.67).

Seen in this light, the shift in role towards the proletariat in South Africa of the Reverend Leon Sullivan is significant. Sullivan, an influential figure in bourgeois black politics in the US, is one of those gentlemen of the cloth who seek to persuade the world on the South African question that God is on the side of justice, equality, freedom and the US Constitution. In 1977 and 1984 he played a leading part in drafting the Sullivan Principles for US companies producing in South Africa (now called the Statement of Principles). Under this code, various concessions at the workplace were won in US-owned plants which permitted wider scope for the workers' struggle to develop. The mass uprising of 1984-87, followed by withdrawal of US capital or its change of hands (as in the car industry), left Sullivan's Principles floating in the air. Nearly a quarter of all signatories withdrew between July 1987 and July 1988 alone (*Weekly Mail*, 15-22 December 1988). Sullivan then sought himself another role: from a reformist evangelism directed to the workers in South Africa, he has moved to threatening a consumer boycott among US blacks against countries continuing to trade or produce in South Africa, to the disadvantage of US capital that has withdrawn. Improvement in the workers' material conditions of life gives way to the trade war between capitals. Solicitude for the workers of southern Africa becomes solicitude for US profits. Reformist politics acquires a cutting edge: xenophobia of the declining world power of capital. If Sullivan's Principles operated previously on balance to the advantage of the working class in South Africa, in their second coming they are aimed squarely at the rising sun of capital, Japan. Their content is global imperialist rivalry for sources of profit, raw materials and markets. In this chauvinistic agitation, the question of South Africa is introduced as a moralistic, higher spiritual, religious cover for the ordinary profane self-interest of the US capitalist class.

The campaign for sanctions against capital in South Africa bears an inner relation to this rising tendency towards economic warfare between the capitalist powers. Sullivan's new testament on South Africa is at one with the Reverend Jesse Jackson's wing of the Democratic Party, in its campaign against 'slave labour abroad' used allegedly to 'undercut organised labour at home' (*Guardian*, 29 March 1988). Jackson expresses here the classic social

chauvinism of bourgeois society in crisis, aiming to chain workers to their 'own' capitalists by setting them at the throats of workers elsewhere. Social nationalism of this kind is sister to the proposed Gephardt Amendment, which sought to penalize countries enjoying trade surpluses with the US by means of mandatory trade sanctions. Though the amendment failed in committee, Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act was used in 1987 to impose sanctions against Japanese semi-conductor importers. A new Omnibus Trade Act then became law in mid-1988, empowering the president to impose wholesale sanctions against any rival capital proving too successful in the US market. The very first act of 1989 was renewed trade war in agricultural commodities between the US and the EC. This is the political climate in the US, in which sanctions legislation on the South African question appears as its ethical sublimation. 'American self-righteousness and xenophobia reach their height when tied with US self interest' (*Financial Weekly*, 29 September 1988).

Paralleled by symptoms of rising xenophobia in Japan, this nationalistic virus arises from imperialist competition on the world market in the period of downturn in the production cycle, as in the 1930s. The South African sanctions campaign has now become a subordinate thread in the context of inter-imperialist struggle for mastery on the world market. It is likely that the declining world power — the US — will in its own interest seize the stick of South African sanctions with which to beat its more vigorous rival, Japan. There is no other political context in which general trade sanctions by the US against capital in South Africa will be undertaken. The promoters of economic sanctions on South Africa thus appear as the creature of one arm of world imperialism against another in the battle for profit: the classic role of reformist, nationalist and Stalinist politics.⁴

US capital first entered South African gold production as a major factor seventy years ago, through participation of the Morgan banking interests in the flotation of Anglo American Corporation in 1917. At that time, 'American' meant Morgans and 'Anglo' meant Rothschilds. The US was then in its capitalist ascendancy, as war-creditor to Britain. US moralism on the South African question is now principally an expression of its loss of world supremacy in banking and the stock exchange, which has passed to Japan. In 1987 the top six banks in the world in terms of assets minus negative charges were all Japanese (*Banker*, July 1988)⁵, Japan was the world's biggest creditor nation, while the biggest of its securities companies, Nomura, was worth 'far more than the market value of all US securities firms combined' (Viner, p.13). In the changed world conditions of the 1980s, 'a handful of Japanese financial institutions has the power to ravage the American economy...' (ibid., p.216). US action against the gold producer, South Africa — including its credit strike of August 1985 —

conceals the *de facto* gravitation of the South African gold producer out of the US orbit towards the new master of money capital, Japan.

With trade worth US\$4.3 billion, Japan is now Pretoria's biggest partner ...

Japan's trade with South Africa was nearly US\$1 billion higher in 1987 than in 1985 ...

The US tops the list of countries that have cut trade with South Africa; its imports fell by US\$965 million in 1985-87 (*South*, October 1988).

For the South African bourgeoisie, this realignment of trade towards the rising capital under pressure of its declining rival marks a strategic re-orientation of its essential interests.

Relative to the yen as a potential world reserve currency, Japan holds a meagre gold reserve. Its post-war rise as an economic power, first in industry — producing today 50% of the world's ships, 25% of its cars, 90% of its videos and 40% of its integrated circuits (Walford, 1988, p.55) — was financed on the basis of dollar reserves and a very high ratio of debt to owned capital, when credit was cheaper than today. A reverse process has now taken place, with Japan extending credit abroad in a period of relatively high interest rates. Japan is again a net exporter of capital, as in the 1930s, only at a qualitatively much higher level. Yet as chief world creditor, funding one-third of the US budget deficit, Japan's official gold holdings were only 754 tonnes in 1986, by comparison with 8,150 tonnes in the hands of the US (Green, 1987, p.191). Given that international use of the yen is being 'prudently encouraged by the actions of the Japanese authorities' (Roosa, 1986, p.58), the gold reserve at its base can only increase, to the advantage of capital in South Africa. A fall on the Japanese share market, which rose higher than other major exchanges last year, would accelerate not reverse this tendency. In addition, no major capitalist power has stronger motive for resisting general trade sanctions. Because of its limited natural resources, 'Japan's dependence upon exports of its goods and its equal and parallel dependence upon imports of food [also raw materials and oil], render the nation perpetually vulnerable to trade sanctions' — far more than the US (Viner, p.218).

The 'world's greatest reservoir of liquidity' (*ibid.*, p.213) is thus least likely to participate in sanctions on gold directed against the country that remains the greatest reservoir of production of the material of the bank reserve. Further, despite the fall in gold price by about 15% (roughly \$75/oz.) from the end of 1987 to end of 1988, and relatively high production costs compared with newer mines in other continents, the prospect for the South African gold mines is not more bleak than it

appeared on the eve of the great depression in 1929, when there was actual net disinvestment and when state and gold mining officials predicted a decline in output of between 30 and 48% over the immediate future (Mlynarski, 1929, pp. 18-19). Within a few years, however, world financial crisis had produced the gold boom, greatly strengthening capital in South Africa.

Towards a Socialist Solidarity Campaign

In 1986, in the same month as the calls by Denis Healy and the *Economist* for a cut in gold price to bring change in South Africa, a British academic, Laurence Harris, noted that the aim of the world central banks — far from precipitating a ‘gold-bust’ — was ‘to ensure that despite the [South African] debt-crisis, South Africa’s large economy with its control over gold production was not cut off from the Western world’s financial system’. The interest of the central banks lay in ensuring that South Africa’s debt crisis ‘did not put the international financial system at strain’. Harris observed that in the long term,

... even if less profitable than previously, the South African economy is such a key element of the West’s international economy that banks have a strong interest in regularising its financial position. This finds expression particularly in the central banks of the US, UK and continental Europe, and among strategically minded policymakers of the major international banks (Harris, pp.810-11,813).

The sanctions argument rests on ignorance of South Africa’s relation to the tendency to crisis in world economy in the present period. If the collapse of Franklin National Bank in 1974 threatened a ‘potentially devastating collapse’ of the whole US credit system (Melton, 1985, p.160), since its liabilities threatened the reserves of the state rescue agency — the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) — it is the credit of the US state itself that is now to be tested. On the day after the global stock market crash in October 1987, world economy was saved from collapse only through a further massive state inflation of credit in the US.⁶ With the bank failures and savings and loans failures of 1987/88, and a ratio of interest payments to earnings in its industrial base of over 50 percent (*Economist*, 24 September 1988), it is the ‘almost complete, unquestioning confidence’ (Melton, *ibid.*) of US and international financial capital in the FDIC that stands between accumulating financial disorders and a really serious collapse. In opposition to the solid wealth dug out of South Africa, the financial legacy of the 1980s in the US is state nationalization of a growing

debt, with rising interest paid in a depreciating dollar. These are not conditions for global financial stability. The consequences must be directly favourable to gold production, in South Africa and elsewhere.

Contrary to the monetary illusion of emancipation through economic sanctions, by courtesy of world capital, the interest of the proletariat in southern Africa requires that the burden of capital be taken off its back by socialist revolution in the decisive money centres of the globe: in Japan, the United States and western Europe. That is the only sanction that can seriously assist it. However, specific acts of solidarity, directed towards determinate goals, striking definite instruments of oppression from the oppressor's hand, are by contrast to a general economic boycott fully realisable. The object here, however, is strictly concrete and limited, aimed towards building up — not breaking down — the strategic and tactical position of the proletariat as a class. In such concrete, limited and particular actions of solidarity, the unity of the proletariat as the universal class can be brought forward as a conscious process in such a way that the power of the workers within southern Africa is strengthened, not weakened. What is needed is action by the working class abroad, in consultation with workers' organizations in South Africa, aimed at forcing specific improvements in the workers' conditions of battle.

Preparation should be made towards international class action against the British Tyre and Rubber Company (BTR), demanding recognition of the metalworkers' union NUMSA, release of its general secretary Mayekiso, reinstatement of the sacked workers at the BTR Sarmcol plant at Howick, compensation for the victimized workers and their families (see 'Body Count Natal' in this issue) and satisfaction of the workers' wage demands. This is both more feasible than a campaign of sanctions on gold and would directly strengthen the proletariat. Every effort should be made to put into the workers' hands those elements of enlightenment, and organization that the state — supported by the international of capital — deprives them of. A similar campaign requires to be developed against Consolidated Gold Fields, through its world-wide interests in the road construction corporation, ARC. This should aim at improvements in the working and living conditions of the workers in ConsGold's South African mines, among the most despotic of all in their administration. Practical international action is needed urgently to save the lives of mineworkers such as Dilizintaba Nomnganga, on death row for their part in the class battles on the mines. Workers should stop all trade with South Africa in material for military and police purposes. In place of the ANC/SACP/AAM strategy of economic sanctions plus political negotiations directed towards a settlement with capital, a socialist strategy would strengthen the workers for a revolution against capital.

In contrast to the mirage of victory through economic sanctions, the

proletariat of South Africa requires above all, clarity. It is a long way from being theoretically equipped to make the revolution it requires. Emancipation can be achieved only by the working class itself; but this demands a genuine enlightenment, as well as class organization, both national and international. The sanctions campaign is a misleading folly. As a barrier to consciousness and to organization, it must be rejected.

NOTES

1. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), French socialist writer. A biography sympathetic to his ideas is by Hyams (1979).

2. Minorco's £2.9 billion takeover bid for Consolidated Gold Fields in September 1988 was to secure 'Anglo's getaway vehicle come the revolution on the Rand' (*Financial Weekly*, 29 September 1988). The AAM's plea to Mrs Thatcher's minister, Lord Young, and ConsGold's plea to President Reagan employed the same argument: that Minorco's bid should be rejected, on grounds of the strategic defence interest of the imperialist state (*Guardian*, 11 October 1988. FT, 6 October 1988). It was a representative of ConsGold interests, Michael Fuller-Good, who declared at the height of the miners' strike in 1987 that blacks were intellectually incapable of competing with whites, and that the migrant labour system existed because blacks preferred it (*Observer*, 9 August 1987).

3. The pioneer study attempting to understand modern South Africa through a serious reading of Marx's *Capital* is by Williams (1975). This study involves major problems of theory, some of which are referred to by Clarke (1978). However these along with the merits of the work — outstanding in comparison with what preceded it — have so far remained unexplored at the level of serious critique by the South African left. The conception against which Williams developed his argument (the SACP theory of 'colonialism of a special type', as advanced by Harold Wolpe) has still not found a defender adequate to Williams, who establishes that 'the real barrier to capitalist development in South Africa is none other than capital itself ...' (p.28).

4. As far back as April 1984, the Interim Committee of the IMF expressed 'profound concern over the growth of protectionist practices' (quoted in Roosa [1986], p.52). Recently the press reported: 'Brussels and Washington tussle on brink of all-out trade war' (*Guardian*, 23 November 1988). In December the Montreal conference of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) ended in disarray.

5. Only one US bank in 1987 came within the top 30 globally (Citicorp, in 8th place), as against 18 Japanese banks (*Banker*, July 1988). The US banks had been severely hit by large provisions against non-payment of debt and by depreciation of the dollar.

6. Batra (1988) writes of the global crash of October 1987 as 'merely a preliminary tremor, a mild preview of a greater upheaval yet to come' — indeed, a 'mini-crash'. He recalls: 'Whenever times are tumultuous, people turn to gold' (pp.12, 161).

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SPARK AND THE 'RED NUN'

Baruch Hirson

Spark — A Revolutionary Journal

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

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

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

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

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

Clare Goodlatte, Teacher

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

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

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

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

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

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

Associate, but not Bachelor, of Laws] in 1885, and her teacher's diploma at the University of Cambridge in 1886.³ She had advanced almost as far as possible in an era in which women had few openings in higher education, and when ordinary degrees were not open to them in Great Britain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Retirement

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

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

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

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

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

The Journalist

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Move to Liberalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Socialist

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

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

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

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

Uprooted].

The Revolutionary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

References

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SELECTIONS FROM SPARK

THE WORKERS PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA (Editorial: Vol.1, No.1, March 1935)

The man in the street, when he looks at the world in general and compares it with this country, will most probably come to the conclusion that he is living in a paradise. Sheltered from all the storms that are raging in Europe, now here, now there, from the nightmare of war with its battlefields, air-attacks, gas-attacks, nightmares of revolution with its uprisings, general strikes, unemployed hunger-marchers, South Africa to his way of thinking is extremely lucky. 'A stable economic order, sound finance, honest administration', unlimited treasure in its gold mines, in its cheap and submissive labour: what more could Capitalism ask for? And he is convinced that Capitalism is the best possible system and that South Africa is going to remain a paradise for ever. We might very well leave this conventional fool in his fool's paradise were it not for the worker who unfortunately is being influenced by this conventional view, is losing faith in the working-class movement and is becoming unwittingly, a supporter of Capitalism.

History *seems* to pass on without leaving any trace of effect upon South Africa, upon the psychology of the people, upon their outlook. And this applies not only to the upholders of Capitalism, the upper and middle classes, but to the subjected and exploited as well. In spite of the lessons of the last three and four decades, the utter failure of the policy of reforms and gradualism, of British Labourism and Fabianism in the political field, and of class collaboration of Trade Unionism on British lines in the economic field of the Labour Movement: in spite of the lessons of the post-war period, on the one hand the successful Russian Revolution, which liberated the working class and poor peasantry from Capitalist exploitation and national oppression, and on the other hand, the general crisis of Capitalism, as a result of the resistance of Social Democracy to the revolutionary change, the advent of Fascism in a number of countries and a growth of the disease in almost every country, a last effort of rotting Capitalism to save itself by any means in spite of the terrific crisis which is now in its sixth year, a crisis which has revealed the rottenness and vileness of the system in its wholesale destruction of commodities, while people are starving for lack of them, which has revealed the inability of Capitalism to control the productive forces, has revealed its anarchy and inner contradictions in spite of the terrible misery inflicted on the working and oppressed masses, the lowering of their standard of living, the 'speed-up' methods, the chronic

unemployment and repression, conditions crying out for a revolutionary change, in spite of all this, Marxism has so far not succeeded in getting a firm foothold in the working-class of the English-speaking countries, and the great bulk of workers in South Africa, are either unaware of their historic role as the only progressive class in society, or they are indifferent, or they still entertain illusions concerning Democracy, Education, and a peaceful and gradual 'growing into socialism' by way of reforms.

Why is it? How can we account for it, and explain it? It is certain that a correct answer to this question is of vital importance to the working-class movement of South Africa as a whole, and in particular to the Workers Party of South Africa. For history has proved beyond any doubt that only revolutionary Marxism can bring victory to the working and oppressed people, and that all the distortions — Revisionism, Menshevism, Economism, Austro-Marxism — can end only in disaster. No middle way is possible. *Either* the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, *or* the dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, that is, Fascism, war, barbarism, destruction.

In the first place it must be admitted that the objective conditions were not very favourable for a revolutionary movement. Here in South Africa, Capitalism has succeeded, more completely perhaps than elsewhere, in dividing the working-class, using in full the strong racial prejudices. It was not only skilled against unskilled, higher paid against lower paid, as in other countries, but it was also White against Black. The miserable wage (if it can be called a wage) paid the unskilled, to the Native, and the tremendous profits and super-profits derived from the enormous exploitation, made it possible for Capitalism here to bribe the skilled worker, the white worker, with a higher wage, a much higher standard of living, than in the countries of Europe. The white worker has as a general rule become an aristocrat of labour, and by ceaseless capitalist propaganda carried on by the Church, the Press, the Schools, and 'public opinion', has been kept separate, economically, culturally, and socially, from his black fellow-worker. Indirectly he has become the supporter of Capitalism, the supporter of Segregation, the supporter of the Colour Bar. And here we find the objective conditions for such a strange phenomenon as the South African Labour Party, which even among so-called Labour Parties, *has no equal* in its slave driver's policy and programme.

The Native worker, usually a worker only of the first generation, coming from the Reserve or the Kraal, backward, downtrodden, uneducated, could not at once shake off his tribal way of life, his barbaric naivety, and his suspicion of the white man, whom he could not imagine in any other role than that of an oppressor. Marxism was too much for him as a start.

And yet it would be wrong to assume that the failure lay in the objective conditions only. There are two historical facts which would refute such an

assumption. First, the Russian Revolution, and secondly, the temporary successes of Marxism in South Africa during the years 1920–1926.

Those who have studied the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia can easily see that many of the objective drawbacks of South Africa existed in pre-revolutionary Russia: backwardness, illiteracy, divisions on racial grounds. Yet all this, though it had far-reaching results after the Revolution, *did not prevent* the Revolution, because there was a revolutionary Marxist Party which knew how to fight against those obstacles and remove them from the revolutionary path.

The other encouraging fact which cannot be denied was the formation and growth of the Communist Party of South Africa. Those who read the old issues of *The Bolshevik* and *The Bolshevik*¹, those who know the great amount of propaganda and educational work done by the Communist Party of that time, who have studied the formation and successful development of the I.C.U., the strikes of 1921 and 1922,² and the slow penetration of the wall of racial prejudice, must admit that the failure has not been the result of objective conditions only, but of subjective weaknesses as well. The mere fact that the leaders of the Marxist Movement in South Africa were mostly foreigners was a serious drawback. Both the white workers and the intelligentsia looked upon it as a foreign movement and stood aloof. Trying to force the pace and unable to perceive the psychological factor in the racial cleavage, the Communist leaders antagonized the two sections to an even greater degree.

There were besides many blunders and mistakes on the part of the leadership. The role of the intelligentsia was not well understood and thus a useful ally was neglected. And then came the big change. The zigzag policy of Stalinism in the Comintern, the policy of breaking with the existing Trade Unions and building up separate revolutionary Red Trade Unions, the fatal slogan of 'A Native Republic', the theories of the Third Period, of Social Fascism, of the United Front From Below Only³ — all these could not but have most disastrous effects on the revolutionary movement. The best elements of the Party, those who were trying to raise a critical voice, were expelled, driven away, branded as counter-revolutionary. In a short time the Communist party was reduced to ruins. The degeneration of the small Communist Party of South Africa was merely a part, on a small scale, of the greater degeneration of the entire Communist International. The more the various Communist Parties of the world followed out the dictates of the Comintern, the more impotent, sectarian, and useless they became. 'National Bolshevism' broke the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. The need for a new International became imperative.

But this was not all. In their blunders and ukases they managed to compromise the very name 'Communist', just as the Social Democrats did

with the name 'Socialist'. Because of this, and in order to escape possible confusion, and to avoid placing a handicap on the new Party from the start, we have had to drop the name originally chosen, 'The Communist League'⁴ and to adopt instead a new name THE WORKERS PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Notes by Editor

1. Presumably 1920 (the black miners' stike), and 1922 (the white miners' strike).

2. This seems to be a mistake. I have found no file of the *Bolshevist* and there is no reference to this title in any history of the CPSA. The editor(s) undoubtedly meant the *International*

3. The Comintern declared in the late 1920s that in the coming years, called the 'Third Period', world capitalism would be in crisis, and the objective conditions for its overthrow had arrived. Communists were instructed to set up revolutionary red trade unions and break with reformist bodies. All those belonging to groups outside the official communist parties were dubbed 'social fascists', and alliances with leaders of such movements were forbidden. Instead, the communist parties were told to participate only in united fronts with rank and filers — a mistaken tactic which proved to be a complete failure. In South Africa, despite the opposition of S.P. Bunting, the CPSA was instructed to campaign under the slogan of a Native Republic. This led to the near collapse of the party.

4. After the split in the Lenin Club, the majority adopted the name 'Communist League of South Africa', and the minority became the Workers Party of South Africa. It is not certain whether *Spark* No.1 appeared before or after the split. The above editorial resembles the May Day manifesto of the Lenin Club in 1934. I have only found two copies of the Communist League paper, *Workers Voice*, Vol.1, No.3, October 1935, and Vol.1, No.6, February 1936.

* * * * *

THE TWO NATIVE BILLS

Editorial: Vol.1, No.3, May-June 1935

'Whoever consoles the slave instead of arousing him to revolt against slavery aids the slaveholder' (Feuerbach)

The Union Parliament, or rather the Select Committee of both Houses, has presented the country for its 25 years jubilee with two Native Bills. And without doubt these Bills can justly be considered the crowning work of 25 years of repressive legislation.

To the revolutionary Marxists, who have followed the so-called Native

policy of the Union Government since the famous Botha's Natives Land Act (which even the bourgeoisie calls the Act to keep the Natives out of the land), and who saw in their true perspective the Black Manifesto and the Smithfield speeches of our true Christian guardian, this crowning work, *The Natives Parliamentary Representation Bill* and *The Native Trust and Land Bill*, will cause no surprise. For at least we know that the oppressed classes and races can expect no justice from British Imperialism or from Colonial Capitalism. The crimes of both have no limit.

The publication of these Bills has been a shock to some archaic liberals of the Victorian school, or to humanitarian or Unitarian fools, who believe, or at least pretend to believe in the ultimate victory of 'democracy' — bourgeois 'democracy'. The shock is so great that they — who are the first to protest against the setting fire by a white brute to a Native hut, or such cases as the inhumanly blinded Sabatini, and similar minor brutalities of the white man's Christian rule — they have been plunged under a cold douche and can do no more than gasp. We may leave them to themselves until they recover and regain their power of speech. Those whom we have in mind, with whom we are preoccupied, are the Native town worker and the Native intellectual, who unfortunately are still listening to the missionaries, to the liberals, to the Professor Brookses and Jabavus, and are still centring their hopes in their King, in English liberal tradition, and so on. And they, the Brookses, the Jabavus, the Ballingers, the Marquards, who are the disappointed, the shocked, who are consoling the Native, they are the enemies of the Native.

We are not disappointed, we are not shocked. British Imperialism, British finance capital, is everywhere the same, true to itself, in India, in China, in Egypt, in South Africa. To expect from them an improvement in the lot of the oppressed people, oppressed economically, culturally, nationally and socially, is just as idiotic as to expect money from an octopus! Like the octopus it has but one function — to suck, suck, suck. The colonial people are its defenceless prey. True, even the octopus must sometime leave its prey, when it has to fight another octopus or some other deadly enemy. Then the British octopus had to fight the slave-driving Dutch sharks, then indeed they gave concessions to the Bantu and the Coloured. Then they gave them sham-equality and liberty; they gave them the vote. But that time has passed. The robbers have come to terms and now we have this delicious cake of Fusion. Those who have noted our spoken and written words for the last two years can well remember our analysis of this beautiful cake and our forecast *how* it will be used against the oppressed and workers of this country. All those [re]sounding fanfares, those solemn phrases, that decorative sweetness ('burying the hatchet', forgetting 'the lifelong strife' and establishing 'peace and unity in South Africa for the welfare and benefit

of all') could deceive only simpletons of the Ballinger type, who are now counting up the number of Englishmen and Dutchmen respectively in the Select Committee, and asking: Where is English liberalism gone? We said at the time: The robbers have come to terms, not in order to give concessions to the workers, not in order to improve the lot of the Bantu workers and peasants, but to attack them, to exploit them more extensively and intensively, and to take away from them the remnants of such political rights as the subjected classes had succeeded in wresting from them in the years when the robbers were at loggerheads.

The driving force for Fusion were (i) the division of the spoils, cheap and ever cheaper labour, the real source of the ruling classes' profits, and their power and luxury; and (ii) the elimination of competition for this cheap labour.

For these reasons British Imperialism dropped its liberal cloak, which had fulfilled so useful a purpose in the past, giving Britain a hold on the imagination of the Bantu and Coloured (England the true friend of Native, devotion to Queen Victoria, to the Union Jack, etc.); and surely the liberal readers of the *Cape Times* must have wept in silence over this change of front, while they studied in editorial columns the shameless defence of the Representation Bill, and when they read there that overseas critics of South African Native Policy 'will today find themselves astonished at the generally liberal nature of the proposals'; and that a 'really honest attempt has been made upon liberal lines to enable them to work out their destiny under the white man's guidance in fuller and freer measure than ever before'. All this about a Bill which deprives the Native of the vote! However deeply we may compassionate such liberals as the Rev.R. Balmforth, Mr.Wm. Ballinger, Mr.L. Marquard, or Sir James Rose-Innes, in their shocked grief, we must rejoice that British Imperialism has come out at last in its true colours. For it is the mind of the Bantu millions that concerns us, and their old illusion of British Imperialism, and their faith in that illusion, still cloud their consciousness and prevent their awakening. It is for us to see that this illusion is destroyed.

For the same reason South African Capitalism has had to drop the dream of Independence. In the hope of realizing another dream, the dream of Segregation, they have had to drop the first. When there comes a competition between sentiment and profit, capitalism always chooses profit. Botha, Smuts, and now Hertzog have all had to tread the same road. This month we have seen Hertzog in the suite of British Imperialism at the Jubilee celebrations in London! The Empire is now his greatest ideal! How many fighters of the old Republics must have mourned in their homesteads over this final triumph of British Imperialism! And however we may pity the relics of bygone days, with its Stofbergs and its van der Merwes, we

must nevertheless learn for ourselves the revolutionary lesson. We must realize that the hopes for a revolutionary fight of South African Capitalism versus British Imperialism has no longer any foundation — it is a thing of the past. We have to deal with a united enemy, with Imperialism-Capitalism.

But leaving aside for the moment the advantages and disadvantages arising from these two points for the revolutionary movement, we turn again to Fusion. We have said that as a result of Fusion we have now a first blow — these two Bills. Others will follow. That means that these Bills would have been impossible without fusion. It is common knowledge that since 1925 Gen. Hertzog has tried hard to deprive the Natives in the Cape of their franchise. His efforts were unsuccessful, because the necessary two-thirds majority could not be obtained. But now, suddenly, 'the old passions have lost their intensity', the atmosphere has essentially 'changed', and with good feeling, with give and take'. Coalition and Fusion have done the rest, and, 'as a revival of the old passions *would break up the government*, the Bills are likely to reach the Statute Book'. Thus it is clear that this was the pre-arranged price for Fusion, that the voting in the Select Committee was a farce, for 'a revival of the old passions would break up the government'.

In this way Segregation, the dream of the African slave-drivers, is realized. The 'Master and Servant' division of Piet Retief a hundred years ago is again alive. The Native as the hewer of wood and drawer of water came back to life in the Civilized Labour Policy of the entire Fusion government. A white South Africa! The Native is not considered a part of the population of South Africa. He is an alien, a leper, who must be segregated. Nay, more. According to Smuts he is not even a human being. 'The Native in South Africa is the most enduring animal', said Gen. Smuts to a non-European audience in U.S.A. a few years ago. A man may well rub his eyes and wonder whether he is living in 1935 or 1835. In South Africa the clock is put back.

Yet it would be a big mistake to put the whole blame on the shoulders of the Dutch, or on the Northern Provinces of the Union. Was not the initiation in this policy taken by the Cape in 1894 when the Glen Grey Act was passed? And near about that time, in 1892, were not restrictions and qualifications put upon the franchise in order to make the Native vote ineffective? After that it was only necessary to remove those restrictions from the European franchise, and, behold! there you had the political segregation line. Then the women's franchise for Europeans only made the Native vote so feeble as to be practically worthless.

Yet even this nominal franchise of the Cape Native was a thorn in the flesh for the European ruling classes. And now the largest part and the most productive part of the population is deprived of any political right or shadow

of right. In this policy British Imperialism shows its real face.

Of course our Liberals and Fabians, 'friends' of the non-European, will set to work to console the disfranchised with the plan of Native Representative Councils, and a new Bunga, though even the Jingo press calls this merely a 'sop'. Or they may bring up the Land Bill by way of a consolation. For consolation is the political task and function of these 'friends' in capitalist society. And who is not a friend of the Native nowadays? Every exploiter, every bloodsucker, every rogue, every hireling, speaks of 'trusteeship' and the welfare of the Natives. Land for the Native to be bought with funds appropriated by a parliament made up of mineowners and landowners and their servants! What a mockery! What a joke! Just listen to what they themselves say.

'The success of this scheme (Native Trust and Land Bill) remain to be seen when it comes into operation, but generally speaking what we want to do in the country is *to keep down* Native over-population and not to give them more breeding ground' (Mr Justice Simpson).

Or again, read the proceedings in Parliament concerning the Vaal-Hartz scheme, and you will see how the legislators give land to the Natives, that is, how they rob them of even the miserable little share of land that they still have.

In this dark hour for the Natives, we consider it most injurious to console them, or to soften the blow with fine phrases about morality and justice, with loose promises and large hopes. Moreover, reminders that no nation that oppresses other peoples can itself be free, are by themselves sufficient. It is very necessary to add that liberation can be achieved not by submission, but *only* by fighting. Imperialism and Capitalism are doomed. But they will not die a natural death. They must be overthrown by a Revolution. The Revolution is a matter of life and death for all the oppressed, workers and toilers. If the Bantu workers and intellectuals, if the Coloured (who are next in the order of repression), if the white and Indian workers and Intellectuals, will realize that only if the International Revolutionary movement of the working class, only if the realization of the teachings of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, only in a South African and a World October-Revolution, lies our hope and salvation. If this blow will open the eyes of the Bantu workers and peasants, and free them from illusions, if the blow will bring us nearer together, South and North, black and white, then the disfranchisement of the Bantu may turn out to be a blessing, a temporary loss which will be followed by a real economic and national liberation of the Bantu from ALL oppression. For only the Revolution, only the over-throw of Imperialism-Capitalism can bring full liberty, full equality to all inhabitants of this country, of whom the Bantu form the greatest component part.

Document
ZEPHANIA MOTHOPENG

[We have been given the following document, together with an introductory account. When this was received there was no news of an impending release, although it was known that Mothopeng was grievously ill. Part of the document tells the story of Mothopeng's life, and we only regret that it is so short. However, there is much in the document with which we disagree, in its philosophy and outlook, in its political and economic perspectives, and other problems. But we print it, because Mothopeng has played his part in the South African struggle, and his account should be known. We have been told that other papers or organizations have refused to print this document, including the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), of which Mothopeng is President].

Zephania (Zeph) Mothopeng was sentenced to 15-years jail on 26 June 1979, for trying to overthrow the government. He was 66 years old.

He was in solitary confinement for about sixteen months before being brought to court. His trial, which lasted for 18 months, was held in the small town of Bethal, several hours' drive from Johannesburg. He and sixteen others were found guilty of 'terrorist activities' and furthering the aims and activities of the banned PAC. He was charged with having recruited and sent men out of the country for military training and with having instigated unrest in the township of Kagiso, near Krugersdorp, on 17 June 1976, the day after the start of the youth revolt in Soweto.

The state accused Mothopeng of having begun an underground organization of the PAC in 1964 while serving an earlier jail sentence on Robben Island.

The PAC central committee elected him President at a meeting in Tanzania in August 1986.

Shortly before being imprisoned in 1979, Mothopeng wrote this account of his life and of his political beliefs and hopes. The document was brought out of jail.

* * * * *

I was born in September 1913 in the district of Vrede in the Free State. I was baptized as a child in the Anglican Church in the same district where I was born. I attended my primary school at St Mary's Primary School, Daggakraal, in the district of Amersfoort, Transvaal, ironically about fifty miles from Bethal. It was the home of my parents where they lived until they died. It was where my grandfather had bought land under a freehold

scheme arranged by P. ka I Seme, who was then their lawyer (and an early leader in the black struggle).

I passed standard six at St Bedes and St Chad's College, Ladysmith, Natal, an Anglican Training College. I had my high school education at St Peter's Secondary School, Rosettenville, Johannesburg, under the Anglican Community of the Resurrection, from 1933 until 1937 when I passed matriculation examinations. I was an assistant prefect at St Peter's for two years.

I trained as a teacher at Adams College, Natal, where I was one of the first students to study for a post-matric teacher's diploma. I passed Teacher Training Certificate in 1940. I was elected chairman of the student body in my last year. In 1946 I passed BA (by correspondence) at the University of South Africa, Unisa, while I was teaching at Orlando High School from January 1941. I taught at Orlando High School for about thirteen years. I taught Maths and Physical science.

I conducted the senior school choir for all these years. My choir won all competitions in which it participated. In 1947 Orlando School choir was chosen to sing to King George VI. I conducted it at Orlando Communal Hall when the King and his royal entourage visited Orlando during their tour of South Africa. I was one of the founders and first chairman of the Johannesburg Bantu Musical Festival in 1946 which enjoyed the sponsorship of the Johannesburg City Council.

In 1950 I was elected president of the Transvaal African Teachers' Association. In 1951 my executive embarked on concerted campaigning against the Eiselen Report on Bantu Education by way of extensive pamphleteering by using our clandestine pamphlets such as *The Voice* and *Education for Change* and of course the teacher's magazine, *The Good Shepherd*.

By these pamphlets we succeeded in influencing the teachers to such an extent that in June 1952 the teachers at the TATA conference in Witbank passed a resolution rejecting Bantu Education in toto and they pledged themselves to work for its complete destruction and thereafter to restore free and universal education to the Africans. It is a resolution which the teachers never reversed up to this day. Those who continued teaching in Bantu schools did so under protest. This resulted in the dismissal of three members of my executive by the Transvaal Native Education Department: the president, the general secretary and the editor of *The Good Shepherd*. I was the president, Professor Ezekiel Mphahlele, who is an outstanding author, was the general secretary, and Mr Isaac Matlare, who is now a lawyer in Lesotho, was the editor.

Since then I abandoned teaching and decided to devote all my energy to work politically to achieve the total rejection of Bantu Education and to

attain the overthrow of white domination in Azania.

I joined the African National Congress Youth League in 1943 and from 1954 I became one of the members of the Africanists in the ANC. We were against the influence of the whites in the ANC and we also contended that it was not militant enough. In 1958 when we broke away from the ANC I was elected to the working committee of the Africanists which was to prepare for the inauguration of a new organization. I was entrusted with the drawing up of the draft constitution which was presented for approval at the inaugural meeting of the PAC. It was adopted with minor amendments.

I acted as chairman at the inaugural conference of the Pan-Africanist Congress on the 16th April 1959 at Orlando Communal Hall where Mr Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe was elected the president of the organization and I was elected as one of the members of the National Working Committee.

The National Working Committee of which the president was the chairman was responsible to plan and to direct the PAC anti-pass campaign of the 21st March 1960 which resulted in the police killing many Africans in Sharpeville and Vanderbijlpark, and Langa and Nyanga in Cape Town, and the biggest demonstration to the Parliament building in Cape Town led by Mr Philip Kgosana.

The objective of the anti-pass campaign was to achieve human dignity. The pass laws assail in a most degrading manner the dignity of the black man in that they restrict his freedom of movement and he is expected to produce this slave document on demand to any policeman at any time and anywhere.

Black people suffer daily humiliation which they receive at the pass offices where these iniquitous laws are administered. During this campaign the effectiveness of mass action was patently demonstrated in that as a result of this concerted positive action the then Commissioner of Police, Major-General Rademeyer, was compelled to suspend temporarily the operation of these iniquitous laws.

During this campaign I was arrested and sentenced to two years. I was charged jointly with PAC National Executive members including the President Sobukwe and National Secretary Potlako Leballo. I was arrested again in March 1963 for furthering PAC activities (the organization was banned in April 1960). I was kept under arrest until the end of July 1963 when my case was withdrawn and I was immediately arrested and detained at Randfontein Police Station and Pretoria Prison. [An added note states that during this time, Mothopeng was tortured: a canvas bag was put over his until he was close to suffocation: he was also given electric shocks]

I was sentenced in May 1964 for three years for being a member and furthering PAC activities. I served the sentence on Robben Island. There

were many riots which took place due to PAC activities during 1962–63 at Kingwilliamstown, Paarl near Cape Town and in Johannesburg.

When I was discharged from prison in 1967 I was taken to Qwaqwa and banned for two years. I remained in Qwaqwa for about six months and was allowed to return to my home in Johannesburg. In 1969 my banning order was renewed for another two years. So I was under banning orders for four years.

In my present trial I was detained in August 1976. At the time of my arrest I was employed as a director of the Urban Resource Centre, a voluntary community organization. It conducted many programmes in Kagiso Township, Krugersdorp, among others adult education, community bulk buying, youth organization. It had a training centre at St Ausgar's, Roodepoort, which trained people in some skills and arts and crafts. It had study centres at Soweto, Thembisa, Natalspruit, Sebokeng and Evaton. I have been studying a Bachelor of Commerce degree at Unisa.

All the campaigns which PAC embarked upon flow from the resolution of the National General Conference of the 19th December 1959 at Orlando Communal Hall which stated that the organization must embark upon positive action to free African people from domination. This action was to be based on an unfolding programme which had to be executed relentlessly until total liberation and freedom were achieved.

Our struggle for freedom since 1960 has made great strides. In 1960 the boundaries of freedom were as far away north as Ghana. Today they have reached our borders. We share common borders with free countries such as Botswana and Mozambique.

The superstructure of white domination based on apartheid has cracked to its foundation. Apartheid as a philosophy has collapsed and it is in complete disarray. The black people have discovered the potency of their power — mass action, and from now they will employ it with devastating effect.

As the doors of prison lock us in, this time our spirits are very high because we realize that victory is in sight and freedom is on our threshold. We are fully aware that the oppressors are confronted with formidable onslaughts from every angle. Their economy is foundering upon the rocks despite the repeated assurances of its recovery. The cost of living is escalating at an unprecedented rate, there is alarming unemployment and thousands of workers are thrown out of their employment. Scarcity of oil is inflicting havoc on our economy. The housing shortage is mounting while rentals are shooting high into the sky. The ordinary man is baffled and buffeted in every direction. In such a situation can total economic collapse be far? Our education is in a shambles, it is hopelessly in need of finance. Indeed one perceives deeply an imminent mass upheaval resulting from this economic collapse.

The African people have acquired a complete self-reliance and accepted the principle of fashioning their own destiny and evolving their own ideology and method of liberation based on their own experience emanating from the objective conditions of Africa.

The youth of our land are determined to work and sacrifice for our freedom based on one man one vote which is the only sure way to guarantee human rights, liberty and dignity, the only way to banish permanently and irrevocably racial discrimination, economic exploitation, social degradation and poverty in our country.

Our land is faced with armed onslaught on our borders which is fast creeping in our country. The white youth of the land are posted on the borders to try to stop the inevitable. It is indeed a fruitless exercise. These young men should be employed to provide wealth instead of being engaged in this wasteful venture.

The black people of this land are striving to establish a new social order which will guarantee their rights to equitable distribution of wealth in a society in which there will be no exploitation of one man by another, a society which will protect the wealth and raw material of Africa from being exploited and exported outside the continent for the benefit of international capital, a society which will guarantee full employment and education for all.

We grant no one the right to balkanize our country Azania. We claim the right to manage our affairs in Azania without impairment. It is in this just society which we are striving to establish where justice will be attained and meted out, otherwise justice becomes a sham and mirage as it is unfortunately the case in our country at present.

We approach prison with full certainty that freedom is at hand. In this we are supported by the knowledge that thousands and thousands of the black people in the country are working hard and are willing to sacrifice everything to achieve it. We will soon be walking out of bondage into free Azania in which the above objectives shall have been accomplished and put into practice.

PS: An African is any (black) person who is committed to an African destiny and who finds himself oppressed by the oppressive laws and policies of this land, directly and indirectly by virtue of being dispossessed or displaced as a result of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

[The Sowetan, 14 December 1988, printed an interview with Zeph Mothopeng in which he offered a revised definition of an African. Mr Mothopeng no longer insists that only black persons are so designated. Eds]

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