

Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 4 No. 3

December 1988

Mulroney & South Africa



Rescuing Credibility?

Canadian Policy
Towards
South Africa

COSATU

The Year in
Retrospect

Bush and Botha

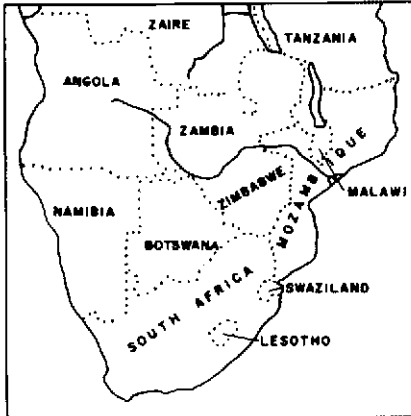
New Tactics
for
Southern
Africa

price: \$3.00

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Mandela Picnic Rally, Toronto, 1988

Opportunism Knocks

The November election in Canada was about free trade and not about policy towards southern Africa. Still, the Tories did win and that means the past has indeed been prologue to what the anti-apartheid movement can now expect from Ottawa.

But what have we had already? About this there is considerable difference of opinion. Take the *Globe and Mail's* pre-election op-ed piece on Brian Mulroney's foreign policy profile ("Unlikely man of the world," *G & M*, October 27, 1988). Written, in the heat of the campaign, by Charlotte Montgomery, its paragraphs of fulsome praise for the Prime Minister read more like a paid political advertisement than an attempt at serious analysis. Yet in the lead sentences of this article we also find her quoting an "anti-apartheid activist and non-Conservative" as being "full of praise for what is

widely accepted as Mr. Mulroney's most admired foreign-policy effort." Jokingly suggesting that he "would even consider voting for Maureen McTeer (his local Conservative candidate)," Montgomery's interlocutor concludes, quite seriously, that "I give the guy (Mulroney) full credit."

Shouldn't it be more difficult than this to give "full credit" to Brian Mulroney on his southern Africa initiatives? Hasn't the policy been flawed from the outset in very serious ways, not least in its reluctance (documented in earlier issues of *SAR*) to embrace actors like the African National Congress of South Africa as far more legitimate spokespersons for the South African people than the Pretoria government itself? More important to our immediate purposes, isn't the record of the past few years one of rather precipitous retreat from the rhetorical high-water mark of Brian Mulroney's 1985 United Nations speech

and the initial announcement of Canada's new sanctions initiatives in 1985/6?

True, as Stephen Lewis reminds us in this issue, Mulroney did take on Margaret Thatcher over apartheid in a verbal sparring-match behind closed doors at last year's Vancouver Commonwealth summit. Yet it was also a year ago that Linda Freeman warned us in these pages ("Where's the Beef?", *SAR*, 3, 3) of how little *substance* remained to Canada's South Africa policy. Having scanned the Tories' dismal performance in 1988, she makes the same argument even more forcefully in the lead article of the present issue.

The continuing retreat is there for all to see - most notably in Canada's distancing itself from any further initiatives with regard to sanctions. Freeman chronicles this. Stephen Lewis, in the exclusive in-

interview in this issue, bemoans it. And the point is underscored by a confidential document prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat to guide the deliberations of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers meeting in Toronto in August. We publish here, for the first time, an important section of that document which shows just how much more the Commonwealth was being invited to do in the sanctions sphere than Joe Clark and his advisers were prepared to countenance. Cumulatively, these three articles (the Freeman essay, the Lewis interview, the Secretariat document) make depressing reading.

Where was Brian Mulroney while all this was going on? Should he also get "full credit" for bringing his own "most admired foreign policy effort" to a standstill? Stephen Lewis seems reluctant to so argue, citing, variously, the Cabinet, Joe Clark himself, and/or the unreconstructed bureaucrats in External Affairs as having dragged Mulroney into retreat. Of course, few would question Mulroney's own gut distaste for racism, especially of the heavily institutionalized, *apartheid* variety. Still, there can be little doubt that Commonwealth politics also persuaded Mulroney to take the high road on South Africa, offering him the chance to upstage Pierre-Eliot Trudeau in an arena the latter had made his own.

Perhaps, too, there was an even more comprehensive opportunism at work. True, Tory southern African policy has been streets ahead of anything Trudeau and Co. were ever prepared to contemplate; hence the soft spot that Charlotte Montgomery's "anti-apartheid activist" and others have in their hearts for Mulroney on this issue. Yet it is also true that the situation in South Africa demanded more from him. The mid-eighties saw a near revolution in South Africa. Debates raged in South Africa about how best to deal with insurrection there. Eventually the state opted for intensified repression rather than meaning-

ful change. But in liberal circles, not least amongst enlightened business-people, the option of substantive reform as a means of pre-empting revolution was being explored. Recall, for example, the words of Anglo-American's Zac de Beer: "We dare not allow the baby of free enterprise to be thrown out with the bathwater of apartheid."

Recall, as well, the international echoes of de Beer's remark. In 1986 the Commonwealth's Eminent Person's Group had written an eloquent and tough-minded report calling for an extension of sanctions against South Africa in order to force it to its senses before the confrontation there escalated out of control. The EPG's co-chair Malcolm Fraser, the deeply conservative former Australian prime minister, gave his own gloss to the text: in an escalating conflict, he warned, "moderation would be swept aside ... The government that emerged from all this would be extremely radical, probably Marxist, and would nationalize all western business interests"! One suspects that Mulroney responded warmly to this reading of the South African situation. To the goal of ingratiating himself with the black Commonwealth could now be added the role of spearheading the forces of enlightened global capitalism.

Unfortunately, as Mulroney pressed his case for economic action against South Africa - first with Margaret Thatcher at the 1986 Commonwealth mini-summit and then at the Venice G-7 meeting of the major industrialized countries in 1987 - it became apparent that his thinking was running well ahead not only of Joe Clark and External but also of the likes of Thatcher and Reagan. And soon, in any case, the urgency to act seemed to ebb away. The moment in South Africa that evoked Mulroney's enthusiasm for quarter-backing a liberal-capitalist response to apartheid's crisis was gone, obliterated by the Emergency inflicted nation-wide in South Africa since 1986, with its media controls

and its brutal attempt to suppress outright the democratic opposition.

There has been a set-back in South Africa, allowing Pretoria to gain time for itself and encouraging even the most liberal of business people to fall in passively behind the government. Repression was seen to "work" and the threat of revolution receded. Has not the same been true of that other summer-time soldier for change in South Africa, Brian Mulroney?

If so, might it be assumed that only the revitalization of the popular movement in South Africa itself can force a Tory government to re-engage seriously with the apartheid question? In part, yes. But this would be a dangerous half-truth if it were seen to excuse the Canadian anti-apartheid movement from keeping up the pressure for more progressive policies from our government. Moreover, the fact remains that Canada will not be allowed to wait until the struggle once again comes to a head in South Africa before having to "come clean" regarding its policy towards that country. This is the irony around which Freeman structures her article and it is also the point with which Lewis dramatically concludes his interview.

As Freeman argues, the only redeeming aspect of Canada's southern African policy in 1988 has been our eleventh hour promise to give quasi-military assistance to the front-line states, bloodied victims of Pretoria's aggression. An opportunistic move in its own right, in her view, and one designed (successfully) to help ease us into the Security Council berth Mulroney had set his heart on. The irony? Motions regarding mandatory sanctions are guaranteed to surface in the Security Council and they will do so sooner rather than later. "Security Council membership," Freeman writes "will require precisely those forces within the Canadian state who want to downplay this issue to stand up and be counted every time a vote is called"! We will be watching.

Rescuing Credibility?

Canadian Policy Towards South Africa, 1988

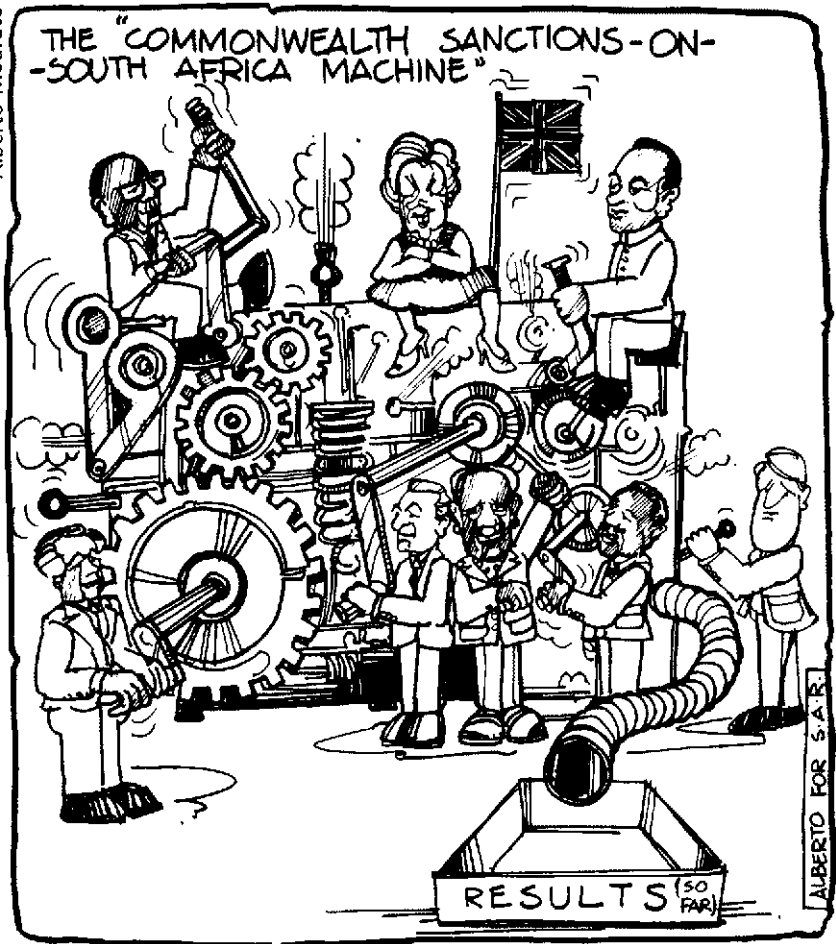
BY LINDA FREEMAN

Linda Freeman, who teaches political science at Carleton University, writes regularly in Southern Africa REPORT on Canadian policy.

Two months before the recent election the Mulroney government declared a major shift in its southern Africa policy, its first significant step forward in two years. In September at the United Nations, the Prime Minister declared that Canada would provide security assistance for Canadian development projects in the Frontline States in southern Africa. This means that Canada has at last agreed to furnish military training and non-lethal aid to the governments victimized by South Africa's destabilization policy. This initiative is virtually the only sign that Canadian policy in this sphere has not entered a terminal condition of burn-out. Why, then, the shift? And is it sufficient to rescue the credibility of Mulroney's overall approach towards southern Africa?

Let us look first at the specific initiative itself. In the past few years the anti-apartheid community has lobbied hard to get the Canadian government to move on this issue. In February 1987 at a national conference on southern Africa in Montreal, Joe Clark refused to deal with the contradiction of Canada providing major infusions of development assistance for railway lines and other projects in countries like Mozambique which were in imminent danger of being destroyed by rebel forces trained and supplied by South Africa. At the Vancouver Commonwealth conference last October, Mulroney rejected the recommendation of the Commonwealth's London sub-committee chaired by Canada's

Alberto Mourato



ALBERTO FOR S.A.R.

then High Commissioner to Great Britain, Roy McMurtry, which had proposed non-lethal security assistance. Just this past summer at the meeting of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Committee on southern Africa in Toronto, Clark was instrumental in stonewalling any action at all, even though former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria produced another report recommending security assistance to the Frontline States.

A new initiative

In September, the government seems to have changed its mind. While it is clear that Canada has no intention of sending troops, guns or bullets, the assistance which is now being offered Frontline States - military training, logistical support for defence forces (clothes, food, fuel, spare parts and communications equipment), balance of payments support to these states to help meet security costs - does consti-

tute a major step forward. And there is no question that this assistance is sorely needed. Mozambican troops, for example, have been desperately short of all of the items Canada is now scheduled to provide. Given that Britain has been involved for some time in providing military training for army officers in the region, and that the Scandinavian countries, India and Algeria have provided logistical support for Mozambique's security needs, Canada will certainly not be acting alone. Moreover, there are clear precedents: Canada trained Tanzania's army and air force in the 1960s and has brought officers from all over Africa to Canada for training.

Yet rather than launching such an exemplary new programme with verve and conviction, Mulroney euphemistically referred to the change as providing assistance "to preserve (Canadian and Frontline States) development initiatives" and denied President Mugabe of Zimbabwe's depiction of the assistance as military assistance. An earlier External Affairs press release outlining the nature of this assistance in greater detail had gone right over the heads of the Canadian press. It was this that left Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe, to break the story for Canada and he simply called a spade a spade in telling Canadian reporters that Mulroney had committed Canada to providing military assistance to the Frontline States. As a senior African diplomat in Canada pointed out, in southern Africa the items which Canada has promised count as military assistance - however much Mulroney might try to downplay that fact.

Why, then, Mulroney's sotto voce introduction of such a significant policy change? In timing, the initiative had to balance two main concerns facing the Mulroney government. Its *raison d'être* was the need to win support for Canada's ultimately successful bid for a seat on the Security Council; its trepidation was that such a move might trig-

ger strong negative public reaction in Canada on the eve of a federal election.

The Security Council bid

Canada had not been a member of the Security Council for ten years and wished to maintain the tradition of membership once each decade. Now Canada found itself competing with Finland and Greece for one of two seats in the 'Western Europe and others' category of non-permanent seats. Moreover, Canada was well positioned to reap the rewards of the high profile of its former Ambassador, Stephen Lewis, and to play a strategic role in the United Nations in a period in which the organization is going through a renaissance.

However, many Third World countries had let it be known that their support for Canada's bid was contingent on further Canadian action on southern Africa. In particular, Commonwealth countries were dismayed by the short shrift which Joe Clark had given further sanctions at the Commonwealth meeting in Toronto in August. Therefore, a crucial moment in Canada's lobbying for the Security Council seat was a meeting between Mugabe and Mulroney, out of which the new policy on Canadian security assistance for southern Africa emerged. The *quid pro quo*, of course, was Mugabe's visible support for Mulroney and Canada's candidature. At the end of October, this strategy paid off when Canada easily won a seat on the Security Council in a first ballot victory, gaining 127 votes out of a total 159 possible from the General Assembly.

While the Security Council seat explains the origins of the new policy, why then the exasperated response to Mugabe's announcement? As the policy change coincided with the launching of a federal election campaign, Mulroney did not want to make waves in Canada. Partly, he wanted to avoid disunity in the Conservative Caucus and Cabinet. Prominent members of the Cabi-

net like John Crosbie and many Conservative M.P.s are sympathetic to the Botha government and are not happy with Mulroney's southern Africa policy. Partly, too, the Conservative government has been reluctant to hazard provoking a strong reaction from the Canadian public which might endanger the direction of policy in southern Africa as a whole. In the previous decade, Canadian promises to provide even humanitarian assistance to southern African liberation movements in 1973 and 1979 had provoked a storm of editorial and public protest. Earlier this year, Walter McLean, the Conservative M.P. from Waterloo, told a conference on Angola that the government's fear of a public reaction was stalling a move on this front. In September, Mulroney was prepared to take the gamble, and might have slipped the policy by the press, but for Mugabe's announcement in Harare.

Mere posturing?

The specifics of the military assistance initiative aside, the timidity with which Mulroney has handled the issue provides a revealing contrast with his confident commitment to concrete sanctions in 1986. In fact, until the announcement on military assistance, Tory policy on southern Africa looked as if it were degenerating into the posturing of former Liberal governments - strong on rhetoric and short on substance. Up to that point, Canada had done only slightly more in 1988 than in 1987 when it had done virtually nothing.

In 1987, Mulroney's commitment to southern Africa had been reaffirmed in his visit to the region and in his attempt to spur the great powers to action in the G-7 meeting in Venice. However, after failing to get any support at Venice, Mulroney's taste for leading the charge seems to have flagged, revived only briefly by his role as host of the francophone summit and the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Vancouver.

Moreover, until September, the prospects did not seem much better in 1988. There was the dispiriting performance of the Canadian government at the Toronto Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting on Southern Africa in August. For one, Mulroney decided not to open the conference, preferring to work in his constituency. By contrast, in February, President Kaunda of Zambia had provided a warm welcome to the Foreign Ministers at their first meeting in Lusaka. For another, Joe Clark's attempt to focus

the African Minister quickly pointed out, polls show that half of all Canadians would support tougher measures. Four excellent studies offered the basis for moving forward, but Clark was prepared to offer little more than a strategy document, a few grants and a series of public events designed to stir up public interest in Canada.

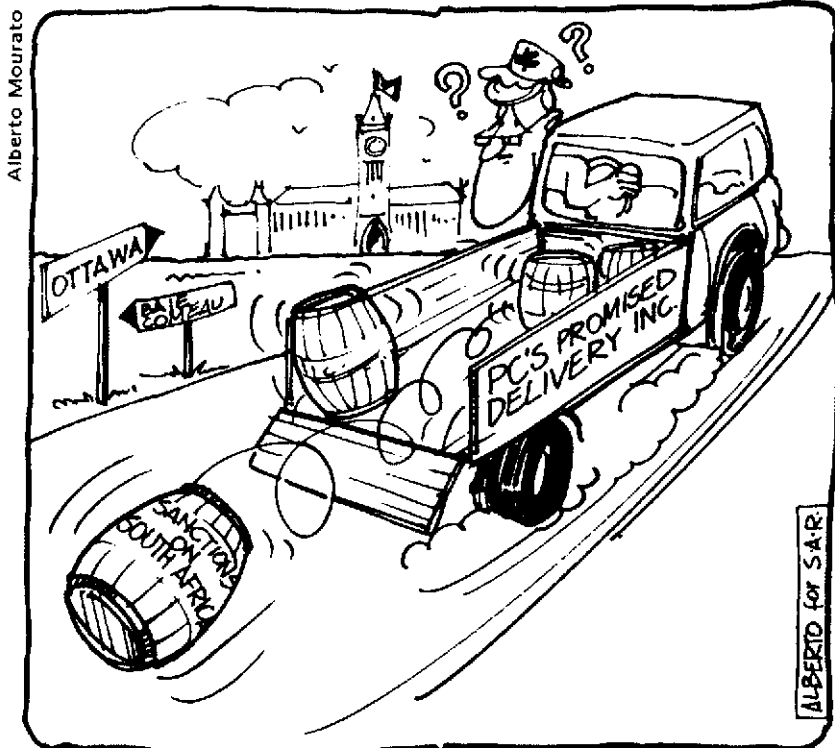
In addition to this meager contribution, the Tory government adopted two other sets of measures. In mid-summer, Canada extended the existing ban on sporting ac-

tion funding and eligibility for national teams. The timing of this ban was intended to spare Canada the embarrassment of having South Africans playing at a tennis tournament in a suburb of Toronto at the same time that the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers were meeting in Toronto to discuss ways to widen, tighten and intensify sanctions against South Africa.

The second set of measures coincided, like the military assistance initiative, with Canada's bid for a seat on the Security Council. Three days before Mulroney's speech to the United Nations, Clark announced that the government would tighten the ban on government contracts with majority South African owned companies in Canada to include government grants. This move was designed to close an embarrassing gap disclosed by Liberal M.P. John Nunziata who found that three South African owned companies in Canada - Boart Canada Inc., Hard Materials Research and Longyear Canada Inc. - had received either federal contracts or grants from External Affairs' own Program for Export Market Development. In addition, the government agreed to stop all sales by public sector agencies to South Africa, including Petro Canada's exports of sulphur to South Africa. And Ottawa extended its ban on the sale of high technology goods to the South African private sector, having already stopped sales to the public sector.

Flin Flon

While laudable statements of intent, a very vivid test of the government's sincerity on these measures has come quickly to the fore regarding the September ban on government loans to South African companies. One of Manitoba's ten largest companies, Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Co. Ltd. (HBMS), has asked for loans from both the Manitoba and Canadian governments to help it comply with environmental legislation, failing which it threatens



the delegates' attention on the minor Canadian project of combating South African censorship and propaganda and away from the main issue of wider and tougher sanctions angered and distressed the Commonwealth Secretary-General and the African delegations. In exasperation one African Foreign Minister asked Clark in a closed session what his problem was. Clark suggested that the Canadian public did not want a stronger policy when, as

activities to include prohibitions on Canadian athletes competing with all South Africans who carried South African passports. In the past, South Africans regularly competed in Canada in sports like golf and tennis. They had been exempted from the general sports ban under the convention that they were individual businessmen and women. Now they are included, and any Canadian who plays against a South African anywhere can forfeit federal govern-

to close operations and shut down Flin Flon. Unfortunately, HBMS is a company controlled by two giant South African mining transnationals, Anglo American Corporation and De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd. which together constitute the backbone of the South African economy.

The copper/zinc operation run by HBMS is Flin Flon's life blood - indeed, its *raison d'être*. The company employs about 2,500 workers and is responsible for another 1,500 workers, contributing about \$200 million annually to the provincial economy. That such a company should ask for loans from the federal and provincial governments (about \$43 million each) seems preposterous (especially as the company paid about \$35 million in dividends in 1986). But similar loans have been granted for anti-pollution measures elsewhere in Canada. Moreover, without them, HBMS insists that the company cannot afford a \$130 million modernization program to comply with new regulations for pollution reduction.

It will be instructive to see what the Canadian government will do on this issue. It seems that the implications of the South African link have not been thought through in past discussions between HBMS officials and provincial and federal governments. The President of HBMS is confident that the loan will be approved as he's been dealing with the federal government for over a year without the issue of South Africa even being raised. He has launched a campaign in Manitoba to enlist public support for the loan and has played upon regional sensitivities. He insists that a failure to provide the loan will be another instance, following the CF-18 controversy in 1986, of Ottawa ignoring Manitoba's interests, a perception shared by Winnipeg voters in this year's federal election.

Other departments of the federal government and the provincial gov-

ernment have a history of support and subsidies for HBMS. The Energy Department's Canadian Centre for Mining, Metallurgy and Energy Technology is including HBMS in a multi-million dollar research project on waste disposal as if HBMS were a Canadian company. Again, the South African connection never entered anyone's mind and is not considered to constitute a reason to object to the company's participation. Last year the Manitoba government also provided a \$9.7 million loan to allow HBMS to buy a mine supplying Flin Flon's smelting operations.

While it is hard to assess the amount of bluffing in HBMS' position, it is highly unlikely that the federal government would stick to sanctions in the crunch. The economic hardship for northern Manitoba which would follow an HBMS closure in Flin Flon would be out of all proportion to the government's commitment to this issue. However, at the very least, this case has put the Mulroney government on the spot, highlighting the contradictions between its alliance with international capital in Canada and the Tory policy on southern Africa.

More backsliding

Certainly, if the government's performance on previous much lighter commitments are anything to go by, it will use technicalities to justify failing to honour its commitments. Consider, for example, the way in which Canada this year did not live up to its pledge to the Commonwealth at Nassau to discourage all scientific co-operation with South Africa unless it contributed to the end of apartheid. South Africans were permitted to attend three officially-sponsored conferences in Canada - on tourism, on water and a UNIDROIT conference on international leasing and factoring. External Affairs took narrow decisions in each case. On the UNIDROIT conference, the Department of Justice advised that entry could be allowed under treaty

obligations to the United Nations. (African delegates did not agree and organized a boycott until the South Africans were asked to leave.) The issue did not arise at the water conference and South Africans who participated at the tourism conference did so as academics not government officials.

While the government has prosecuted two companies - Lajal Scientifique and Aero Vue - which it found had broken sanctions by exporting goods with clear military applications, it has done nothing about the much more serious way in which Canadian companies have helped South Africa bypass international sanctions on its oil imports and coal exports. Canada has observed its 1986 ban on importing coal from South Africa - a resource which both Canada and South Africa have in abundance. However, researchers in the Netherlands have found that in the past two years at least two Canadian companies - Canadian Pacific Ltd. and Montreal-based Fednav Ltd. - have allowed their ships to be used regularly as charters which have transported South African coal to Holland. There, South African coal has been blended with Canadian coal and then transshipped to Europe with the South African link disguised. The Dutch group Kairos also found that a Canadian Pacific vessel broke the international ban on oil exports to South Africa in 1981 and 1987. CP officials have defended these practices, saying there is nothing illegal about breaking a voluntary U.N. ban, and government officials concede they have no restrictions to prevent private Canadian companies exporting South African coal to other countries or breaking the international oil embargo.

Quite clearly, Canada does not have comprehensive sanctions, and many of the sanctions which it has adopted are not mandatory. Canada's two-way trade is still about \$200 million - we continue to export sulphur and to ban the

import of those goods which are easy to obtain elsewhere or where Canada is a competitive supplier. The financial sanctions are, without exception, voluntary sanctions with no provisions for monitoring compliance. In light of these facts, it is particularly telling that the government now suggests there is very little left to be done in the sanctions field!

It is also a distinct anomaly to have Canada and South Africa still represented in each other's country at the highest level by ambassadors. On the one hand South African groups have urged Canada not to withdraw its embassy, as it constitutes a valuable conduit for assistance and information. However, the cost of allowing official South Africans a base in Canada is that the embassy operates a major campaign to defend South African policies, a campaign which combines propaganda with disinformation, distortion and deception.

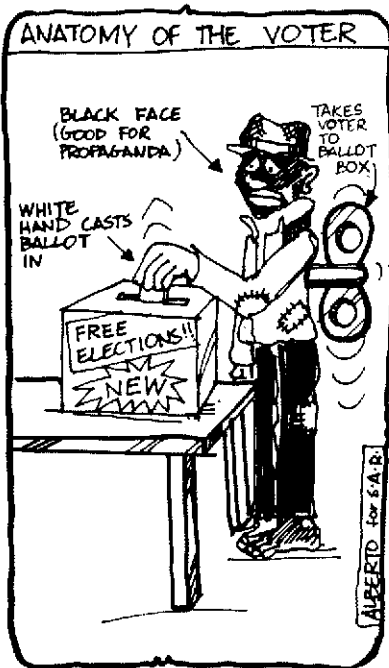
Moreover, while the government offers generous scholarships to black South Africans and supports programmes with the black private sector in South Africa, it continues to treat South Africa's main liberation movement, the African National Congress, with a considerable amount of coolness. In contrast to the Scandinavian countries who have established a direct and close working relationship with the ANC, Canada's meetings with the ANC continue to be largely informal, and assistance is offered indirectly through NGOs. After eighteen months of negotiation with CUSO over a package of five projects, the federal government chose to fund only one - offering just under \$65,000 a year for three years for an ANC creche, refusing meanwhile to assist a more pertinent project of management training and other forms of institutional support.

The prospects

What then are the prospects for Canada's unequivocal commitment

of 1985 - stated so clearly by Brian Mulroney at the United Nations - to impose full diplomatic and economic sanctions against South Africa if there were no genuine signs that apartheid was being dismantled? None would doubt that the South African state has intensified its repression of the black majority in the past few years. Tens of

Alberto Mourato



thousands of people have been detained, many children have been tortured and most elementary liberties have been jettisoned in the process of re-establishing state control inside South Africa.

Yet Clark and Mulroney have retreated, claiming that the time isn't ripe, and that Canada will lose its influence if it acts precipitously. Despite all the negative evidence provided by the Eminent Persons Group experiment in 1986, Clark, in particular, still believes in the possibility of a negotiated way out of the South African crisis. As Stephen Lewis has observed, Canada is "on the verge of dereliction of our commitment."

Given this increasingly feeble record, the gesture on non-lethal military assistance to the embattled Frontline States in southern Africa was intended to shore up Canada's reputation which had sagged dangerously in August, and which had been tarnished by the lacklustre official reaction to the banning of South African organizations in February and to South Africa's renewed state of emergency in June. In such a context, this latest initiative looks more like an isolated move designed to serve Canadian ends than the beginning of a new phase of resolute action.

More seriously, it also demonstrates the continuing isolation of Mulroney and the Prime Minister's Office in forming policy on southern Africa. While External Affairs officials have reacted indignantly to the suggestion (SAR, December, 1987) that they are less than enthusiastic about Mulroney's southern Africa policy, events in the past year serve only to confirm this judgement. Joe Clark may have been consulted on the decision to provide non-lethal military assistance in southern Africa, but External Affairs does not seem to have been involved in launching the proposal. Indeed, the Canadian High Commission in Harare only learned of the new policy from Mugabe's press conference, a week after the press release in New York. Instead, the decision seems to have originated again with Mulroney in consultation with a few advisers.

On his retirement from his post at the United Nations, Stephen Lewis revealed that to make any headway at all on southern Africa, he had had to bypass the "moribund bureaucracy" of External Affairs and to contact Mulroney and his staff directly. In External Affairs, Lewis found "a lack of creative energy, (and) a tendency to be repetitive ... passive and rigid ...". Moreover, the closer he got to the top, the more the process seemed to stultify. Senior mandarins in Exter-

nal Affairs resisted policy initiatives from outside or from the ranks, and yet they seemed incapable themselves of making imaginative recommendations. Basically, their concern was to steer attention back to more traditional areas of Canadian interest and away from what they regard as an excessive preoccupation with southern Africa.

With the departure of Roy McMurtry from the High Commission in London and Stephen Lewis from New York, the forces supporting Mulroney from within the state have dwindled. While it is heartening to see the return of Walter McLean and David MacDonald - two Conservative M.P.s with African experience - to parliament, the recent federal election has also brought back John Crosbie, Bill Vankoughnet and Robert Wenman, all Tories with pro-South African sympathies.

A final irony

There is, however, a final irony to the story of Canada's 1988 record on southern Africa, one that is of some significance. For Canada's very victory this fall in attaining a seat on the Security Council will serve to keep southern Africa on the Tory agenda! Specifically, Security Council membership will require precisely those forces within the Canadian state who want to downplay this issue to stand up to be counted every time a vote is called. It is difficult to imagine Canada voting against mandatory sanctions along with the representatives of Britain, West Germany and the United States. It is equally hard to imagine the present government adopting them.

Still, one thing is certain. Now that Canada has attained this higher international profile, it will be much more difficult to coast on the record of the past. The choice, simply put, will be between keeping its promises or damaging its credibility. Secure in a second majority government, Mulroney's good faith is at issue. This time, an international as well as a national audience will be watching.



Dave Hartman

South Africa Confidential

Document Underscores Canadian Backsliding

"Ottawa deflection of sanctions issue angers delegates" was the headline of Michael Valpy's front-page article in *The Globe and Mail* that chronicled last August's meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa held in Toronto. A second *Globe* article, written a few days later by Ross Howard, carried the related headline, "Ottawa's stand on South Africa queried after Toronto meeting." This piece documented the frustration and concern felt by many African diplomats and observers at Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark's activities at the meeting. For it was widely felt that Canada had sought to divert attention away from the issue of concrete economic sanctions – both by its foot-dragging and by its insistence that the question of countering South African propaganda should be the primary concern of the foreign ministers. Fortunately, other delegations did manage to bring the discussion back to the main point, but the consensus remained that the result of Canada's manoeuvres was a dramatic watering down of the meeting's final proposals.

The Canadian government could not easily cover its tracks in this regard, as the terms in which the *Globe and Mail* reported the story attest. According to Howard, some Canadian officials did pretend that in attempting to so structure the debate Canada was merely "following signals first sent by the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat." Just how far this was from being the truth soon became apparent, however. A *Maclean's* journalist managed to pry loose a confidential 51-page document prepared by a committee of experts specially appointed by the Commonwealth Secretariat to provide a perspective on sanc-

tions that could guide the foreign ministers' discussions. (This expert committee even included one Canadian, Bernard Wood, the head of Ottawa's North-South Institute. Wood had served as advance man for Mulroney's successful tour of southern Africa in 1987; he was nominated to the committee by External Affairs, as a second choice after Clark's original nominee, a Canadian academic notorious for his hostility to sanctions, was deemed inappropriate by the Commonwealth Secretariat!) The document reveals just how convincing a case could indeed be made for sanctions and just how firmly the Commonwealth Secretariat was prepared to encourage the ministers in the direction of more effective sanctions. It reveals, in other words, just how strong a tide of opinion within the Commonwealth Canada was prepared – with some success – to defy in Toronto in August.

The factors that underlie Canadian government backsliding on the question of South Africa are discussed in other articles in this issue of SAR. Here we seek merely to reproduce as evidence an important portion of the confidential document itself. Note that the document has never before been published, although some brief sentences taken from it were quoted in Hilary Mackenzie's article on the foreign ministers' meeting in *Maclean's* (August 15, 1988). Space constraints mean that we can produce only the concluding Section V (pp. 45-51), entitled "What Can Be Done Now." But this is the guts of it: an invitation to more concerted Commonwealth action, the agenda that should have been far more firmly on the table in August. A few words first, however, by way of summary of the first 44 pages of this "In-

terim Report of the Expert Study on the Evaluation of the Application and Impact of Sanctions to the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa," pages that set the stage for the recommendations you will read here.

One of the expert committee's main premises is sharply stated at the very outset: "International sanctions are having an increasing impact on South Africa." It proceeds to document this premise in the body of its text. The committee also cites with approval the admonition of South Africa's most important business magazine, *The Financial Mail*: "Don't kid yourself. Effective sanctions do work." Yet it agrees with the FM that sanctions are still very far from being fully effective, with many countries not complying and numerous loopholes remaining. Moreover, the recent failure of even the most verbally assertive of countries to follow up earlier actions with significant new sanctions has allowed the repressive forces in South Africa to regain a significant measure of self-confidence.

The committee therefore echoes the remark of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Durban, Denis Hurley, to the effect that "much stronger pressure is required – pressure that will cause real discomfort to the white community to make it realize it cannot continue" with apartheid. The export of South African bulk commodities must be stopped ever more effectively, alongside tighter limitations on sales to South Africa. For current constraints have brought about less than half the decline in purchases needed to reach the "minimum noticeable level" required to begin substantially to alter South African state policy. The expert study then specifies new opportu-



Dave Hartman

Joe Clark answers questions after Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Conference, Toronto, 1988

nities for effectively implementing sanctions. These are opened up by the changing pattern of South Africa's trade. The study also identifies areas of SA's particular vulnerability. Outlining the broad lineaments of an effective sanctions strategy, it then proposes its concrete programme.

If such steps are followed, the experts argue, "the Commonwealth would be reasserting its leadership of the sanctions campaign. Particularly with sanctions, leadership has been by example. The precedents set by the Nordic states and the Commonwealth have been important to others, such as the United States. By intensifying its own economic measures, the Commonwealth would again be setting the pace."

V. WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW

Commonwealth countries have all adopted sanctions against South Africa, but some still maintain trade links with the apartheid state. It must be possible now for them to impose the remainder of the initial range of sanctions - a somewhat broader version of the present US and Commonwealth measures. Less than that will lose all credibility in South African eyes; "protection" against sanctions will seem assured.

As we have noted, some measures are more difficult to implement than others. Some measures will require more study and cannot be presented until the final report next year. Nevertheless, we believe that

the following measures could be sensibly implemented now by Commonwealth governments. They are practical and would not involve significant costs. (Precise technical definitions are given in Appendix 1.) We have divided these initial proposals into the three categories set out in the Okanagan statement: "wider, tighter, and more intensified application."

WIDER APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

1. Press other countries to adopt the Commonwealth trade bans

The Commonwealth bans on the import of South African agricultural products, coal, iron and steel, and uranium are a practical first step. Together these account for 24 per cent of South African exports. If the importation of just these products was stopped by all of South Africa's trading partners, it would have an obvious impact inside South Africa and spur the process of negotiation.

There should be no problems with these commodities. All are readily available on the world market, so South Africa will be unable to find alternative markets, while the importers can easily find alternative suppliers. Thus each nation which stops importing these goods has a small, immediate impact on South Africa, while the costs to themselves are negligible. Priority should be given to coal, which is South Africa's most important export after gold.

Diplomatic efforts should be concentrated on the three main trading partners - Japan, West Germany, and the UK - and on those second tier countries which have substantially increased their trade. In Europe, that is Turkey, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal. In Asia, that is Hong Kong and Taiwan, and probably South Korea.

2. "Taking advantage" legislation

Regulations, such as those in the US Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid

Act, should be passed in all countries which impose sanctions. This would permit restrictions to be imposed on countries which "take advantage" of sanctions, for example by importing coal or steel which is cheaper because of sanctions. At the very least, such regulations should ban the import of goods containing sanctioned material, and permit further trade restrictions in flagrant cases.

TIGHTER APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

The Commonwealth commitment to sanctions is sincere and well known. But loopholes and sanctions busting have reduced the impact they intended when they imposed sanctions. Commonwealth diplomatic efforts will carry higher credibility if members demonstrate in a practical way how to tighten sanctions.

3. Heavier penalties

Penalties for violating sanctions should be similar to those for illegal trading with enemy countries and for drug smuggling, rather than the more minor penalties normally applied to customs and labelling offenses.

4. Stricter customs scrutiny

Customs authorities should give a higher priority to checking for, and investigating, sanctions violations. Special units should be established and be given extra resources, if needed. For imports, closer scrutiny should be given to possible false labelling and false country of origin declarations. Liaison should be improved with the countries neighbouring South Africa, which are most likely to be victims of dishonest marking, to ensure that genuine products from those countries are not delayed by investigation.

For both imports and exports, close scrutiny should be given to articles passing through free trade zones. For oil, arms, and similar sanctioned items, more use should be made of discharge and end-user certificates, and these should be followed up to ensure their validity.



Dave Hartman

South African Women's Day protest, Toronto, 1988

5. Prohibit technology transfer intended to support sanctions evasion

All technology transfer linked to South African attempts to gain self-sufficiency in oil, arms, and computer technology should be prohibited. This should include consultancy, sales and licences of technology, and sales of actual hardware. In the oil sector this would include anything linked to oil and gas exploration, production, and processing, including gas and coal conversion.

MORE INTENSIFIED APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

In calling for the "universal adoption" of the US, Commonwealth, and Nordic measures, the Commonwealth has accepted that a substantial expansion of sanctions may be needed, and has pledged its support. At this time, the experts recommend some first steps toward the intensification of sanctions. None would impose significant direct costs on Commonwealth countries, nor do they imply a major reduction in trade at this time. But adopting these measures would underline the Commonwealth's commitment to more intensified sanctions, and would set an example which shows the way to other states who have not yet moved as far.

Three kinds of measures are pro-

posed. First are measures to allow "people's sanctions" - measures which will permit individual citizens to reduce their indirect dealings with the apartheid state in advance of formal government sanctions. Second is the cut in trade credits, which does not itself reduce trade but which points in that direction. Third is the addition to present sanctions of a small group of commodities which are within the spirit but not the letter of present bans.

6. Legislation permitting local action

To clarify the position of local councils, school boards, and similar bodies, legislation should be introduced allowing restrictions on South African goods in any competitive tendering. Also, there should be a "conscience clause" allowing individuals to refuse to handle goods and other transactions for or from South Africa. This will allow individuals and organizations which feel strongly to take action, and to bear the cost themselves. It will show the strength of feeling, and could further reduce South African trade even before expanded sanctions are imposed by law.

7. Increased publicity and information

Withdraw any regulation permitting secrecy and commercial confidence

with respect to South Africa. This should apply to licences, export permits, penalties for violations, etc. Set up a public register of transactions with South Africa, which would include export credits, sales and purchases of goods, calls by ships, etc. Many companies are only prepared to do business with apartheid if they are protected by a veil of secrecy.

Regulations on local government tendering, commercial confidence, and so on have been implemented for good historic reasons, and it is not intended to breach the principles involved. As Sweden stressed when it passed such legislation, South Africa is a unique case. Thus, legislation and regulations intended to carry out recommendations 6 and 7 should be specific to South Africa. They should stress the unique nature of apartheid and the Eminent Persons Group warning that, without action, "the cost in lives may have to be counted in millions." And they should stress that local and individual actions against South Africa are in keeping with established foreign policy - that this is not an example of local government setting foreign policy.

8. Ban export credits and guarantees

Export credits serve two important functions. First, they are replacing long term credit and have become an important loophole in existing financial sanctions. Second, they encourage trade at a time when the Okanagan Statement points to a reduction in trade. Thus ending trade credits tightens financial sanctions and points to the intensification of trade sanctions.

In order not to create new loopholes, any ban must be broadly defined. It must include: loans to buyers, credits by sellers, loans to cover sellers' credits, the sale or factoring of bills, and guarantees and insurance for all forms of transactions with South Africa.

9. Clarify the term "agricultural products"

The Commonwealth ban on agricultural products should extend to everything which grows, including inedible products, and to the most basic products made from them. Thus it should include: cotton and wool, as well as yarn and thread; hides, skins, and leather; fish and seafood; and pulp and paper.

10. Extend the Commonwealth ban to some other minerals

The Commonwealth already bans coal and uranium, as well as iron and steel. There are three groups of minerals which could easily be banned now. They are not strategic in any way, South Africa is not a major world producer, and there is a wide range of alternate (non-communist) suppliers, including Commonwealth members. They are: base metals (copper, lead, tin, zinc, aluminium, and nickel), iron ore, and non-metallic minerals (except andalusite). These account for another 5 per cent of South African exports, and are totally unnecessary to the industrialized world. Precious metals such as platinum, and the controversial steel additives and minor metals, are not included in this list. (See appendix 1 for more details.) Action on this is particularly urgent as base metals prices have doubled so far this year; without a ban on base metal exports, South Africa's extra earnings from rising prices will again wipe out the effects of other bans.

Prognosis

By themselves, these measures will not end apartheid. They will not even bring about the "real discomfort" that is needed to force whites to think about negotiation.

But these are significant steps, which, if taken by all countries, would sharply intensify the pressure on the apartheid regime, and would hasten the movement towards serious negotiation. These measures represent a renewed commitment to

sanctions. They are a clear statement that the Commonwealth is not prepared to stop where it is.

White South Africa now feels protected from sanctions. It believes it will be allowed to pursue unhindered a policy of "repressive reform" and avoid all political change. This can be challenged. The Commonwealth has taken the lead before; it can do so again. It must declare publicly that it is not prepared to continue with business as usual. And it must show by example its commitment to wider, tighter, and more intensified application of sanctions. South Africans, white and black, must have reason to believe that effective sanctions will be imposed soon.

(11 July 1988)

Unfortunately, nothing with binding clout along these lines emerged in the meeting's final communiqué. There was merely a brief check-list urging in very general terms such things as stricter customs scrutiny, more publicity about and heavier penalties for violators, some clarification of the definition of "agricultural products" and the like; an injunction to "prohibit technology transfer that is designed to enable South Africa to circumvent existing sanctions, particularly in the areas of arms, oil and computers" is about as specific as things get. As Maclean's reported, in the end Canada had ignored the urgency attached to the issue by the Commonwealth Secretariat, stonewalled the other six countries represented on the foreign ministers' committee and blocked any move to adopt new sanctions. Hence the bland and studied understatement of Clark's final thoughts on the deliberations "There are differences on the speed with which to proceed with sanctions"! Hence, too, the diplomatic but sharp-edged response of Johnny Makatini, international affairs director of the African National Congress of South Africa, an invited observer at the meeting: "The outcome fall short of what we expected."

An Interview with Stephen Lewis

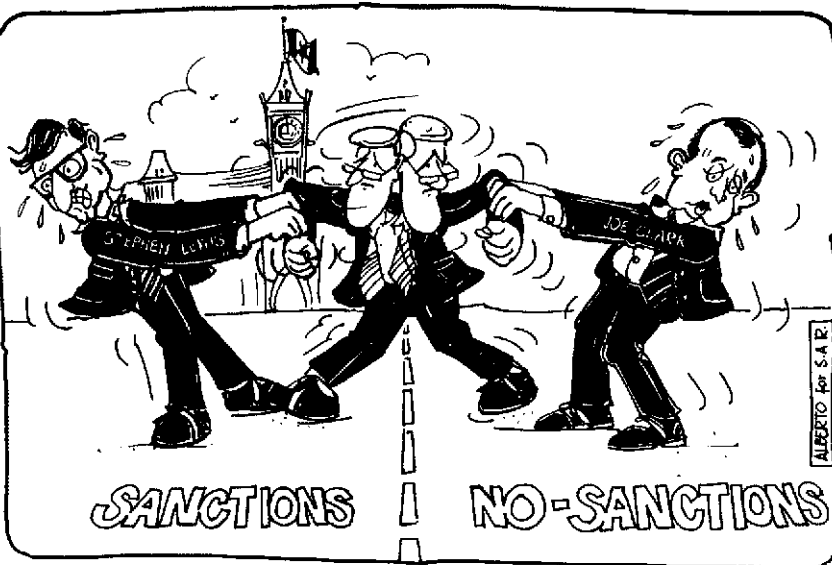
BY MICHAEL VALPY

Globe and Mail columnist Michael Valpy interviewed Stephen Lewis for *Southern African Report*. Valpy was the *Globe's* Africa correspondent in 1984-87.

For the nearly four years that Stephen Lewis was Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, our star shone brighter than ever before ... in the General Assembly, throughout the Third World, but especially in Africa. Much of the credit, of course, belongs to Lewis, scion of one of Canada's first families of democratic socialism and former leader of the Ontario New Democrats, the experienced internationalist Canadian with an intellect as tough and as well-honed as his oratory.

But some credit for Lewis' term must go to the unlikely man who appointed him and whose government gave Canadian policy on southern Africa its most significant advances in 30 years - Brian Mulroney. In 1985 Mulroney promised the U.N. General Assembly severe diplomatic punishment of South Africa if Pretoria did not move substantively toward a democracy of racial equality. He helped create the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group and played a major role in positioning the Commonwealth behind limited sanctions. Last year Brian Mulroney became the first major Western leader to visit Zimbabwe and later became the hero of the Vancouver Commonwealth summit when he defied Margaret Thatcher over South African sanctions.

But what has happened since then - while Pretoria has laughed in the world's face and further silenced internal opposition to its racial policies? Mulroney has never followed up on his promises of tougher action against South Africa. In August, when Canada played host to Com-



Alberto Mourato

monwealth foreign ministers meeting to discuss South Africa, his government pretended sanctions were not on the agenda. This past fall, when he again addressed the General Assembly, he gave South Africa little more than passing reference.

Stephen Lewis, no longer Canada's U.N. ambassador, is back in Toronto to teach and write. In an interview with *Southern Africa Report*, he assessed the state of Canada's policy - and what the future might hold for it.

SAR: *How much is South Africa still on the Prime Minister's agenda? Has he been influenced by government polls saying South Africa is no longer special?*

SL: I don't quite know how to read it. I was, I will admit, intensely surprised that we weren't prepared to carry the policy any further at the most recent United Nations speech. I had thought that the process would not stop with [the Commonwealth summit in] Vancouver ... I thought that next step would have come in March or April of '88 ...

It's hard to argue with me that [Mulroney] wasn't, and isn't serious about South Africa, because I've had too many conversations where he is genuinely engaged and exercised, where he talks about it feelingly and obsessively ...

I'm given to understand - I have no evidence - that there have been very difficult times in Cabinet and that the opposition to the policy comes from within Cabinet, and that it is so deep, so truculent, among some of the Cabinet ministers that conceivably on the eve of a campaign he didn't want an internal showdown ...

My impression about External is that they never felt deeply enough about the issue to have pushed him further. Because if you are a prime minister who wants to do it, but it's hard to find Cabinet support - and I suppose after Walter McLean left the Cabinet, there was no one in the Cabinet who was enthusiastic about the policy, save the Prime Minister, in my impression. Well, even a prime minister needs some support from colleagues. And if he

doesn't get it strongly from External Affairs, and [its] minister who has his own doubts about let's-put-it-all-on-the-high-road - which was, I found, immediately given away by those opening words at the Commonwealth conference on 'sanctions fatigue' and really meant Joe Clark's weariness with dealing with the issue. It was an interesting revelation, I think, of Mr Clark's own frame of mind ...

Kohl - why should it be for us? It has to do with corporatism and ideology and business and the natural affinities of the Tory party to protect business interests and not to want to engage in these kinds of things ...

I haven't talked to the Prime Minister about precisely what prompted the standing-still. I thought from my own conversations with him over the latter months of my being there [at the U.N.] that

mitment on this issue hasn't shifted or changed or melted down. But a man who's been left alone?

SL: Yes. I always felt he was terribly alone on this issue. To come to External ... in my three to four years, I never, but never, once saw anything truly thoughtful or analytic about South Africa. In other words, the quality of the research and the material I saw was entirely pedestrian. The only thing that ever was useful in the argument, useful in the debate, was the kind of stuff you get from StatsCan - how much you're doing in exports and how much you're doing in imports. You don't need a South African task force to do that.

SAR: *Did alarm bells go off in your head, either during the visit of Oliver Tambo or during the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' meeting in Toronto in August, when the last thing the Canadian government wanted to talk about was sanctions ... they wanted to focus on censorship?*

SL: Yes, and I had the impression that the Africans were quite impatient with all of that and that their eyes were opened in a sense ... that what was being said by the Prime Minister on the one hand and by the Foreign Minister on the other seemed rather different.

SAR: *Had you seen it coming?*

SL: It didn't surprise me. As I say, I always had that feeling that at External, collectively their heart wasn't in it. And that therefore you look for alternatives, for the kinds of things which the African leadership would always regard as peripheral. And it is peripheral ... You don't bring the [South African] government to the negotiating table by jacking up the communications possibilities or giving scholarships to black students ...

... I think what will ultimately force the hand is the Security Council. I don't know whether they've thought about all this - well, they must have. I mean, what do they do when the first comprehensive



Dave Hartman

SAR: *What's the basis for the Cabinet's lack of enthusiasm? Do they believe in the sincerity of 'reform'?*

SL: There are those who think it's simply the wrong policy, that sanctions won't work, you can't penalize South Africa, they will modify their policy over time ...

There also is the sense that if it's not good enough for other 'good Tories' - Reagan and Thatcher and

he was going to move ... So I was surprised and taken aback, and I don't know how to explain it except by Cabinet. Because I don't think it was ever related particularly to polls. I don't think there was ever a poll or survey which shows that Canadians would be mad at the government if we proposed full sanctions.

SAR: *You are portraying the Prime Minister to me as a man whose com-*

and mandatory sanctions resolution comes before the Security Council? What are we going to do? Maybe, maybe, the Prime Minister and Mr Clark came to the conclusion that that's where they will show their hand. Maybe they've wanted the election out of the way and their Cabinet colleagues appeased ... and then, in the crunch, when you have no alternatives, when external circumstances force your hand in a different arena, maybe that's where it happens. Maybe that's where we go down the road with sanctions.

SAR: *How have we been interpreted in the last year by the Africans? They're not blind.*

SL: No. But it's important to recognize that the confrontation with Thatcher will last a long time. In other words, it's so unusual for Canada to have done what it did - I mean Joe Clark was very good at the Foreign Ministers' meetings and Brian Mulroney visited Zimbabwe and Zambia, and Clark went further south still and [David] MacDonald and [Maurice] Strong and McLean and [Monique] Landry and Maggie Catley-Carlson, and their involvement in all these subSaharan and southern African activities - there's such a high Canadian profile.

And the joining of the issue within the Commonwealth - that here was a white, Western country prepared to take it on and give the leadership, and show its credentials. That has so impressed them that when you add the Prime Minister's very close personal friendship with Mugabe and Kaunda, the two main actors, it's going to last a long time. They may be becoming a little jaundiced ... not about the Prime Minister, I bet you ... a little jaundiced about External and what happened around the conference in August.

SAR: *Mugabe and Kaunda are both very, very sophisticated politicians. They know better than even we do how easily words come. Surely they must be looking at us and saying the words are good but the policy isn't following through?*

SL: Maybe they are. But they may be willing to give more time. You know, it was an electric moment at the Commonwealth conference when Mulroney took on Thatcher and used that analogy about 20 million whites and five million blacks in Canada and if the five million blacks dared to dominate the 20 million whites - well, how long would our friends to the south allow us to get away with that? And Thatcher nearly had a fit. I've never seen such anger on any one's face as she displayed at that moment. [The suggestion] that the Americans would intervene! It just drove her crazy. God, she was aggravated! But you could have heard the proverbial pin [drop in the room].

And there was such a sense of solidarity. You have Mulroney sitting here. Right next to him is Mugabe. Right next to Mugabe is Kaunda. And there's Thatcher, down at the end of the table. You talk about forging friendships and alliances! [Mulroney] can say [to Mugabe and Kaunda], "I've got some domestic problems, give me a little time, I can't do it right now, but I'll do it ... in the meantime we'll try to give you some non-lethal [military] support, we'll pour in more and more support for Mozambique and Angola, we will get on the Security Council and give you a voice there that you don't otherwise have ... you'll never get it from Japan or Germany or Italy, but you'll get it from us." All of this forms a complex ... I'm not pretending that any of this is dishonest. It's the process, the way the issue evolves.

SAR: *Mugabe, in my last interview with him, said he couldn't see any reason, balancing everything, why we should continue diplomatic relations. Although he indeed did make clear that the first step was economic.*

SL: I embraced Clark's argument, maybe because I was so excited by what was done in '85 - but I embraced the Clark argument ... which is very, very typical of Joe Clark

... that you take it stage by stage, you look at every single aspect of the argument, you try to get others on side, you do things in conjunction with others, and that that's the way you really put pressure on South Africa. I believe that was an honestly held intellectual position. Therefore, the steady incremental application of pressure that came through the Commonwealth and the whole EPG process, all of that made sense to me.

Well, it became obvious that you sure as hell weren't going to move Thatcher no matter what. And when it became obvious that Kohl was going to stick his heels in, and obvious that Japan was just waiting to fill up the gap when anybody divested, then by 1988 the message became clear that that strategy didn't work. It should therefore be abandoned. It was a dishonoured strategy. It was honourable, initially, but it was discredited. They tried. They failed. So there is then no reason not to carry out what you had said you'd do in 1985.

SAR: *Let's come to non-lethal military aid. Is it something we can do easily, in terms of our own policy history?*

SL: I think it is, in fact, a real step forward. Because even if all the emphasis is on non-lethal, even if all the emphasis is on uniforms and on dispassionate trucks that are neutral, it still speaks to security. Can it be justified? Of course, it can be justified. So long as Canada is engaged in major project-building in areas that are subject to military activity, then we have a right to support indirectly our own economic interests by non-lethal support for security protection. We're not going as far as Margaret Thatcher, we're not bringing large numbers of Zimbabweans in for military training (but) we are creating a new category of aid that is linked directly with security. It's not inconsistent with the Canadian tradition but it does step up the degree of commitment, at least to the Frontline States.

COSATU

The Year in Retrospect

BY: 'A SOUTH AFRICAN CORRESPONDENT'

It has apparently been a bad year for COSATU (the Congress of South African Trade Unions), South Africa's largest and most progressive trade union central. In 1988 the state imposed severe restrictions on its political activities. Its own senior officers have admitted that key union structures are barely functional and major campaigns have bogged down. Several of its affiliates have been riven by internal dissension - most strongly evidenced in the continuing inability to resolve the deep divisions in one of its largest affiliates, the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union. And to top it all off the amended - but still notably draconian - Labour Relations Act is now law, despite resolute opposition.

But the overall picture is not a gloomy one. COSATU is entering the last months of yet another turbulent year organizationally and politically intact. It is displaying a greater degree of shop floor resilience and greater potential for political unity than at any other point in its three year history.

COSATU has demonstrated its buoyancy in two ways: It can still mount mass political action and its affiliates have undertaken several disciplined factory floor actions.

There have been numerous major political actions this year, but undoubtedly the most significant was June's three-day mass strike in opposition to the Labour Relations Bill and the restrictions imposed on COSATU and 17 other organizations in terms of the Emergency regulations. This strike, called by a

COSATU Special Congress for three days of 'peaceful action,' involved some three million workers.

The strength of the action took the COSATU leadership by surprise, and so did the reaction it provoked. Business and the state simply panicked. Immediately before the strike, employers had not only refused to accept a COSATU demand that they intercede with the government in order to prevent the bill from becoming law. They actually launched a high profile media campaign in support of the bill. Yet a few hours into the strike, business representatives were closeted in meetings with the Minister of Manpower in an attempt to find some compromise that would satisfy the unions. In any event, the bill was enacted unchanged, but the unions had won an important organizational victory. They had clearly demonstrated to both the state and business that they could mobilize disciplined mass support in spite of the formal restrictions of the emergency and the brutal police repression that it has sanctioned.

It is too early to assess the impact of this action. The bosses are clearly treading warily, reluctant to use the new powers granted by the amended Labour Relations Act. COSATU affiliates are currently attempting to force major employers to sign private agreements waiving their rights under the Act. And the strength of the action, combined with the successful boycott of the recent municipal elections, will show the state that its emergency rule has neither pacified the population nor given it a shred of legitimacy.

A major strike in August by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) showed clearly that COSATU affiliates can mount strategic action around both short term wage demands and long term changes in the structure of the metal industry. The NUMSA strike involved approximately 30,000 workers at a multitude of plants. NUMSA is not alone in its capac-

ity to mount such a co-ordinated national action. A number of COSATU affiliates are similarly well-organized, with effective national shop steward councils which generally group stewards in the same company at different plants across the country. It is these councils which are responsible for the kind of action recently taken by NUMSA.

Most COSATU affiliates have effective shop floor organizations and have consistently been able to secure real wage increases despite Botha's personal plea to the private sector for wage restraint. A recent survey found that unionized workers were receiving wage increases averaging between 19 and 22 per cent. After a massive strike in Natal and the Eastern Cape, even the state railways quickly conceded a substantially larger wage increase than originally intended.

COSATU's apparent strength appears to disguise some grave internal weaknesses. The union has had trouble breathing life into some of its structures, particularly the regional organizations which it had hoped would be a crucial level of the federation. Important campaigns - most notably the centrepiece 'Living Wage' Campaign - have bogged down, suffering from lack of co-ordination by the COSATU structures and poor participation by affiliates. These are very real difficulties. But there are gratifying attempts to confront them by means of open debate. This process was started by national officers who prepared a searching and deeply critical document, and it has been continued throughout the federation.

This openness is also reflected in a softening of the sharp debate around COSATU's political position. Much of the political debate in COSATU has effectively centred around the issue of organizational autonomy versus an unequivocal orientation towards the mainstream of the national liberation movement. In the often bitter polemic characterizing this debate, the proponents

of the former position have been labelled "workerist" while the latter have been called "populist."

This slanging match has generated more heat than light and in the process has masked a very real dilemma.

Clearly, there have been two crucial political developments in the post-Soweto period: the public re-emergence of the ANC as the representative of the majority of the population and the emergence of a militant trade union movement, one of the hallmarks of which is its democratic functioning and political autonomy. These developments have given rise to an important tension which lies at the heart of the debate within COSATU: how to insert this powerful union movement into the national liberation movement whilst simultaneously maintaining its vital independence and heterogeneity.

There have been important shifts on both sides of the debate. While the dilemma has by no means been resolved, it has moved into a realm where both sides effectively agree on a common definition of the problem; namely, the urgent need to build an effective anti-apartheid alliance. The clearest evidence of this is the decision by the special COSATU Congress to call an anti-apartheid conference (subsequently banned) to include representatives of NACTU (the smaller, more black consciousness-oriented union central) and the black consciousness groupings. The participation of major UDF affiliates in this decision is particularly significant. There has also been renewed cooperation between NACTU and COSATU over the opposition to the Labour Bill.

But there is no reason for complacency. COSATU will have to clear enormous hurdles in the immediate future.

For a start, COSATU is facing an aggressive attack from business, which wants to curb the power of the unions on the factory floor. Though both the June work stay-away and

the NUMSA strike, as well as other similar actions, illustrated clearly the limits of business aggression, the unions now face the additional burden of an amended Labour Relations Act. The amendments severely undermine the legal protection that the unions have developed over the past decade. They place particularly severe limits on the already heavily



COSATU anti-labour bill rally, Cape Town, Aug. 1988

circumscribed right to strike. Most notably, the Act now permits – in the best tradition of Thatcherism – employers to claim damages from unions involved in illegal, or even "unfair" industrial action.

The act need not be crippling. It will, however, require a highly disciplined and carefully considered response. In the 'seventies the trade union movement established its strong roots in the work place by careful organization, seeking out and exploiting the weaknesses of its formidable opponents. In this earlier period, the unions often lost sight of the political wood for the trees of the factory floor. In recent years the opposite has tended to happen. Unions have focused on the need to undertake large scale polit-

ical mobilization and in the process have occasionally neglected factory floor issues. In order to counter the Labour Relations Act and an aggressive business class, COSATU must clearly heed some of the organizational lessons of yesteryear.

Secondly, COSATU will, in the immediate future at least, continue as the leading legal mass organization in the country. As we have seen, the position generates an inevitable tension in a diverse, politically heterogeneous trade union movement. COSATU's role in this regard is not made any easier by the exceptionally repressive environment in which it operates. The banning of the anti-apartheid conference, though not entirely surprising, may force COSATU to lower its political sights.

Finally – and this a fundamental long term problem – COSATU must devise a strategy for dealing with the massive levels of unemployment. This may yet prove to be COSATU's major political task. The unions are increasingly representative of a relatively privileged segment of the population, people privileged by virtue of actually having jobs. Over thirty per cent of the national workforce is unemployed. Access to housing, educational opportunities, pensions and medical care increasingly depends on having a job. This lends additional substance to the 'privilege' of employment. So COSATU has to confront state economic policy that accepts and indeed relies upon a permanently marginalized mass.

It is important not to exaggerate this tension. There has been no greening of the South African working class, whose overwhelming experience remains one of national oppression and grinding class exploitation. But the growing mass of unemployed workers and their relation to those with jobs does represent an increasingly complex feature of South African society which both COSATU and the liberation movements will have to confront.

Truth and Consequences: South Africa's Churches on the Front Line

BY GARY KENNY

Gary Kenny is a staff person with the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa

Although they have grown accustomed to the violence of the apartheid state, staff of the South African Council of Churches' (SACC) national office in Johannesburg could not have been prepared for what awaited them at their place of work on the morning of August 31. The entrance to SACC headquarters off De Villiers Street had been cordoned off. Dozens of police stood guard, some holding German shepherds straining on their leashes. The pavement in front of their beloved Khotso House, the "House of Peace," was littered with chunks of concrete and shards of glass. Khotso House, they soon learned, had been torn apart earlier that morning by a massive basement explosion.

Later that same day, in a downtown Johannesburg church, the SACC's general secretary searched for words to steady the shaken spirits of his staff. "Do not be afraid," began Frank Chikane, quoting scripture and remembering that only a few days earlier he had discovered a hand grenade in his mailbox at home. "Do not be afraid . . . for there are more who are with us than those who are with them."

Those same words would be needed again just six weeks later in another South African city, this time to boost the morale of the country's Catholics. In the early morning hours of October 12, Khanya House (House of Light), the head office of the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) in Pretoria, was firebombed. The ensuing blaze started in the basement and spread quickly to the floors

above destroying hundreds of important documents and files and printing equipment. Later, the police discovered limpet mines and hand grenades which the arsonists had intended to be detonated by the fire.

Miraculously, no one was seriously injured by either blast, although some church personnel were in both buildings at the time of the explosions. A shadowy right-wing group calling itself "Witwolwe" (white Wolves) claimed responsibility for the attack on Khotso House. Whether it really exists, or whether it is an attempt by the South African government to mask its own involvement, is not clear. Church leaders, however, say they are sure that Pretoria was responsible. "We have no doubt that this act was committed by the perpetrators or supporters of apartheid," said Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "The South African Council of Churches has long been a target of the enemies of peace precisely because of its own strong commitment to the struggle for justice and peace."

Around the world the reaction of churches to the bombings was shock but not surprise. In South Africa, any opinion at odds with apartheid ideology is regarded by the South African government and its supporters as hostile and unpatriotic. Such vicious and unprovoked action as that taken against Khotso and Khanya Houses is, therefore, to be expected. Churches opposed to apartheid, just because they are churches in a state which claims to be righteously Christian, are not regarded by the government as exceptions to that rule.

The attacks on the SACC and SACBC are part of a consistent, longstanding strategy of the South African government and its agents

to hinder church activities. This strategy has been most evident since February, 1988 when Pretoria effectively banned or restricted 18 democratic organizations. Among those groups affected were the United Democratic Front, the country's largest anti-apartheid coalition, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The churches felt they had no choice but to move forward into the front lines of the struggle to fill the void left by the UDF and COSATU.

The SACC and the SACBC have long been thorns in Pretoria's side. The SACC in particular has been uncompromising in its opposition to apartheid dogma. It has consistently exposed the moral bankruptcy of apartheid and its heretical Christian justification. Long ago it committed itself to use every resource it has to work for an end to apartheid and to support its victims.

At no time has that commitment been clearer or any more threatening to the Pretoria regime than in the period following the bannings in February. In an unprecedented show of ecumenical and inter-faith unity, hundreds of church leaders marched on Parliament just days after the bannings to file a formal protest. The march marked a turning point for the church in South Africa. Statements and resolutions condemning apartheid were no longer enough. By taking to the streets, church leaders were committing themselves to a new policy of effective action to end apartheid.

That policy was clearly outlined in May when a special Convocation of Churches was convened. A decision was taken to engage in a campaign of "non-violent direct action" to "persuade or otherwise

force the government to the negotiating table." In July, church leaders met again and, on the basis of the May resolutions, agreed on their first course of action. They decided to call on Christians and all peace-loving South Africans to boycott the municipal elections scheduled for October. The elections, they said, were undemocratic and merely an extension of the apartheid system.

Frank Chikane said in a pastoral letter that the churches were under no illusions in taking such action. We "were quite aware of the enormous forces of evil (we) were chal-

lenging and confronting" and "the vicious and brutal ways in which these forces would possibly deal with (us)." The regime has realized that violence is the only way it can continue to maintain apartheid. It "has chosen the military option against our people." It is saying to the churches, "we want you on the battleground."

But, Chikane added, South African Christians are compelled to "obey God rather than man." As a church of Christ, which sides with the poor and marginalized, "we have no option but to speak the truth irrespective of the consequences."

As the bombings of Khotso and Khanya houses attest, the consequences have been severe. Other attacks on the churches have also occurred. In January, Community House, which houses the Western Cape Council of Churches and the UDF in the Peninsula, was bombed. More recently a staff member at the SACC was held hostage at gunpoint by a man claiming to be angered by the churches' socio-political role and alleging that he was a police informer. Archbishop Tutu has been publicly rebuked by both President Botha and Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok. The latter, angered by Tutu's public dismissal of the October elections as "undemocratic," called Tutu and other church leaders "wolves in sheep's clothing." Lower-profile clerics have been jailed for condemning the elections.

Church leaders do not expect the South African police to bring to justice those who perpetrated the bombings. One cleric said that he didn't believe that the police are seriously trying to solve these crimes. He pointed out that many months has passed since Community House and several union offices were bombed. Those attacks remain unsolved, the cleric said, and added that things will probably get rougher for the churches.

The African National Congress (ANC), no stranger to the viciousness of apartheid violence, also fears the worst is yet to come for the churches. The attacks on Khotso and Khanya houses "herald possible attempts to assassinate the religious leaders of our country who are opposed to apartheid," the ANC said in an October statement.

Undeterred by the warnings, threats and bombings, South African church leaders opposed to apartheid have pledged not to stray from their course of direct action until the end of apartheid has been guaranteed. "Although the House of Peace has been destroyed this will in no way deter us from working for peace," Chikane said.



Adil Bradlow/Afrapix

Municipal elections: Heideveld-Athlone, Oct. 1988

The Rushdie Controversy

BY CHARLOTTE BAUER,
The Weekly Mail, Johannesburg

"They can leave me without a vote, move me from my home, destroy my business - but they must not touch my God."

The speaker was quiet-spoken, male and anonymous. A Muslim, he had phoned the *Weekly Mail* newspaper to protest the fact that author Salman Rushdie was about to arrive in South Africa to speak on an anti-censorship platform at the paper's annual Book Week.

The mild-mannered caller suggested that the newspaper and the event's co-host, the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW), withdraw their invitation immediately. Before hanging-up he said: "I am a man of peace, but if that godless idolator comes here, I will pray that you have a slow and painful death."

Death threats against Rushdie flooded the *Weekly Mail* office before the author's arrival. What was curious about them was that many were not only signed but also contained the address of the sender.

The cause of this violent reaction is Rushdie's latest work, *The Satanic Verses*, a controversial novel that has angered Muslims because of its portrayal of Islam's founder, Mohammed. Over the next few days, it became uncomfortably clear that the depth of offence caused by Rushdie's *Verses* to South Africa's 500,000-strong Muslim community was not confined to a small band of right-wing 'crazies.' It reached across the spectrum from devout religious groupings to Muslim anti-apartheid organizations. This blurring caused conflict in anti-apartheid circles whose oppositional unity had been honed on the easily-identified common enemy - state censorship. Seasoned victims and opponents of censorship suddenly found them-

selves in the position of potential censors.

From the moment the Muslim community decided to mobilize around the Rushdie issue, events moved briskly - and bizarrely. A pamphlet urging action against "Islam's enemy" was circulated in all mosques. It called for the immediate ban of the book (a demand the government's prolific censors complied with, almost as a matter of form, a few days later), the revoking of Rushdie's visa to visit South Africa and a boycott of both the *Weekly Mail* and COSAW.

The irony of the boycott call was two-fold. COSAW, the political voice of progressive South African writers, itself supports the cultural boycott strategy and had sought and received a hard-won boycott exemption from the British Anti-Apartheid Movement in order to bring Rushdie to South Africa.

The second ironic note was struck when the call to boycott the *Weekly Mail* was rendered superfluous. At the height of negotiations with Muslim leaders over the Rushdie saga, the paper was abruptly banned for a month under the government's Emergency regulations.

No-one in South Africa had read *The Satanic Verses* at the time the controversy broke - it had not yet been published here. One of the leading architects of the campaign against it, Mahomed Farid Choonara of the Africa Muslim Agency, managed to expound lengthily upon the book's "satanic blasphemy" without having read it. This, he said, was "not the point."

Rushdie himself was not surprised. "Whether in South Africa, India or Britain, no-one feels it necessary to have read the book before deciding they don't like it. We're talking about people who prefer to burn books rather than read them."

Perhaps the most striking irony of all, was the title of Rushdie's keynote address in South Africa, chosen long before the saga of *The Satanic Verses* began: 'Wherever they burn books, they will also in the end burn people.'

The call to "seek and destroy" all copies of *Verses*, came to naught only because the state obliged by banning it before a single copy reached the bookshops.

The *Weekly Mail* had been effectively silenced, but the threats against it continued unabated. Against a backdrop of the increasingly reluctant support of the Muslim left, the *Weekly Mail* and COSAW's pleas for the right of free speech to win the day began to sound a little innocent in the face of religious dogma and growing political gamesmanship.

The Book Week organizers were worried too, about the unsavoury vision of being forced to accept the protection of the South African Police. There was little doubt that Rushdie would need some kind of physical shield during his visit, but the symbols conjured up by the image of Rushdie flanked every step by the notorious SAP was cause for some alarm.

However, until two days before Rushdie's arrival, the organizers stood firm. COSAW said it "viewed with disgust the concerted campaign being waged against (his) visit," and reiterated that "COSAW firmly opposes any form of censorship, particularly when that censorship is imposed via threats of violence."

The same day the South African government published its banning order against the *Weekly Mail*, a final meeting took place in the newspaper's office at which COSAW and the *Weekly Mail* tried to reach some kind of solution with representatives of various Muslim groupings including the Islamic Council of South Africa, the Africa Mus-

lim Agency and the politically progressive Transvaal Indian Congress. They failed to come to any agreement.

The organizers' offer of debates with Rushdie and recognition of the Muslims' right to protest, rather than prevent, his visit, met with absolute rejection. Rejected too, was the idea of signing a joint statement, in which the organizers suggested would have affirmed that "all parties share an abhorrence of the iniqu-

ously sees scope for 'conscientization' among its more conservative constituents. Financial aid from Islamic countries and wealthy local Muslims which wends its way to such organizations may have also been a factor in the left's hasty - and, to some, unholy - alliance with fundamentalist demands. Having watched, as one organizer put it, "our allies disappearing into the middle-distance," a complete stalemate was reached.

In a limp sort of post-script, COSAW reaffirmed its "dedication to freedom of speech and our stand against imposed or self-censorship ..."

The *Weekly Mail* immediately distanced itself from the decision, saying "it was the democratic movement which granted the permission for Rushdie to come and address us and we are accordingly in their hands ... We believe that this decision will bring shame and disrepute upon the progressive movement in this country and we condemn it in the strongest terms."

Rushdie himself reacted by expressing concern that, in the end, it was the writers who had backed down. "I am saddened that COSAW was finally unable to stand by *The Satanic Verses* as a work of literature. Part of my reason for coming to South Africa was to express solidarity with those who fight censorship there. I am saddened by the fact that the same solidarity was not extended to me."

Without doubt there are individuals within COSAW - author Nadine Gordimer among them - who have been deeply upset by the Congress' back-to-the-wall decision to give up this particular fight against censorship.

It can always be argued - the South African government does it all the time - that there are 'good' reasons for censorship. In this case, it may well have truthfully been that a man's life was at stake. Salman Rushdie himself, however, was still prepared to take that chance.

The *Weekly Mail's* Book Week censorship debate went ahead on Monday night without Rushdie's presence. But in a last-ditch attempt to salvage something of the situation, there was a telephone link-up with the author in his North London home. For more than an hour, Rushdie fielded questions from the audience about literary censorship - a disembodied voice, but still an extremely powerful one.



Salman Rushdie

uity of the South African censorship system and condemn any attempt to use the issue to divide the progressive movement." As Mahomed Choonara put it: "We are simply not here to compromise."

It became clear that active anti-apartheid organizations such as the Transvaal and the Natal Indian Congresses were not prepared to alienate a section of their constituency by playing the principles game - even at the risk of appearing to be colluding with the government.

Within the Muslim community, the democratic movement obvi-

The next morning, 24 hours before Rushdie was to have flown into Johannesburg, COSAW withdrew its invitation. The *Weekly Mail* accepts the position that foreign artists can only visit South Africa if sanctioned by the democratic movement. Without COSAW's support, the newspaper would have found itself in breach of the cultural boycott.

COSAW's terse press statement gave little inkling of the breadth of the pressure and politicking that had gone on behind the scenes. It said only that under threatening circumstances, COSAW could not guarantee Rushdie's safety in South Africa.

Anthropology

BY ROBERT GORDON

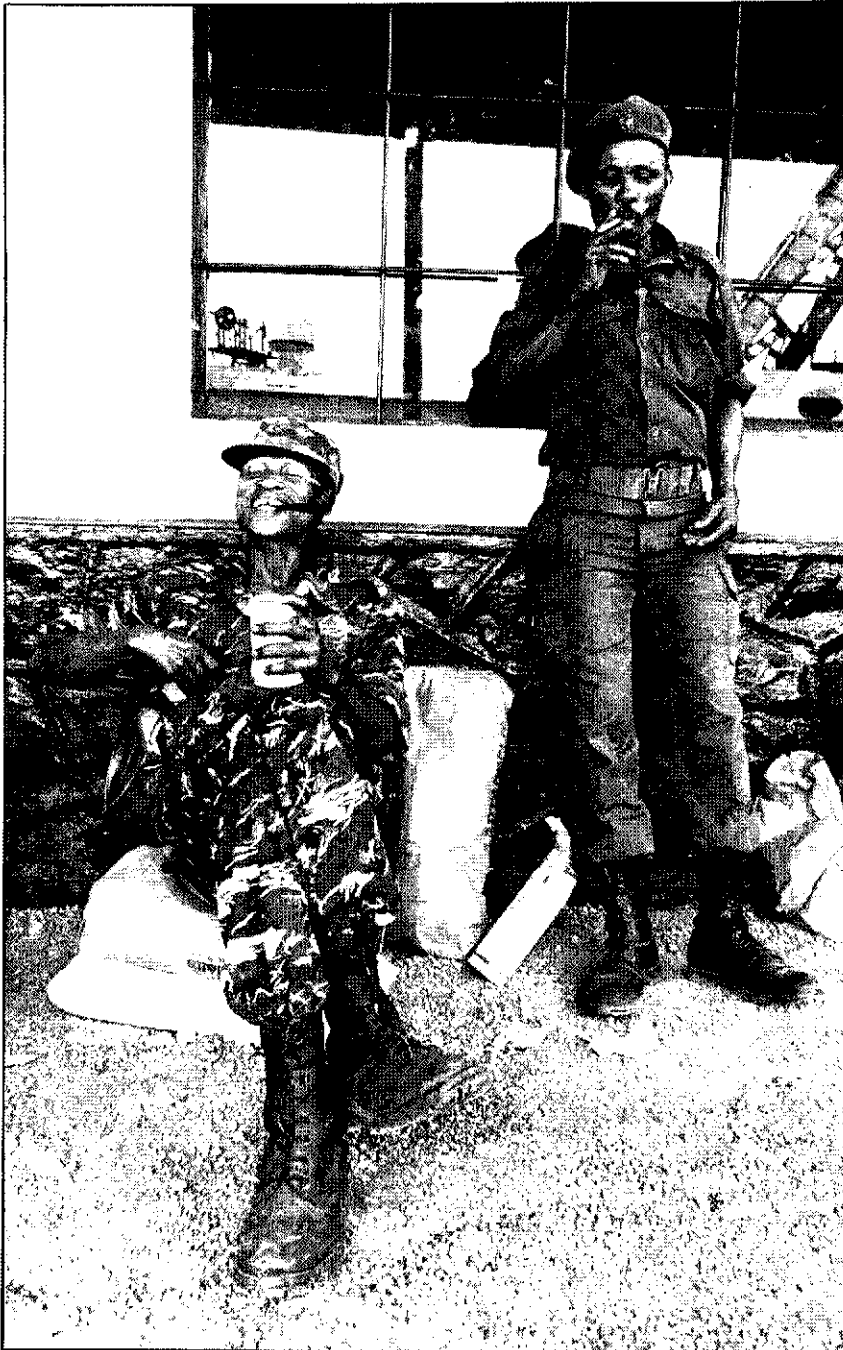
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The use of anthropologists by military forces did not begin in Vietnam or with Project Camelot in Latin America. In 1941, the American Anthropological Association unanimously passed a resolution calling on all members to place themselves and their specialized skills and knowledge "at the disposal of the country for the successful prosecution of the war." The truth is that wars and, especially neo-colonial wars, have been good for the business of anthropology.

It is thus not surprising that in South Africa, plagued by a 21-year-old insurgency war in Namibia and growing civil unrest in the black townships, the largest single employer of anthropologists and ethnologists is the South African Defence Force (SADF). In 1967, P. Riekert, an influential 'Urban Bantu Administrator', argued that "anthropology can be of the utmost importance in the South African Armed Forces ... the most recent trend is in fact to utilize anthropologists."

In 1975, after a few Afrikaner ethnologists had shown their worth, an ethnological section was formally created as a support unit of the army. Its mission was to provide ethnological knowledge not only for strategic and tactical operations, but also to improve race relations both within the SADF and between the SADF and the black population that bore the brunt of military operations. By March 1977, the ethnology section of the SADF employed 16 full-time, permanent ethnologists and was recruiting aggressively, even going so far as to advertise in the English-language press "to help maintain good relations between various ethnic groups employed in the services."

Despite these efforts, almost all the estimated 34 full-time ethnologists are drawn from Afrikaans-language universities. Their ap-



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

!Kung (Bushman) recruits in South African army, Namibia, 1984

In the Service of Apartheid

proach is thus not that of British social anthropology or even American cultural anthropology, but a unique homegrown anthropology known as *volkekunde*. Organizationally, the ethnology section forms part of the Civic Action Program, a program organized around the belief that victory in the war will be 20 per cent military and 80 per cent political and civil. The major project the program is associated with is WHAM: Winning the Hearts and Minds of the Indigenes.

The *volkekunde* discourse is well-suited to maintaining the status quo. In 1977, the SADF published an Ethnology Manual for the Soldier which concluded that:

Ethnology studies the life of peoples, its course and its development, including those factors that exert an adverse or a positive influence on their lives. Ethnological knowledge, therefore, is of vital importance to any person or government body controlling or directing the lives of a people, especially of those who still have to be guided on the road to civilization.

To be able to counter enemy attack, it is vital for the soldier to understand the ideology behind a revolt and to be aware that the counter-insurgency could be successful only where the security forces enjoy the support of the local population. Ethnological knowledge, therefore, is considered the greatest single means of power at the soldier's disposal.

Knowledge of the enemy, even in the pre-military phase, is important. Similarly, knowledge of the local people trapped in the war zone is important if the military is to minimize its resistance. Thus the task of the ethnological section is largely to collect data from the (potential) war zones. In selling their expertise to their superiors, the ethnologists point out the successful anthropological contributions in other war situations. Thus, Colonel D. P. Stoffberg, PhD, the officer-in-charge of the ethnological section,

claims that the American success in World War II was due, in part at least, to the anthropological contribution of the Foreign Morale Analysis Division. Contrarily, the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya is blamed on settler mismanagement, poor administration, lack of understanding and too rapid forced acculturation; in Rhodesia, costs were high because of a lack of ethnological knowledge, according to Stoffberg.

mitting ethnocide against the 'Bushmen' From this case it was made clear that some *volkekundiges* are regularly consulted by the South African security establishment. Of course, it is not only *volkekundiges* who have applied their knowledge to the service of the apartheid state - geographers, psychologists and even horticulturalists have all featured prominently. Indeed, a grateful Department of Horticulture at the Uni-



!Kung (Bushman) in Namibia, 1984

Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

The circumstances of other counter-insurgencies, most notably the Mau Mau and Rhodesian cases, determine to a large degree what research ethnologists will undertake. In Rhodesia, mediums played a crucial role in the war. Thus, not surprisingly, the chief military ethnologist in Namibia is doing his doctoral research on witch doctors. This knowledge is then used to ensure a 'minimum of disturbance' with military intrusions and the promotion of relations between military personnel and local indigenes.

Should problems fall beyond the unit's expertise, it can call on a vast network of Afrikaner academics. For example, the SADF ethnologists flew in *volkekundiges* and other experts when faced with the problem of 'Bushman' resettlement and charges that the SADF was com-

versity of Pretoria named one of its marula plant cultivars 'Koevoet' in honour of its close relationship with the dreaded police counter-insurgency unit. It is now apparently accepted practice for military personnel to complete advanced degrees at Afrikaans-language universities and have their theses read only by security-cleared supervisors and examiners.

In addition to presenting flawed discourses on such topics as 'The Influence of Marxism and Communism on the Traditional Black Communities of Africa' as Stoffberg did in 1984, military ethnologists also have more mundane duties. They are expected to advise on the selection of black recruits, teach an orientation course and instruct officers eligible for promotion in ethnology. But, even though ethnology is ap-

preciated, white personnel are not encouraged to be amateur ethnologists. On the contrary, the SADF offers only one two-week training course in a black language. None of the 77 whites assigned to the premier black unit, Twenty-One Battalion, could speak an indigenous language. Similarly, despite employing more than 2,000 'Bushmen', the SADF has only one white who can speak a 'Bushman' language.

Blacks are made mysterious by SADF personnel in various ways. 'Bushmen' are treated as magical good luck amulets; and 'terrorists', we are assured by an experienced mercenary writing in a 1983 issue of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, "are able to walk two or three kilometers on their toes in order to confuse security forces." This mystification only bolsters the status of the ethnologist as an expert; other white personnel cannot challenge his magical knowledge. Still, it is worth noting that, as in the British Colonial service, officers are divided in their views on the efficacy of ethnological advice. Structurally, however, the future of the ethnological section appears secure in the support from upper echelons: one of the four secretariat sections of the ultra-powerful and secretive State Security Council is exclusively concerned with 'strategic communications' and 'cultural action'.

Military ethnologists are also heavily involved in preparing material for the Youth Preparedness curriculum, which is compulsory in white schools. Youth Preparedness is seen as a key component of the state's reaction to the 'Total Onslaught' inspired by the 'Communists' it believes it is facing. This onslaught is a form of psychological warfare with the 'soul of the volk' and entails instruction to counter a familiar litany of manipulative evils: God is Dead, Liberation Theology, the breakdown of the family, legalization of abortion, free love, long hair, hippies, unisex haircuts, internationalism and humanism. The



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

Army teacher supervises primary school, Tsumkwe, Namibia, 1988

major source cited on the 'Communist' strategy is *The Naked Communist*, published in 1946 by the John Birch Society. Organizations allegedly working against South Africa include the American Friends Service Committee, the American Committee on Africa and the CIA. The Namibian Youth Preparedness Handbook that I consulted contained headings such as 'My Contribution to the Promotion of the SADF's Status', 'Why Military Service?' and 'The Girls' Responsibility with Regard to the Defense of the Land' It also contained a number of units which discussed ethnology.

But what is this ethnological knowledge that the ethnologists package, market and distribute so widely? The ethnology manual is revealing in this regard. After providing a brief introduction to the distribution of the Bantu who, it claims, are the result of the intermixing of Negroes and Hamites and now all live happily in their 'Homeland', the manual stresses the need to obtain the goodwill of indigenes and proceeds to give advice on Important Aspects of the Culture of the Blacks that have to be Con-

sidered During Liaison. After recommending the use of interpreters (with white monitors), the manual discusses Bantu social organization based on two principles: seniority and group formation. It then proceeds to warn that:

Direct contact with Bantu women should be avoided, while social contact should be ABSOLUTELY forbidden and prevented. The comings and goings of the Bantu woman should, however, be closely observed for the following reasons: 1) She provides food and is the 'beast of burden'. It will most probably be her duty to provide the insurgent camp with food and beer and she may even carry the heavier automatic weapons as happened in Angola. 2) She incites men to successful military action by arousing them sexually before a battle, taking part in the 'Washing of the Spear', a ceremony based on a party where sexual intercourse takes place. 3) Experience has shown that the Bantu will take advantage of the 'weakness' of the Whites not to treat women roughly ... by pushing them to the front in political riots ...

Such 'rules' tell us more about the

Afrikaners' Calvinistic sexual inhibitions than about ethnographic reality. Other stereotypes abound: "White rule has prevented them from waging war on their neighbours, and in this way replenishing their livestock. An effective way of intimidating Bantu is by taking away his livestock." Or "Blacks never hurry." "Blacks have an inability to defer gratification and while whites have an analytic-scientific way of thinking, Blacks think mythologically. The Black woman's role is to keep quiet, work and bear children." The critical message underlying this discourse is that Blacks are different and that a distinctive Black culture still survives. Some elementary rules of etiquette are then offered which, like the advice the Chamber of Mines used to hand out to novice white officials, starts off with the golden rule: accept the Bantu as a human being, admit that he has a name. But of course, this message is undermined by the context of the discourse. Indeed, whites are told "it is completely good etiquette to initially tell a lie."

Volkekunde sits well with, and indeed buttresses, the dominant Afrikaner belief system in certain crucial ways - first in its paradigmatic belief that most cultures are stable. Since, it believes, culture change can only occur after a few generations, most blacks - despite their Western veneer - are still traditional and in a state of happy equilibrium. Any problems are the result of misunderstanding between black and white. Volkekunde also emphatically believes that change occurs as a result of diffusion from outside which fits comfortably with the proponents of 'Total Onslaught' It justifies its lies and deceit by the enemy's lies and deceit. In doing research for this article, I was intrigued to discover that Colonel Stoffberg, the chief military ethnologist, had plagiarized an article published ten years earlier by one of his subordinates, P. W. Moller, in the



Tsumkwe, Namibia, 1984

Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

same journal, *Paratus*.

As someone who looks forward to the day when peace comes to Namibia - which will only happen when a legitimate black government is installed - I was initially prepared to argue, on ethical grounds, against participation in the military by anthropologists. However, as I

examined the record of ethnological counter-insurgency research and the military ethnology discourse in South Africa, I became less certain of my argument. Ethnology advisers such as those employed by the SADF may well be worth at least a division to the forces opposed to white hegemony in Southern Africa.

Bush and Botha

New Tactics for Southern Africa

BY BILL MARTIN

Bill Martin is co-chair of the Research Committee of the Association of Concerned African Scholars.

Is a Bush different from a Reagan? Certainly a wide-awake and vigorous U.S. President will be a novelty. Indeed the President-elect's first words pressed the point, demanding a new, daily briefing direct from the CIA rather than through White House intermediaries. Yet almost all observers expect George Bush to depart little from the Reagan foreign policy agenda. Certainly this would seem to be the case for southern Africa, where little of substance was ever mentioned on the campaign trail. Bush's appointment of James Baker as his Secretary of State — and not a global strategist like campaign advisers Brzezinski or Kissinger — would seem to confirm this view. Nonetheless a strong case can be made that southern African realities will force U.S. policies towards a new approach to the region. It is hardly coincidental that the Botha regime is also being driven to pursue parallel new initiatives.

Continuities with Reagan

Before examining forces for change we should note evidence of continuities, especially on specific issues. In relation to aid to UNITA, Bush has been adamant: "I will support the Angolan freedom fighters who are forcing the Cuban mercenary troops out of their country." Bush stands equally firm in rejecting further sanctions on South Africa, and with Baker's advice would undoubtedly continue the shunning of SADCC in favour of more direct, and manipulable, bilateral relationships with individual states.

More support for Renamo?

More alarming than these continuities however, have been hints of differences with current policies, especially in relation to Mozambique. During the campaign Bush stated that "there is no alternative to a political settlement in Mozambique." Questioned on this, a Bush representative speaking to African scholars in Chicago recently affirmed that this should mean direct negotiations between Renamo and the government of Mozambique. Adding import to such statements is the accelerating drive by right-wing groups to invest Renamo with "authentic anti-communist credentials" such as those they attribute to the Contras. After months of being groomed on how to speak, dress and act, it would appear that Afonso Dhlakama will soon be launched on a U.S. tour designed to make of him a "charismatic," Savimbi-like leader of Renamo.

Despite these portents, it would seem unlikely that even Bush would recognize Renamo, unless he decides to placate right-wing Republicans with an African post. Yet to complacently conclude that Bush will literally follow in Reagan's footsteps would be a most dangerous delusion. New challenges are undoubtedly about to present themselves to Bush's foreign policy advisers and to their opponents. To see this, one must place the Reagan legacy in light of southern African realities.

"Constructive engagement" has failed miserably

Two points are elemental. First, it is readily apparent to all but the most retrograde anti-communists that "constructive engagement" has

miserably, irrevocably, failed to gain any positive change away from apartheid in South Africa. Even its most famous proponent and practitioner, Chester Crocker, never uses the term. Notwithstanding uncertain "progress" in negotiations over Angola and Namibia, constructive engagement has served to embolden repression within South Africa and aggression beyond the borders of the country. Far from advancing U.S. power to determine the trajectory of southern Africa, Reagan's embrace of the Botha regime has embittered the states and peoples of the region and steadily isolated U.S. foreign policy from that of many western allies and even the U.S. Congress. The dilemma this poses for the new occupants of the State Department is a sharp one: to guide relations with the government of South Africa, what organizing principles can possibly replace constructive engagement?

South Africa forced to question "destabilization"

Second, it is evident that the Botha regime is itself wracked by divisions over a continuation of destabilization based upon military power. It has long been recognized that military destabilization, through the destruction of the economic resources of surrounding states, undercuts the potential benefits of the region to South Africa. While destabilization has imposed heavy costs on the Frontline States, South African gains have been limited and ambiguous. Rhetorical bravado aside, it is quite clear that leading representatives of the state and capital in South Africa link the ever-deepening South African economic crisis to the country's isolation from the region and from the international arena. An especially compelling demonstration of the limited value of military instruments has been the South African Defense Force's defeat this past year at the hands of Angolan and Cuban forces in Cuito Cuanavale. Meanwhile international political pressures on the

South African regime show no sign of lessening. Indeed western sympathy for the Frontline States is growing, particularly in support of the regional defense of Mozambique.

In the face of mixed results from past practices and an uncertain future, there are thus strong inducements for South African policy makers to reassess prevailing approaches to the region. If recent discussions and actions are any guide, it would appear that the military component of South Africa's "total strategy" is being forced into the background in favour of the deployment of economic and diplomatic initiatives. Hence Botha's recent shuttling to Mozambique, Malawi, Zaire and Côte d'Ivoire; the touting of the benefits of South African purchases of goods from surrounding countries; the praise for the provision of South African aid, products and investment; and Botha's call for a regional security conference. The policy pattern is the same one the government of South Africa has tried to impose internally: establish as far as possible military domination, and then search for political solutions of the "reform" variety.

This process is not without its contradictions and no outcome is assured. Nor can we analyze these South African initiatives in any detail here. What is critical, however, is to appreciate the parallel dilemmas and challenges for a new U.S. administration marked by conservative "pragmatism." We can make some plausible and informed guesses about the reactions of the Bush administration. As noted above, a recognition is gaining increasing currency that few additional gains can be won by open commitment to the South African regime and to military destabilization. This hardly represents, of course, a rejection of the basic geopolitical view that southern Africa is preeminently an East-West struggle.

Towards regional "restabilization"

There is, however, an issue of tac-



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix

Mozambique refugees, 1985

tics: how best to defend free enterprise and cultivate pro-western forces. Two new approaches are gaining currency. The first pertains to the region of southern Africa: members of the U.S. foreign policy community are increasingly calling for an end to the war unleashed against the Frontline States during the Reagan years. In this view a set of negotiated settlements of the right proportions, however tenuous, can solidify present advantages and stave off new challenges as regional economic flows centering upon South Africa and the West are re-established. The southern Africa

specialist for the Council on Foreign Relations calls it a need to "restabilize" the region.

The scenario obviously stands at odds with the Frontline States' struggle to delink from apartheid South Africa, but such "restabilization" promises real gains for the U.S. across the board: South African economic domination of the region could be ensured, the U.S. would emerge as a peacemaker, Botha's international image would be refurbished, and calls for international sanctions would become less viable as sanctions would affect the



Steve Hilton-Barber/Afrapix

SWAPO rally: Supporters anticipating Namibian independence, Windhoek

region as a whole. In such a manner all the pitfalls and failures of constructive engagement could be overcome.

Inside South Africa: "Let the cauldron boil"

If the extent to which such an initiative protects apartheid's regional and international dimensions are quite apparent, what are the implications for policy towards the struggle inside South Africa? In this area, drawing a central lesson from the failures of constructive engagement, conservative and liberal pragmatists alike are moving to a second new approach. Simply stated, they argue that in this area there are no "realistic" or "pragmatic" policy goals. Past administrations, and Carter's in particular, stand accused of being grossly unrealistic in believing that majority rule might be attained even if only in the most distant future. If majority rule is not in sight, it is but a short step to conclude that the end of minority rule should not be made a publicly-stated goal. In essence: in the short- and medium-term let the cauldron boil inside South Africa, but make sure the heat does not ig-

nite U.S. interests across the region as a whole.

For the new pragmatists this delinking of the call for an end to apartheid from the regional dimension has many advantages. Over the long-run, however, one can fully expect an expansion of U.S. aid and intervention in promoting a group of moderate South African blacks who may provide acceptable and compliant partners for negotiations with the apartheid regime. Well in place at the moment, U.S. - and indeed North American and European - funding for the black middle class, can be expected to accelerate.

A Bush-Botha convergence

This last point, like many of the others noted above, suggests a convergence between Botha and Bush. Much will depend, of course, upon the evolving balance of forces and personnel within the Botha and Bush administrations. Yet the substantive point remains: the realities of southern Africa, and especially the results of "total strategy" and "constructive engagement," are pushing towards a reassessment by both these ruling groups. While fundamental perspectives and goals are

little changed, the policies by which they are pursued may well prove to be quite innovative in the coming period.

If this speculative analysis is at all correct, significant new challenges will be posed for both the Frontline States and international supporters of the anti-apartheid movement. If relative peace is achieved across the region, even on terms which consolidate the military and economic predominance of the apartheid state, the benefits across the region will be quite strong. The terms of bilateral agreements (formal or unannounced) can range across a wide spectrum and they will surely spark significant debates within the U.S. administration even if the tactical vision is coherent (for example, what is the place of UNITA and Renamo in negotiated deals?). At the same time, strong inducements will undoubtedly be advanced to foster divisions among the Frontline States, the ANC, the extra-parliamentary opposition inside South Africa, African and other Third World governments, and the international anti-apartheid movement.

No simple victory

If United States and South African policies take the directions outlined here, we can expect less clarity and less unity among the international forces arrayed against apartheid on many issues: from sanctions and boycotts, through educational and foreign "aid" to South Africa, to support for Frontline States faced with demands to bargain directly with South Africa and the West. Indeed the debates of the last few years have already disclosed increasing divergence, as is evident in the pages of *Southern Africa REPORT*. Whoever holds the reins of southern Africa policy in the Bush White House, anti-apartheid work in the coming years will require more vigorous analysis of the strategies at play and more consistent consultation among the various wings of the movement.

Upbeat Organizing Downunder

The following account is based on a variety of sources in New Zealand including an extensive interview with Dick Cuthbert, co-founder of HART, *Halt All Racist Tours*.

In the last two to three years, the New Zealand anti-apartheid movement has forced a number of companies to drop imports from South Africa, stopped Zola Budd from competing in NZ, created a climate of anxiety around cultural and economic links with SA, and launched a series of dramatic shareholders campaigns against major NZ companies.

The movement has clearly stormed ahead over the last three decades. In the 1960s, the rallying cry for activists was "No Maoris, no tour," a slogan adopted because SA refused to accept Maoris on touring NZ rugby teams. The weakness of the slogan is obvious: sporting contacts were OK, provided NZ could send its own coloured people to SA.

By far the most tumultuous anti-apartheid event in the last thirty years was the bitterly divisive SA Springbok tour of 1981. Since rugby approaches a national disease in NZ, the movement's dramatic opposition to the tour galvanized a wrenching months-long debate that grew violent, promoted massive organizing and police repression, and generated vast media coverage. In a country of three to four million people, bucolic tranquillity and sixty million sheep, the tour took place amidst unprecedented police security, constant disruptions, and cancellations of games. Indeed it is a mark of the anti-apartheid movement that it divides families, classrooms, sports groups and cultural associations. In this conservative land of milk and mutton, it has taken determined organizing to build the anti-apartheid movement, not to mention throwing out former Prime Minister Piggy Muldoon.

Demise of the Pig

There are sharp contrasts between the seventies and the eighties. Ten years ago, Muldoon, sometimes known not so affectionately as The Pig, used to chum up to some of the more conservative African nations, and refuse to stop rugby tours involving SA. But a decade later, after the movement's intensive organizing and through consciousness-raising in political circles, David Lange's Labour Party is clearly critical of apartheid. Within days of Labour's election success in 1984, the South African Consulate packed up and left. "Labour finds apartheid abhorrent," said Lange to Radio Mozambique at the time. Since then, Labour has established its own High Commission in Harare, welcomed Oliver Tambo to NZ, and refused visas to some South African sports competitors. Following the Nassau Accords, the Government has banned SA wines from Dec 1986.

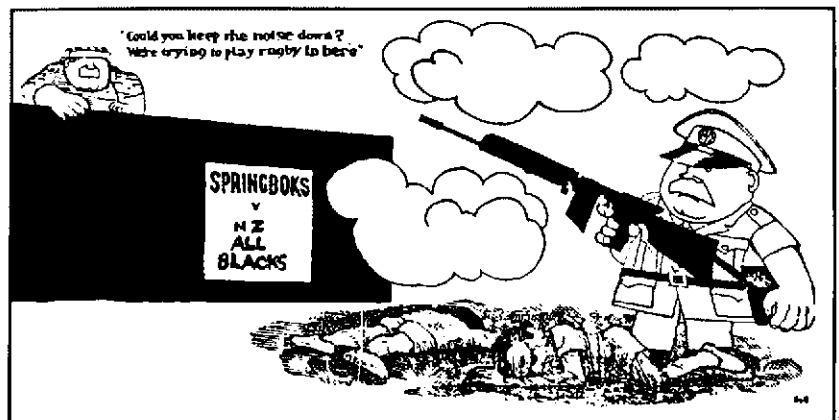
Since NZ's highest profile links with SA are sports, Labour warns sporting groups about breaching the Gleneagles Agreement forbidding sports contacts with SA. The Government didn't want Zola Budd, for instance, to race at the World Cross Country Championships in NZ in March 1988, for fear of jeopardizing the 1990 Commonwealth

Games in Auckland. One of the groups listening to the Government is the Rugby Union. Formerly run by neanderthals with more than an ounce of sympathy for SA's regime, the NZRFU is now much more sensitive to government pressure and public sentiment. For instance, the NZRFU very recently turned down an invitation from its SA counterpart for five players to take part in a combined international team tour in 1988. Only two years ago, a planned rugby tour of SA by an international team provoked the anti-apartheid movement to organize huge demonstrations throughout NZ: by HART's account, 40,000 people in Auckland, 25,000 in Wellington, for instance. This public pressure led to the ludicrous spectacle of a few renegade All Blacks trying to slip out of NZ unobtrusively in the wake of blazing publicity and court injunctions. Spotted and photographed on departure, they flew very circuitously to SA, because Australia would not grant them transit.

The Campaigns:

Not yet team players

However, it is not clear that Government will always act decisively without pressure. Accordingly, once an issue arises, HART telegraphs



Amanda, New Zealand

the Government and starts a media blitz, as it did over Zola Budd in early 1988. The effect in this case was another escalating national debate, in which the headlines and the invective mounted steadily in a country-wide punch-up. "Why is HART picking on a thirteen-year-old kid?" demanded a caller to an open-line programme. In the end Budd abandoned the visit. However, HART sees Labour as "very weak" on professional sporting contacts, thus enabling SA players to fly in under flags of convenience.

Shares Against Apartheid

In some ways, paradoxically, the economic campaigns loom larger now, even though NZ's economic links with SA are limited. Some businesses have long-standing connections with SA. Enter the first shareholders campaign in the late seventies. The Act governing shareholding stipulated that 100 separate shareholders in a company could force it to discuss a given issue. The anti-apartheid movement enthusiastically bought shares, then forced meetings on investment in apartheid. Members argued vociferously, disrupted meetings, grabbed mikes, engaged in "nasty, messy protests," some of which ended up in court actions.

Challenged as well by the movement's energetic public demonstrations, some companies at first negotiated with the movement, then later dropped imports from SA. The movement targetted Rothmans NZ, some local wine importers, eventually Brierleys, one of NZ's biggest investment companies. In response, Brierleys brought a large damages suit against specific members of the movement, seriously threatening activists' personal property. The company then flew two key members of HART to its Wellington headquarters for a head-to-head meeting. But in the end, faced with the negative effects of continuing public exposure, Brierleys dropped the suit, an outcome that saved members' houses and justified the move-



Fedier / Armandia, New Zealand

ment's policy of direct non-violent action. Some companies have asked how they can be expected to get their money out of SA. In reply, the movement simply states the obvious: "That's your problem."

Nationally, 20% of SA primary products are now banned, including dried fruits, wine and fish. Anti-apartheid members monitor the banning closely, "following up ruthlessly," they say, on infringements. There is an engaging twist to the Government ban on wine-imports. Since the companies continued to sell overstocks of wine, the anti-apartheid movement warned that it would pillory vendors that advertised the wines. The wines were therefore sold under the counter, thus "equating SA goods with dirty books."

The shareholders campaign is something of a coup. Approximately 100 shareholders in the movement have now bought up to 30,000 shares, tying up between \$250,000 and \$300,000. The movement has a system to regularly receive proxies from new shareholders in unions, churches, progressive groups and protest organizations. It has a separate campaign against the NZ-

based multinational, Fletcher Challenge Ltd, a huge pulp and paper company, with \$300-400 million in British Columbia. Because FCL exploits native people's land both in NZ and BC, as well as investing in SA and massively in Chile, it has all kinds of activists against it in NZ and Canada. For instance, three Indian chiefs from Vancouver used movement proxies at FCL's Annual General Meeting in Nov 1988. The chiefs were in NZ for a TV programme, making a connection between BC Forest Products and Chile (where Fletcher put \$100 million in September 1988). Because BCFP works traditional Indian land, now taken by the province, Fletcher faces legal challenges from groups like Save the Stein.

Meanwhile, the movement's opposition to FCL's SA investment invokes a standard response from the company: "I strongly oppose the South African regime," says its Chair, Ron Trotter, "but I do not believe sanctions would help." However, on FCL and the struggle in general, the anti-apartheid movement continues the good fight with total determination: "Never compromise," says one activist. "Grind on."

Censoring Sanctions in Toronto

Canadian government efforts to suppress the sanctions issue during the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' gathering in Toronto last August took various twists and turns. Four months earlier, the External Affairs Department had surprised southern Africa activists by deciding to fund some kind of "big popular event" to mark the occasion. It soon became obvious, however, that the high profile cultural events sponsored by the External Affairs department, including South African jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim and the premiere of the film "A World Apart" were meant to draw attention away from sanctions, focussing on censorship instead. The professional organizers employed to run this scam took their mandate seriously. After hearing prominent black activist lawyer Charlie Roach challenge Foreign Minister Joe Clark

at a press conference to take tougher measures on sanctions, one of them, John Piper, approached another activist in the black community to suggest a "reliable" replacement for Roach at the candle-lighting ceremony. The argument was that Roach couldn't do the ceremony because he "can't be trusted not to be political. The CBC will only cover it if it's not political."

Happily none of it worked quite as the External Affairs officials planned. At the posh cocktail party to launch the film about ANC activist Ruth First, film writer Shawn Slovo, First's daughter, made tough political statements. The candle lighting ceremony was punctuated with placards and chants of "Sanctions Now!" Within the conference itself, however, it seems Canada did get away with putting the brake on sanctions.

"I thought he was
a policeman ..."

Last week brought news from Johannesburg of a 24 year old white South African shooting it out in the middle of the city, leaving a trail of four blacks dead and nine wounded before he ended his rampage. He was reputed to be part of the extreme right. This was already chilling enough as an indication of the profound sickness that institutionalized racism provokes. More chilling still was the local account published later. A white woman who was in the neighbourhood as the bloodbath was happening actually chatted with the killer between victims. She claims to have thought he was a policeman. It was only when she discovered her error that she decided things were not alright - and fled herself!

Bruce Cockburn in Mozambique

Canadian song-writer Bruce Cockburn listened, talked and sang his way into the hearts of Mozambicans for three weeks this fall. Cockburn's trip, his first to Africa, came at his own initiative. COCAMO, a consortium of 19 Canadian NGOs, readily agreed to organize the visit for Cockburn including a public speaking tour in Canada on his return. Cockburn visited four provinces, travelling by small plane and military convoy, at times arriving only a day before or after Renamo attacks. He was able to see the war at first hand, visit settlements for displaced people and look at development projects organized by Canadians, particularly in Nampula province where COCAMO is at work.

Contacts with Mozambican cultural workers were a high point of the trip, with mellow evenings stretching long into the night as people shared their experiences and

songs. Some played on guitars just refurbished with the strings Cockburn had tucked into his luggage. (One of his plans now that he is back is to get together a shipment of guitars for Mozambique.)

According to the Canadian cooperants who joined Cockburn for an evening with Mozambican musicians in Maputo, the song that brought the house down was Cockburn's "Call it Democracy." Cockburn's explanation is that the song caught on because the Maputo gathering included so many Mozambicans who spoke English. They had no trouble picking up the words of the refrain.

*"IMF dirty MF
takes away everything it can get
always making certain that
there's one thing left
keep them on the hook with insupportable debt."*

The song was bound to hit home during a month in Mozambique that brought yet another devaluation, the fifth since early 1987, all part of the IMF/World Bank recipe for the economy.

Since his return to Canada, Cockburn has toured extensively throughout central and western Canada, talking to the media and to public meetings organized by the members of the COCAMO consortium. His meeting in Toronto brought out an enthusiastic audience of about 700 people. Cockburn gave a poignant account of his trip, a kind of travel diary rich with vignettes and anecdotes, much of it with the poetic flavour that marks his songs. Possible next steps include a song (or songs) from the trip and work with the southern Africa solidarity movement to promote visits of Mozambican musicians to Canada.



Dave Hartman

Bruce Cockburn at Toronto rally after his Mozambique tour

Bruce Cockburn Reports Back from Mozambique

The refugees tell of asking *why* - *why kill your own people and raze the land?* Renamo bandits who have taken advantage of a government amnesty to turn themselves in can talk about what they've done, can talk about South African advisors (who blacken their faces to blend in better), but are inarticulate on the subject of *why* . . .

Maybe Afonso Dhlakama knows. He's the "president" of Renamo. Around the time of Mozambican independence, he was kicked out of Frelimo for robbery. In 1980 he boasted to reporters that the South African defence minister had given him a colonel's commission and told him, "Your army is now part of the South Africa Defence Force." (And maybe Francisco Nota Moises knows. He was information secretary of Renamo. He's

currently living in Canada, having been granted asylum as a "refugee" by our government.)

And on the other side? There is fatigue. There is hunger. There is a refusal to succumb. A rudimentary militia has been formed to augment the overworked army. In secured areas the social order persists. Schools and hospitals are bit by bit being rebuilt. People sing . . .

The last night is cool. After 10 the city is quiet, quiet enough to make out the thud of mortar fire somewhere to the south across Maputo Bay. Mars glows a bruised red in the deep black sky, the god of war presiding over this fury that has taken Mozambique.

(Now November 10-16, 1988)

Operation Timber

BY VICTORIA BRITAIN

Victoria Britain is editor of the Third World page in the Guardian [UK] and is a regular contributor to SAR.

Operation Timber, Pages from the Savimbi Dossier, edited with an Introduction by William Minter, Africa World Press, PO Box 1892, Trenton, New Jersey 08607.

As the quadripartite negotiations on the independence of Namibia and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola ran into a stalemate, missing the November 1 deadline for implementing UN Resolution 435, this modest little book appeared, giving the historical clue to the present history.

Jonas Savimbi's Unita has been the most devastating tool in the hands of South Africans and the US as they have attempted to bring independent Angola into their sphere of influence. Behind this year's negotiations on the future of Namibia and Angola the hidden agenda of Savimbi's future has increasingly edged towards the foreground - though never openly.

Minter's book, with its cover picture of Savimbi dining with Colonel Oliver North, tells the story behind what Congressman Mervyn Dymally calls, in his Preface, "US 'covert' aid to South Africa's racist army in Angola, through the Unita movement headed by Jonas Savimbi." Minter neatly describes the context of ignorance about Angola which has allowed South Africa's disinformation strategists such a field day in getting Savimbi widely accepted as a nationalist champion with conveniently anti-communist credentials.

The dossier of letters to and from Savimbi and various Portuguese officials has previously been available in part in both Portuguese and French, but with the substantial new back-

ing from the US and European right that Savimbi has been receiving in recent months, it is timely to have it in English. What the dossier proves beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt with Minter's scholarly introduction to the various sources, is that as early as 1971 Savimbi, far from being a nationalist fighting for Angola's independence, was allied with the Portuguese colonialists in their fight against MPLA.

The sources include a number of letters between a Unita commander in the east and two Portuguese timber merchants who were linked to the PIDE. A PIDE memorandum then lays the groundwork for the thorough-going relationship of dependence which subsequently grew up between Savimbi and the Portuguese military. This included, at Savimbi's suggestion, the provision of Unita guides for Portuguese operations against the MPLA and a fairly complete cooperation on the ground in the east of Angola.

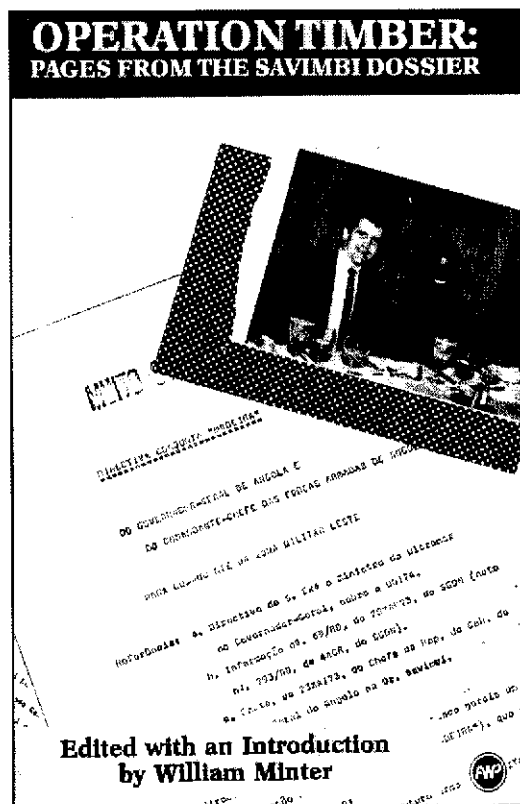
This background to the carnage Unita has wreaked ever since on the civilian population of Angola is key to understanding firstly, why the Angolan government is unable to compromise with Savimbi personally, and, secondly, how the external forces so deeply concerned with shaping the future of Angola have found Savimbi key to their purpose.

It is no accident that Savimbi's most important allies have also been the backbone of US pol-

icy in Africa - South Africa, Zaire, Morocco, Ivory Coast.

President Botha's ambitious attempt to break out of diplomatic isolation through the quadripartite talks and the reception for South Africa in Brazzaville and Cairo is closely linked to Savimbi's future. The visits by the South African leader to Zaire and Ivory Coast in October, and the attempts to be accepted at a summit with some of the Front Line States were as much about strengthening Savimbi's profile in Africa as about ending Pretoria's pariah status.

Dr. Chester Crocker's stubborn belief that in the end the MPLA will make a deal with Savimbi has never apparently been shaken by the unequivocal denials of that possibility by the Angolan Head of State. Those reading Mr. Minter's book may find Dr. Crocker less persuasive afterwards.



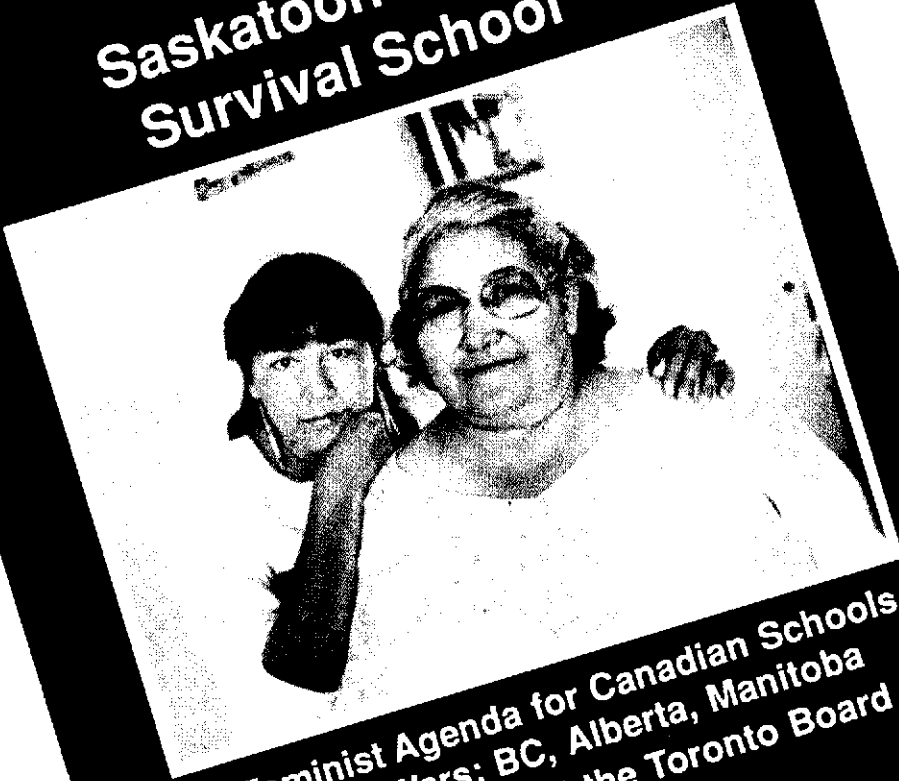
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