

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 7 No. 3

January 1992

— South Africa 1991

Guess who's coming  
to dinner?

ANC's Pallo Jordan on  
Socialism in South Africa

EXCLUSIVE

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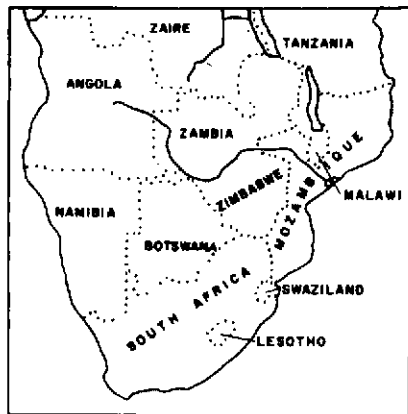


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## Southern Africa REPORT

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# Canada's ties with South Africa thaw as apartheid melts away

By Bill Schiller  
TORONTO STAR

JOHANNESBURG — After six years of icy and intermittent contact characterized by mutual contempt, Canada and South Africa appear headed for a diplomatic warming.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney is still planning a visit here in October. A business delegation is on the way.

And this month could see the beginning of the phased elimination of sanctions against South Africa, says Canada's new ambassador to Pretoria, Christopher Westdal.

The complete normalization of relations between the two countries, once only a distant dream, seems to be taking shape on the horizon.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to begin the phased elimination of the sanctions as early as the meeting of the Commonwealth foreign ministers in New Delhi (in September)," Westdal said in a recent interview.

The 43-year-old ambassador — he was Canada's youngest ever ambassador when posted to Burma at 34 — stressed that lifting sanctions by Canada and the Commonwealth "depends on how quickly the move to democracy here proceeds."

Canada was not changing its views on South Africa, he said. "We are trying," he noted, "to reflect our unchanging values in a rapidly changing situation."

But he said he was "optimistic" and hoped that during his tenure, a minimum of three years, Canada would once again see full government-to-government relations with South Africa. "We will promote, trade here. We will promote, trade here. We will promote, trade here."



WARY HENLEY FOR THE TORONTO STAR  
month to South African President F.W. de Klerk, whom Westdal praised for his "vision."

## "The Benefit of the Doubt"

Can we any longer afford to be polite towards the Canadian government and its minions regarding this country's South Africa policy? Not that we haven't sought, in the pages of *SAR*, to expose some of the darker calculations — as well as the deeply compromised pattern of implementation — that have all along been part and parcel of the Mulroney government's activities in this sphere. Yet we have been somewhat disarmed by a Canadian policy that did seem to be out of phase with the otherwise generally repugnant right-wing approach perpetrated on so many fronts by the Mulroney regime. So, gentle reader, wake up, smell the coffee — and consider Linda Freeman's annual review of Canada/South Africa relations in these pages. The unseemly haste to em-

brace F. W. de Klerk that Freeman finds to be emanating from Ottawa suggests that, as far as our South African policy is concerned, everything new is becoming old again.

We know Mulroney and company, of course. Need it come as any great surprise that Brian and Barbara and the rest, breathing an almost audible sigh of relief, can now find something winning in de Klerk's "pragmatism"? A little more racist than they, he may be, but he's a smooth "man of the market" nonetheless, a recognizable fellow denizen of the right — and one without the all too visible horns and tail of his presidential predecessor, that old thug P. W. Botha. Mulroney and de Klerk? Almost a natural, we would have thought — and hence the official invitation to

F. W. to visit Canada sometime in the near future.

Yet, to be fair, Mulroney even now seems loath to drop altogether his more enlightened position on apartheid, asserting that he will continue to take some guidance from Mandela, and telling George Bush that he won't hurry to join him in dropping all sanctions against South Africa. Ironically, it's amongst External Affairs officials that one finds something rather more ugly and inhuman: the bland smugness that is so apparent as they bend over backwards to rationalize the continued watering-down of Canada's South Africa policy. Take our Ambassador Chris Westdal as he spoke with the *Toronto Star's* Bill Schiller ("Canada's ties with South Africa thaw as apartheid melts away," September

10, 1991) and, a month later, briefed concerned churchpersons along similar lines in Toronto. Or take Southern Africa Taskforce head Lucie Edwards when she spoke at an academic workshop in Vancouver in November and, the next week, addressed a Commons' sub-committee. These are people who have lived in South Africa and should know better, yet they rush precipitously to give de Klerk "the benefit of the doubt" (in Ambassador Westdal's slack phrase).

Not that we ever expected the Canadian government, politician and bureaucrat alike, to accompany us very far into the next round – the post-apartheid round – of the struggle to build a genuinely free South Africa. No shock, then, when Westdal in Toronto complacently envisions a very smooth economic transition to business as usual in the new South Africa, or when Edwards on Parliament Hill (see Freeman's account, below) hails as beneficial the grip that the IMF/World Bank is already manoeuvring to impose on a "free South Africa." After all, Westdal and Edwards do work for a federal government that is mesmerized by "free trade" and not eager to hear a discouraging word about the benign workings of the global marketplace!

Most of us in the anti-apartheid network have found the impact of IMF/World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment to be anything but beneficial elsewhere in southern Africa. And we have also come to understand that a post-apartheid South African economy will need radical restructuring far beyond anything "the free market" can offer if the deep-seated racial inequalities that South African economic development has brought into being are to be overcome. But to note the difference between our position and that of External Affairs on these questions is merely to arm ourselves for what may become the challenges of the *next* round of support work in Canada: winning Canadian

sympathy for the South African people as they seek to mount radical post-apartheid policies designed to service the basic needs of the population.

But this is not yet where things stand: the roadblocks that established power (de Klerk and company) is placing in the path of South Africa's democratization mean we are still a very long way from reaching any such post-apartheid round. How distressing, then, to find Canadian spokespersons, in Freeman's phrase, "jumping the gun" on South Africa and coming so perilously close to declaring, prematurely, the death of apartheid. Negotiations have barely begun and already we are being cautioned by External Affairs mandarins: the situation is "very complex"; "judicious compromises" may prove necessary on such seemingly crucial popular movement demands as the establishment of an interim government and constituent assembly; de Klerk and his government are not really any more suspect than other actors at the South African bargaining table. Indeed, on this latter point, Westdal (as quoted by Schiller) has already declared himself to be particularly impressed by de Klerk's "vision, courage and the skill of his political leadership"!

Moreover, in the very teeth of revelations about the state's complicity in Inkathagate, and of the release of National Party constitutional proposals whose bottom-line continues to be the maintenance of some kind of white veto, we find Westdal insisting: "We shouldn't be impatient... What do you want him (de Klerk) to do? He's moved as quickly as he can move. You can't just snap your fingers." Our answer? Enough of flackery. Suspicion where suspicion is due, Chris, please. And how about some sense of urgency? And an acknowledgement, the next time you get the ear of the *Toronto Star*, of the moral primacy of the popular movement's still unsatisfied demands. No wonder church-people who heard West-

dal in Toronto were, almost to a person, deeply disturbed by his presentation. No wonder Freeman, in this issue, is so clearly worried about the drift of Canada's South Africa policy.

\* \* \*

Freeman's article draws not only on her long-standing scrutiny of Canadian government machinations in southern Africa in writing this year's policy assessment but also on the experience of an extended visit to South Africa itself earlier this year. As readers will find, that visit lends added pungency – and urgency – to her writing. Other articles in this issue reinforce the sense of drama that currently attaches to South African developments: Bruce Kidd on the heroic "eleventh hour" achievements of the sports boycott movement, Neville Alexander and others on the complexities that are becoming visible on other fronts – related to the negotiations process and, for example, to the role of the security forces (both now and in the future) – within South Africa.

Perhaps two of our articles – in both cases written at *SAR's* express request – demand special mention, however. Rather longer than is common in our pages, their considerable importance more than justifies the space devoted to them. The first, by Pallo Jordan, ANC Secretary of Information and senior member of the National Executive Committee, surveys the lively debate on the nature of socialism that he sees to be alive and and even full of promise in South Africa. The second, by noted anthropologist Bridget O'Laughlin, takes up the vexed question of the "anthropology" of the war that has destroyed so much that was once deemed promising in Mozambique. In the course of reviewing an influential field-study by Christian Geffray, she suggests the weakness of some currently fashionable criticisms of Frelimo policies – and sketches the possible bases for a far more fruitful critique of what has transpired in Mozambique.



Swannieville squatter camp, Johannesburg

Anna Zieminski/Afrapix-Impact Visuals

## Jumping the Gun? Canada and South Africa, 1991

BY LINDA FREEMAN

*Carleton University professor Linda Freeman, activist and writer, is SAR's Ottawa correspondent. Earlier this year, she spent two months in South Africa briefing herself on the current situation.*

As the news from South Africa fades from our newspapers and television screens, an air of self-congratulation and 'mission accomplished' envelops Canada's official representatives. Not only is a democratic South Africa held to be around the corner, but once it is achieved, market forces are believed

to be sufficient to meet the challenges of the future.

One Canadian diplomat in Pretoria stated with pride that, in South Africa, Canadian policy "had hit it just about right." Others suggest that eliminating economic sanctions is in the cards, possibly in a few months. They also point to wide-ranging programmes of assistance to the anti-apartheid movement that are now being transformed into standard mainstream development assistance. It is only a matter of time until the special Southern Africa Task Force in the Department of External

Affairs is abolished, the South Africa 'beat' reverts to a desk officer, and all assistance programmes return to the control of CIDA.

At its most extreme, this sense that South Africa is well on its way was expressed by journalist Gwynn Dyer. He argued publicly in September that it was time to stop the futile moralizing about apartheid and the past in South Africa and to get on with the present and the future.

Yet even the most cursory acquaintance with events in South Africa suggests that the present is still under the shadow of the past,

and the future is an unknown quantity. The grinding reality of violence and economic hardship continues to be daily fare for most non-white South Africans. Many features of the old system of apartheid remain in the behaviour of the security forces and indeed in the racial constitution. This legacy underlies any sense of political momentum as elements of South African society from top to bottom jockey for position in this murky transition.

### Difficult changes still ahead

The complexity embedded in the mingling of past, present and future defies easy optimism. But a pessimism that suggests nothing at all has happened to move South Africa forward in the past year also misses the mark. What is true beyond question is that the most difficult changes lie ahead. Progress towards a non-racial democratic constitution is hobbled by a white minority fearful of the loss of privilege and power. State security forces continue to be implicated in township violence, vigilante attacks on commuters, and attacks that target officials of opposition parties. Destabilization techniques honed in the region now weaken the ANC's constituency in the townships in the calculation that, in time, support will go to anyone who can stop the slaughter, even the National Party.

Even if some compromise can be cobbled together at the political level, there still remains the monumental task of transforming an economy and society designed primarily to serve the interests of the white minority. South Africa is the most unequal society in the world, and, in the short term, life for non-whites has not improved. With negligible growth in the last decade and the decline of the mining industry, the economy is in a shambles. Seven million blacks (about 20% of South Africa's total population) live in squatter settlements, many with little more than plastic and wooden poles to protect them from the elements. Social services are in a

profound crisis, and a generation of South African youth has missed out on education entirely. Unemployment runs at a national average of about 40%, with the Eastern Cape even higher at 65%. Any government will have difficulty fulfilling the basic needs of the majority, let alone the inflated expectations that will accompany a political settlement.

In this extremely vexed context, where is Canada? In its official policy on sanctions, the Canadian government started this year with some sensitivity to the uncertainty of change in South Africa and thus the need to keep the pressure on. Along with the rest of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Committee on South Africa, Canada decided in February 1991 to adopt a phased approach to the removal of sanctions. Thus "people" sanctions (cultural, academic and scientific exchanges, air links, tourism, visa limitations and the like) were not to be lifted until political prisoners were released; exiles allowed to return home; Group Areas, Population Registration and Land Acts were repealed; and repressive provisions of security legislation were removed. Trade, investment, and financial sanctions were to be maintained until there was evidence of progress on constitutional reform in multi-party negotiations. Finally, the arms embargo was not to be repealed until a new constitution was in place.

### Canada's sanctions policy

Canada's high-profile membership in this Committee (as the Chairperson and initiator) ensured that, for the time being, the Commonwealth rather than Canada's allies in the West remains the predominant influence on Canada's sanctions policy, albeit with some grumbling in External Affairs that Canada is being held hostage to African rather than Canadian interests. Thus, when U.S. President George Bush decided in July to end U.S. Congressional sanctions against South Africa, Canada did not follow suit. Mulroney

said that he was more inclined to accept Mandela's assessment of the situation than anyone else's. At any rate, a significant array of American sanctions at the state and municipal level remain in place.

Similarly, when European countries decided to lift a range of trade sanctions (stalled still by the Danish parliament), the Canadian government resisted some pressure from the media and the private sector to go along. At this stage, Mulroney was still standing tall: "We may be the last to remove sanctions," he said. "There's nothing wrong with that."

The Ontario government has also endorsed financial sanctions imposed by the previous provincial Liberal government. In September it dropped two of its top European bond underwriters, Deutsche Bank of Germany and Banque Parisbas of France, from its circle of bond marketers because they began underwriting bonds for the government of South Africa. Also, local investment dealer McLean McCarthy Ltd., owned by Deutsche Bank, became ineligible to participate in future underwriting for the province or for Ontario Hydro.

Beyond the issue of sanctions, there has also been evidence of sensitivity to the fraught nature of South Africa's transition in Mulroney's decision to postpone an official visit to South Africa originally scheduled for October. An advance team from External Affairs had been sent to South Africa in July to make preparations. However, the ANC publicly opposed the visit (and one by Prime Minister Hawke of Australia), arguing that it would lend legitimacy to the de Klerk government soon after Inkathagate and despite the continued involvement of security forces in violence. Given Mulroney's championing of sanctions and his legendary battles against former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on this issue in the Commonwealth, such a visit would have had enormous symbolic value for the South Africans.



Lesky Lauson/Afrapix-Impact Visuals

Ultimately, Mulroney 'postponed' his trip, explaining that, at the time, it "would not be helpful." However, he was not prepared to burn all his bridges. In his letter of regrets to de Klerk, he repeated a formal invitation to him to visit Canada in 1992. Although a date has not been set, a visit by De Klerk would be the first by a South African head of state since the National Party assumed power in 1948.

Following the lifting of sanctions elsewhere, groups within the Conservative party, the private sector and especially the Canadian Exporters Association (CEA), resumed a vigorous and open campaign against Canada's economic sanctions. James Taylor, the President of the CEA, complained that Canadian firms were "in danger of being left out in the cold," while firms from Europe, Japan and the United States were taking advantage of "prime market opportunities."

Accordingly, Taylor announced his intention to lead a trade delegation to South Africa in September. Although Canadian exports to South Africa had increased by 53% in 1990 (moving Canada's balance of trade with South Africa into a surplus for only the second time since 1980), Taylor insisted that exports to South Africa could triple if Ottawa lifted its ban on high technology exports. At the moment, Canadian exports to South Africa consist largely of primary or semi-finished products like wheat and sulphur.

#### Canadian position softened

By September, both the Canadian and Commonwealth positions had softened considerably, no doubt for fear of being left behind. At a meeting of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Committee in New Delhi, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Barbara McDougall, introduced a new set of proposals, insisting that they were intended "to

give credit where it was due" as well as "to sustain the pressure for further change."

In terms of "credit where credit is due," it is interesting to note that some thirty-two apartheid laws are still on South Africa's statute books (on conscription, pensions, probation, town planning and segregated tribal "homeland" reserves for blacks). Also, according to the South African Council of Churches, up to a thousand political prisoners remain in South African and homeland jails. However, despite such preconditions not being met, the Committee decided to advocate the lifting of "peoples' sanctions," partly, it stated, "to facilitate dialogue and interaction with the anti-apartheid movements in South Africa."

More striking still was a considerable easing of the conditions to be met before trade and investment sanctions could be ended. The

February formulation had talked about "evidence of progress on constitutional reform in multi-party negotiations such as the establishment of an interim government, a constituent assembly or some other agreed constitution-making process." Now, provisions (drafted with the assistance and support of the head of Canada's Southern African Task Force in the Department of External Affairs) referred merely to a time "when appropriate transitional mechanisms had been agreed in South Africa which would enable all the parties to participate fully and effectively in negotiations." This means that trade and investment sanctions could be removed as early as December when the first constitutional negotiations are expected to start. However, the Committee decided that tougher financial sanctions would be maintained until there was agreement on a new democratic constitution.

At the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Harare in October, these proposals were accepted and the first set of peoples' sanctions has now been lifted. McDougall also urged that when a set of rigorous criteria had been achieved, all restrictions on individual sports should be lifted. Finally, Canada added official contacts to the list of peoples' sanctions which were to be removed, having by-passed them anyway in 1990 and 1991 in the invitations offered to de Klerk to visit Canada.

**Human rights on the agenda**

A second and more prominent theme in Canada's participation in the Harare conference was Mulroney's very public linking of discussions on the state of human rights and democracy in South Africa to human rights and democracy in the Commonwealth at large. Before the conference, Mulroney went so far as to pledge that Canada intended to link its development assistance in future to the nature of human rights and democracy in recipient countries. "Canada will not sub-



*Farm school, Bethanie, Bophuthatswana*

Santu Mofokeng/Afrapix-Impact Visuals



sidize repression and the stifling of democracy," he declared. "We shall increasingly be channelling our development assistance to those countries which show respect for fundamental rights and freedoms." Mulroney singled out the Kenyan regime for criticism and even challenged President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, his host and erstwhile ally in the sanctions campaign, when police put down student demonstrations in Harare during the conference.

By contrast, Prime Minister Robert Hawke of Australia said he was "sensitive to telling others how to conduct their affairs," while Mugabe said that linking aid to human rights was going too far, that it would be wrong "to try to buy the policies of a government." Others, like Indian Prime Minister Rao, argued that Mulroney's reward system was ill-considered and urged that the focus remain on problems of debt and economic development in poor countries.

While it would be inconsistent to ignore abuses of human and democratic rights anywhere, Mulroney's initiative in Harare did seem unprepared and ill-timed. Critics at home in Canada had no difficulty finding gross inconsistencies between Mulroney's principles and the priorities evident in Canada's existing programme of government-to-government development assistance. Thus, Indonesia, in the news for its slaughter of protesting students in East Timor in November, received an average of about \$50 million a year from Canada in the late 1980s and is the second largest recipient of Canadian bilateral aid in Asia. In francophone Africa, the politically non-liberal countries of Cameroon, Mali, Morocco and Zaire, are major recipients of Canadian assistance. The choice of these countries for assistance has been determined by a range of Canadian interests, most notably the promotion of Canadian trading interests, rather than by the recipient countries' records on democracy or human rights.

### Evening the score

However at odds it is with the existing priorities in Canada's aid programme, Mulroney's new initiative on aid and human rights, reiterated at the francophonie conference in Paris in November, may have an added bonus. For all those sections of Canadian public opinion that have been alienated by Mulroney's South Africa policy, this new policy will be seen to have evened the score. On more principled grounds, the press has received Mulroney's approach very favourably. Take, for example, Toronto *Globe and Mail* columnist John Cruickshank who noted (18 October 1991) that: "Brian Mulroney this week risked all the diplomatic capital he has built up with African leaders in his popular six-year anti-apartheid campaign. But in an excellent cause." The *Globe's* editorial (16 October 1991) added that "If Western governments put pressure on Third World countries to respect such rights, they are not being neo-colonialist bullies, but responsible world citizens ... the day of blank cheque foreign aid is clearly over."

Whether as bully or world citizen, what Mulroney's stance on aid and human rights may also suggest is a desire to return to a closer relationship with Canada's western allies. Having journeyed outside the traditional confines of Canadian foreign policy in his differences with Reagan and Bush and his battles with Thatcher on the issue of sanctions against South Africa, Mulroney's new fingerprinting inside the Commonwealth may signal that he is interested in repairing his fences.

The early hints of Canada's changing alliances in the Commonwealth, the contradictory thrusts in the strong, then softer stand on sanctions, and the tentative approach to official contacts with South Africa's head of state - all these developments in 1991 suggest some fluidity in Canada's policy with South Africa. In particular, the decision to repeat the invi-

tation to de Klerk to visit Canada and the eagerness with which most officials greet the impending end to economic sanctions seem strangely timed in the context of events in South Africa. At the least, they have sent a signal of support to the present South African government shortly after it had put forward constitutional proposals which would have denied substantive democratic rights to the black majority and when it still shows no signs of bringing its security forces under control. It seems that de Klerk's credibility in the international community and in Canada remains high.

Consider the remarks of Canada's new Ambassador to South Africa, Christopher Westdal, when briefing Canadians this fall. As change in South Africa is likely to take time ("There won't be just any flag-down, flag-up ceremonial transition"), he said South Africa would become just another instance of those countries struggling to achieve democracy. He said we should not allow ourselves to become impatient with the pace of change, particularly as he expected little alteration in the economy in the near future.

### Blaming the ANC

In particular, Westdal said he was prepared to give President de Klerk of South Africa "the benefit of the doubt," praising him for "his vision, courage and skill." He blamed the ANC rather than the government for delays in the process towards political change, and said that he does not believe that de Klerk was engaged in any sleight of hand or hidden agenda. Even the revelations that the government had been involved in funding Inkatha and allied institutions like the trade union UWUSA have not shaken Westdal's confidence. He accepted de Klerk's word that this funding was not government policy.

He said Canada wanted to keep its broad credibility and, to this end, was pleased that the government did not provide direct assis-

tance to the ANC. He added that Canada wanted "to rehabilitate (its) relationship with the government of South Africa" by resuming official contacts and providing assistance to existing South African institutions and especially to the country's infrastructure.

For a country as deformed by its past as South Africa, a realignment to serve the interests of the non-white majority will require not only new personnel in national institutions, but also a fundamental transformation in their approach to policy. So far, except for some creativity at the level of local government, little progress has been made on remaking South African institutions. The notion (*pace* Westdal) that the urgent need is to strengthen South Africa's capacities to sustain its modern industrial economy rings a rather ominous chord in the light of who continues to run these institutions and what interests such institutions serve.

However, such prescriptions echo the perspective of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank whose officials have already completed preliminary studies on South Africa. The standard recipes of neo-classical economic thinking embedded in structural adjustment programmes that these institutions regularly impose preclude the far-reaching changes which a state would have to make to end apartheid in any but a formal sense. Their emphasis on privatization will do little for an economy so highly concentrated that six corporations own more than 85% of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Finally, the standard structural adjustment package includes policies which don't address the needs of the poor which, in this case, means most of the non-white majority.

Yet, here too, senior Canadian officials support the early involvement of these institutions in South Africa. At a recent House of Commons committee hearing, the head of the Southern Africa Task Force

said these missions would "help South Africa get things right from the start." The contrast between present South African realities and official Canadian perceptions suggests that, along with other western countries, there is some caution in official Canada about the need for fundamental transformation in South Africa.

#### Post-apartheid aid

In terms of bilateral assistance, there is a real possibility that a post-apartheid government in South Africa will not get the infusions of capital it will need to cope with the dislocation and misery wrought by apartheid. If the Namibian case is any precedent, it is quite possible that western donors will look at South Africa's relatively high per capita Gross National Product and plead shrinking aid budgets and other priorities to diminish their contributions to South Africa quite rapidly. Even in Canada, where aid to South Africa has been early and imaginative, there are mutterings about greater needs in other parts of Africa and the expectation that market forces will help South Africa to meet its challenges. Never before has it been so imperative to offer committed support to the forces in civil society who are working against great odds for a genuinely new South Africa.

Certainly in 1991 the Canadian government and Canadian NGOs have continued to offer a wide range of assistance to institutions in civil society. While there has been a concentration of funds on education, programmes have also included support for civic groups, trade unions, township planning, squatter camps, and even for constitutional negotiations.

In 1991, one of the most impressive projects centred on the development of South Africa's immediate and longer term capacity to provide economic analysis and policy formulation in a post-apartheid South Africa. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) sent

two senior Canadian economists to join South African economists in assessing South African needs, capacities and the role of outside help. The mission completed its report in August and as early as November the ANC, COSATU and four universities had signed an agreement to coordinate research. At the launching of this new research institute, Nelson Mandela said that it was precisely this sort of development which filled him with new strength and hope.

These new beginnings are the tender promise of the future. The worry is that they will be generalized into an over-optimistic assessment of events, an assumption that South Africa has moved into the era of development when, in fact, the majority has not yet won the political kingdom.

Certainly in Canada, there are alarming signs that the state is quite prepared to "jump the gun." Officials still stoutly insist that they are in the struggle "for the long haul." Yet it is just as likely that they will greet superficial gains with great fanfare, that they will congratulate themselves for having played an important role, and will use the opportunity to fold their tents and steal away. Current western fickleness on this score in Namibia provides an ominous precedent for South Africa.

Should the West turn its attention elsewhere, the field will be left to the mercies of the current South African state in its reforming guise. Yet without continued western pressure on de Klerk, it is unlikely that sufficient progress will be made in any sphere - political or economic. At the least, much more international attention needs to be paid to the horrific reality of the South African state's role in the violent destabilization of its own society. Until this problem is addressed, the solution to the much more difficult economic and social problems will be merely problematic. In an increasingly aggravated transition, the future still remains hostage to an ugly past and a messy present.

# Barcelona Bound: The Sports Boycott's Last Hurrah

BY BRUCE KIDD

*Bruce Kidd, Olympic athlete and long time activist in the anti-apartheid sports movement, is currently director of the School of Physical and Health Education at the University of Toronto.*

On November 6 in Johannesburg, veteran anti-apartheid campaigner Sam Ramsamy announced before a national television audience that the new National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCESA) of which he is president will be sending a team to the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.

The press conference was a care-

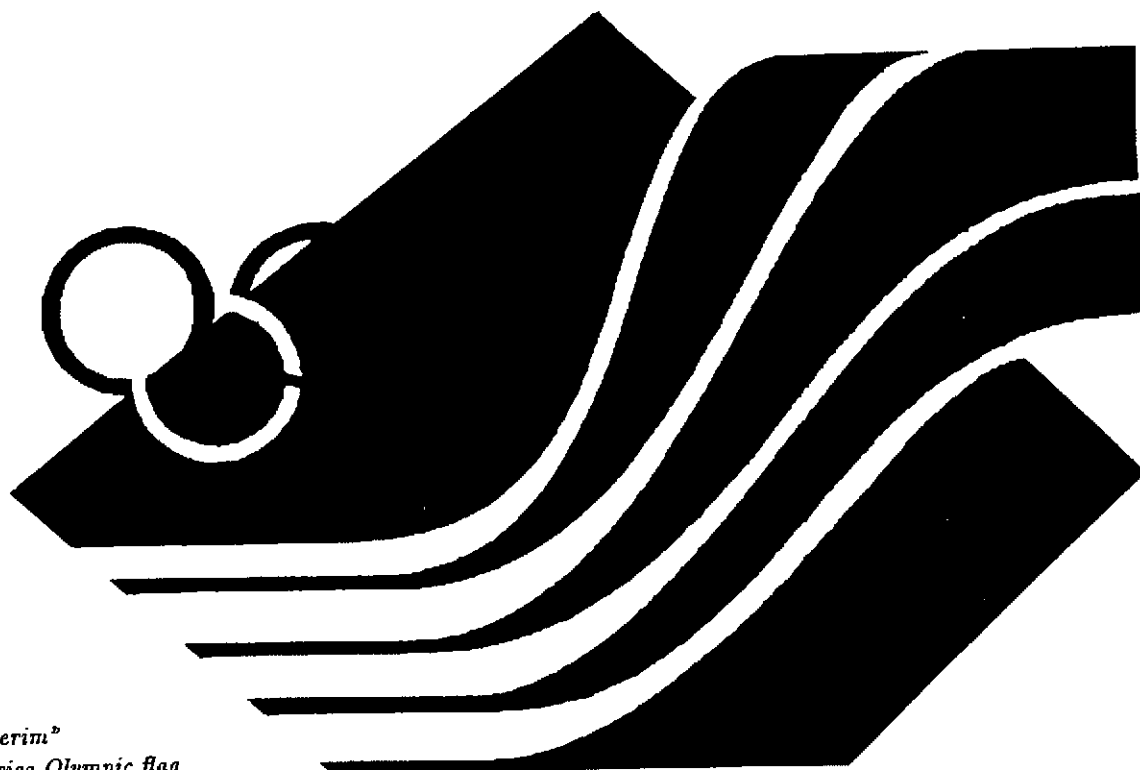
ful showpiece for the inclusive non-racialism that Ramsamy and his colleagues are struggling to develop in sports. The Barcelona team will mark the first time that South Africa will be represented in Olympic competition, he said, pointing out that only "a section of South Africa" competed in the years prior to 1963 (when the International Olympic Committee suspended the all-white South African Olympic Committee. SANOC was expelled in 1970.)

Rather than use the "inappropriate" symbols of apartheid, the team will march under a new "interim" blue, brown, green and grey flag and use the Olympic hymn, Beethoven's

"Ode to Joy," as its anthem to indicate a South Africa in transition towards democracy. (NOCESA is presently conducting a national competition for a new mascot to replace the Afrikaners' springbok.)

Ramsamy praised Nelson Mandela "for his vital role in opening the doors for the Olympic movement in South Africa." Mandela was the only non-sportsperson mentioned.

The announcement indicates another step in the deal worked out last winter between the non-racial sports movement, the ANC, the white sports establishment, and the apartheid state. In it, the de Klerk



*New "interim"  
South Africa Olympic flag*

government agreed to repeal the "pillars of apartheid" legislation and the white sports establishment to participate in the creation of "unified," non-racial governing bodies in every sport. They also made a commitment to a series of anti-apartheid educational campaigns, grass-roots development programs to address the tremendous inequalities created by apartheid, and the use of a new set of symbols. In return, the anti-apartheid movement agreed to take down the moratorium against international events, and to accelerate the schedule so that Olympic competition might begin with the Barcelona Games. Previously, Ramsamy and others had taken the position that the first Olympics for a new South Africa would probably be in Atlanta in 1996.

The responsibility for monitoring implementation was given to NOCSA, an entirely new body made up of representatives from the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC), the National and Olympic Sports Congress (NSC), and the South African Council on Sports (SACOS) on the anti-apartheid side, and SANOC and the government-financed Confederation of South African Sports (COSAS) on the establishment side. (SACOS - on the left - and COSAS - from the right - have since distanced themselves from the pact.)

International recognition for the new arrangements came on July 9 when the International Olympic Committee, on the recommendation of the Association of African National Olympic Committees, officially recognized NOCSA. The following day the International Cricket Council announced it would recognize a genuinely non-racial body for South African cricket, in an agreement negotiated directly by the ANC. It paved the way for the recent matches between South Africa and India, the first official competition for a South African side since 1970.

The decision to send a team to

Barcelona has not meant a complete end to the moratorium, however. NOCSA is determined to use whatever sting remains in the sanctions weapon to spur on sports bodies to meet the conditions for non-racial unity. Even then, it will only approve international competition on an event-by-event basis. The idea is to "ensure that unity, non-racialism and the development programme are pursued with vigour and that they become meaningful and do not remain merely paper agreement." In August, for example, NOCSA vetoed participation in the world track and field championships in Tokyo by the new "unified" body, on the grounds that there had been insufficient progress towards non-racialism. As of September, it had approved 24 new "unified" sports bodies, but very few competitions.

As one would expect, these decisions have not won universal support. In September, the establishment South African Gymnastics Union sent a team to the world championships in Indianapolis against NOCSA's bitter opposition. De Klerk and the apartheid government's sports minister, Louis Pienaar, have called the change in symbols a "slap in the face of South Africans" and the leader of the Herstigte Nasionale Party has laid a charge against Ramsamy for "denigrating the flag." Ramsamy was vilified in the establishment media when he said that the idea of South African track and field athletes competing in Tokyo was "obscene." The government and a number of unrepentant establishment sports leaders have pushed incessantly for international competition without condition. On the left, a small group of activists voice the counsel of perfection that Ramsamy and his colleagues should have held out for universal suffrage. SACOS has taken the position that the moratorium should continue without condition for at least another two years.

One of the factors which led to the Barcelona timetable was the

calculation that in the atmosphere of normalization that de Klerk has managed to create internationally, fewer and fewer federations and governments would continue to enforce the sports boycott. That has proven to be the case. NOCSA has found it increasingly difficult to obtain support even for a selective moratorium. In fact, the International Amateur Athletic Federation offered the largely white South African team an all-expenses paid invitation to the championships in Tokyo. The International Gymnastics Union welcomed the SAGU delegation (with its emblematic springbok and apartheid flag) with open arms.

On this uncertain terrain, the non-racial leaders have played their hand well. Despite the fragility of their agreement with establishment sport and their declining international support, they continue to play a central role in determining the character and pace of change. They still use the lure of international sport to advance the process of creating fairer opportunities for participation. And they have gained decided ideological advantage on the symbols issue. None of this should surprise us given the tactical skill they developed during the long years of the international campaign.

To be sure, there are enormous risks ahead. It's unlikely that the non-racial leaders will be able to maintain the selective moratorium beyond Barcelona. Without the election of a progressive democratic government, they will need another "carrot and stick" to force the establishment bodies to deliver on their promises. Even in the best circumstances, they will find that international sport often drains energies and resources away from grass-roots development. But Ramsamy & Co. recognize these - and other mine fields which could be mentioned - as the agenda for their movement for the next decade. In the meantime, the manner in which they negotiated their "coming out" inspires confidence.

# Has Socialism Failed? The South African Debate

BY PALLO JORDAN

In 1990 the South African Communist Party's Secretary General Joe Slovo published a controversial pamphlet entitled "Has Socialism Failed?". Slovo was sharply critical of the Eastern European experience and also sounded an unorthodox note on such questions as the need for the radical democratization of socialist practice in South Africa and elsewhere. Pallo Jordan, a senior ANC member on the non-SACP left of that movement, was amongst the first both to hail, in print, Slovo's initiative and to point out some of the limitations

of his critique. Here, at SAR's request, Jordan returns to the debate in order to review its strengths and weaknesses and to point out some of its possible implications for efforts to forge a progressive post-apartheid future. Moreover, the fact that the article represents an affirmation of the relevance of the socialist project by a key actor within the popular movement like Pallo Jordan, is worth noting in its own right.

The realization of the socialist vision seems even more remote in the wake of the collapse of "actually existing socialism" in Eastern Europe and

the Soviet Union. The deep crisis in China, Cuba and the post-capitalist states in Asia raises the possibility of that vision's total demise. Unusually, it is from a non-governing Communist Party in the Third World – the South African Communist Party – that the most searching critical appraisal of this crisis has emerged. Moreover, the work in question – entitled, provocatively, "Has Socialism Failed?" – has excited particular comment because it was produced by the Secretary General of that party, Joe Slovo.



Re-launch of the SACP, 29 July 1990

Suzy Bernstein/Afrapix-Impact Visuals

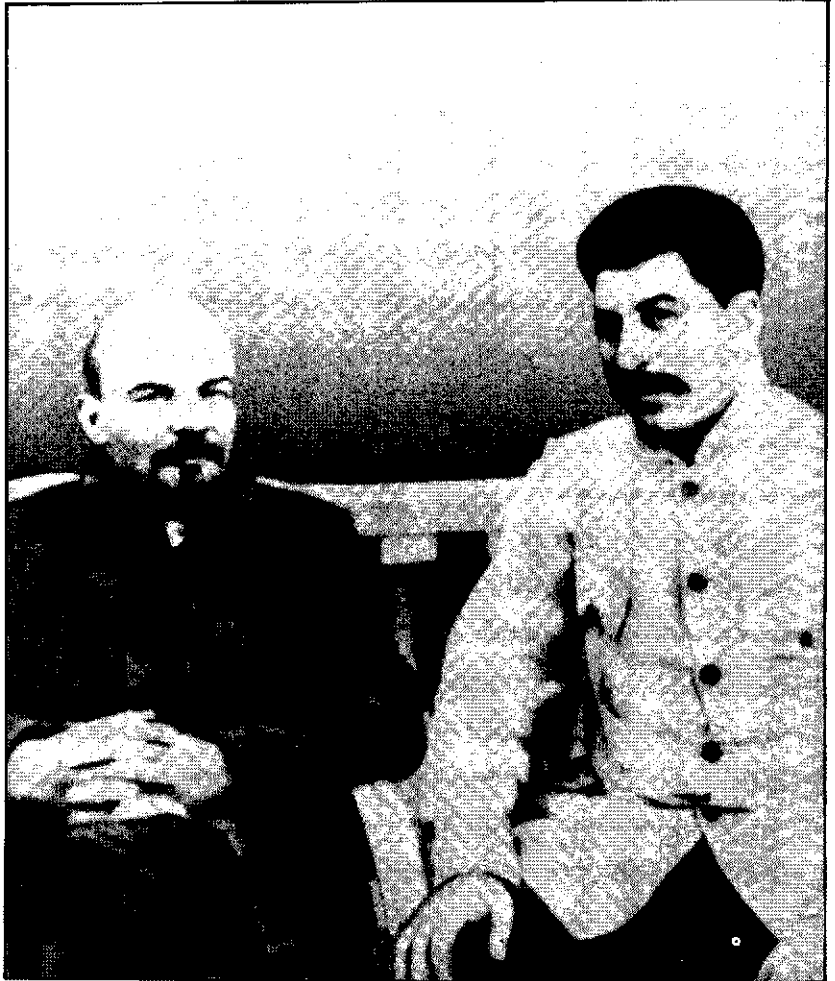
Slovo's intervention has another significance as well. The SACP is among the oldest Communist Parties, founded within four years of the October Revolution itself. The relative weight the SACP has achieved in the national liberation alliance is in marked contrast to the discrediting of both socialism and Communist Parties in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As one commentator has remarked, as fast as red flags come down in Eastern Europe, an equal number is raised in South Africa. Moreover, contrary to the trend in most other capitalist countries, in South Africa the Communist Party is not irrelevant but has become an important actor on the political landscape [see, for example, Mike Morris, "Why Are Anti-Stalinists Joining the SACP?," *SAR*, vol. 6, no. 3 [December, 1990]].

In this article I shall be addressing the responses evoked by Joe Slovo's pamphlet, especially among writers in this region, and the debate his intervention has initiated about both the crisis of socialism and the nature of socialism itself. In a commendable display of intellectual courage, Slovo had called for "an unsparing critique" of actually-existing socialism "in order to draw the necessary lessons." However, even though his intervention was a refreshing breeze, Slovo pulled his punches in his analysis of the Soviet experience. As I shall argue more fully below, this failure of nerve reflects not merely subjective weaknesses but betrays an unfortunate underestimation of the destructive impact Stalinism has had both on the ideals of socialism and on the societies where it was imposed. Such failings are the result of too long an association with the least attractive traditions within Marxism, traditions which have discouraged critical appraisal of "actually-existing socialism," above all as practiced in the Soviet Union.

The responses to Slovo's invitation have varied widely both in their thrust and in their quality. We will

survey some of these responses here. As for Slovo himself, when afforded the opportunity for a rejoinder to his critics – on the occasion of a Monthly Review-sponsored conference in New York on "The Future of Socialism" (see Mike Morris' report on this conference in *Transforma-*

guard Communists and former party members. Slovo's readiness to part company with many practices that have been regarded as the most sacred cows of communist usage was accommodated within the SACP by publishing his views as a "Discussion Document" with an undefined



V.I. Lenin & J.V. Stalin discuss Joe Slovo's "Has Socialism Failed?"

tion, no. 14, 1991) and in a number of interviews in the South African press – he has chosen to address only one of his critics, the present author. To this point we will also return below.

#### Defenders of orthodoxy

Given the traditions of the SACP, Slovo's essay must have arrived as a major shock to a number of old

status, but implicitly not as a view endorsed by the SACP leadership. This perhaps reflects the reluctance of the majority of the leadership to come to grips with the true character of the current crisis and the implications it has for the cause of socialism in South Africa and the world.

South African Communists in the past have usually explained away

the glaring shortcomings of Soviet socialism by emphasizing the limitations enforced by the imperatives of historical innovation. No road maps, so we were told, had been provided to assist the young socialist republic in negotiating the hazardous terrain it had ventured into. This is, in fact, the central thrust of an apologetic essay from the pen of Harry Gwala, a veteran SACP leader from the Natal Midlands (*African Communist*, no. 123, 1990). Relying on the standard arguments, Gwala exhorts Slovo, whom he accuses of being wise after the event, to "Look at History in the Round" in order to acknowledge the impact of the backward economic circumstances under which socialism had to be built.

Equally important is the image invoked by Gwala of the enemy at the gates: the socialist countries have always lived under an unrelenting state of siege and have therefore never experienced stability. It escapes such apologists that this permanent state of emergency might have been relieved had the Communist parties taken the working class into their confidence and relied on its voluntary support of socialism as its first and most effective line of defence. The glaring failure of the methods they prescribe has taught the orthodox nothing. At best they will concede that the CPs administered an overdose, but insist the prescription itself was faultless.<sup>1</sup>

**The left oppositionist critique**  
Trotskyism, as in most countries, is a minority trend among democratic activists of the left in South

<sup>1</sup> A similar refrain to Gwala's is echoed elsewhere by Mike Neocosmos. Even more relentlessly orthodox is the approach of ex-SACP member, David Kitson (*Work in Progress*, no. 73, April, 1991), who bases himself on a rather sterile citing of Lenin's works in order to defend the concept of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and a class approach to freedom against such virtual class traitors as Slovo, Rosa Luxemburg (quoted by Slovo) and the SACP.

Africa. But crises in the socialist bloc have inevitably enhanced the relevance of the Trotskyist critique of Soviet political practice. In South Africa itself Trotskyists had been forced into an uncomfortable silence during the 1980s as the SACP's influence and visibility grew within the mass democratic movement. Slovo's intervention helped to legitimate a critical appraisal of the Soviet Union in the eyes of many activists and the Trotskyists were not slow to seize the opportunity to reopen old debates, not only about the nature of socialism but also about the line of march of the liberation movement.

Thus the Workers' Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA) - since the mid-1980s a political home for Trotskyists operating outside the Charterist camp (the so-called "Marxist Workers' Tendency" serving as a similar rallying-point for Trotskyists within that camp) - have once again linked the degeneration of socialism in the Soviet Union to Stalin's thesis of "Socialism in One Country." This latter formula has been interpreted, in turn, as representing an abandonment of proletarian internationalism and as an accommodation with imperialism. From this, WOSA argues, has also sprung the SACP's own strategic line, the theory of "Colonialism of a Special Type" (CST). The South African face of Stalinist appeasement of the bourgeoisie, this line has committed the SACP to the pursuance of bourgeois-democratic goals rather than the posing of a socialist alternative to apartheid capitalism.

In consequence, WOSA states, the abandonment of CST theory will be the acid test of the SACP's turning away from Stalinism. Yet what of WOSA itself? It presently subscribes to the immediate strategic objective of a democratic revolution with a socialist revolution to grow out of it - while even Trotsky once commended the 1928 notion of "the Black Republic," out of which was to grow the CST approach, to his

South African followers! One is therefore left to ponder just what immediate strategic tasks it is that WOSA wishes to pose for the South African left.

A more thoughtful critique from a Trotskyist perspective has come from the pens of Themba and Mathole, who pose the question "Has Socialism as Yet Come into Being?"<sup>2</sup> While generously acknowledging that the SACP's news-sheet, *Umsedenzi*, has begun to break out of the Stalinist mould, they nonetheless point out the decades-long record of SACP apologetics for Eastern bloc countries. In fact, they argue, it has all along been quite inappropriate to refer to such countries - trapped in desperately backward settings with an underdeveloped working class and "primitive accumulation" still on the agenda - as being socialist. Without this perspective Slovo's account of the roots of Stalinism is inadequate, personalized and not consistent with historical materialism, they charge.

By concentrating on the silences and weaknesses they detect in Slovo's pamphlet, Themba and Mathole indirectly pose serious questions about the real possibili-

<sup>2</sup> Themba and Mathole's article was published in the Harare-based *Southern African Political and Economic Monthly* (SAPEM). It bears noting in passing that, at another extreme, the most strident among Slovo's critics has been Professor Archie Mafeje, the Oxbridge-trained South African social scientist who chose (also in SAPEM) merely to castigate, in an intemperate manner and from an Africanist perspective, Slovo, the SACP and the ANC (even stooping to such factually incorrect assertions as that the SACP is a White party!) This was unfortunate because South African Marxism has an extremely underdeveloped theoretical tradition to which Mafeje might have made a more substantial contribution had his zeal to settle accounts with ideological opponents not got the better of him. However, few other writers followed Mafeje down this ill-chosen path, the overwhelming majority electing to conduct their arguments with restraint.

ties of a socialist revolution in South Africa. They make a strong case to demonstrate that in the absence of a fully developed industrial base and of a modern proletariat experienced in struggle it is well-nigh impossible to construct socialism. It is a pity that, in concentrating their critique on the CPSU, they do not tease out the implications of their argument for the prospects of socialism in South Africa itself.

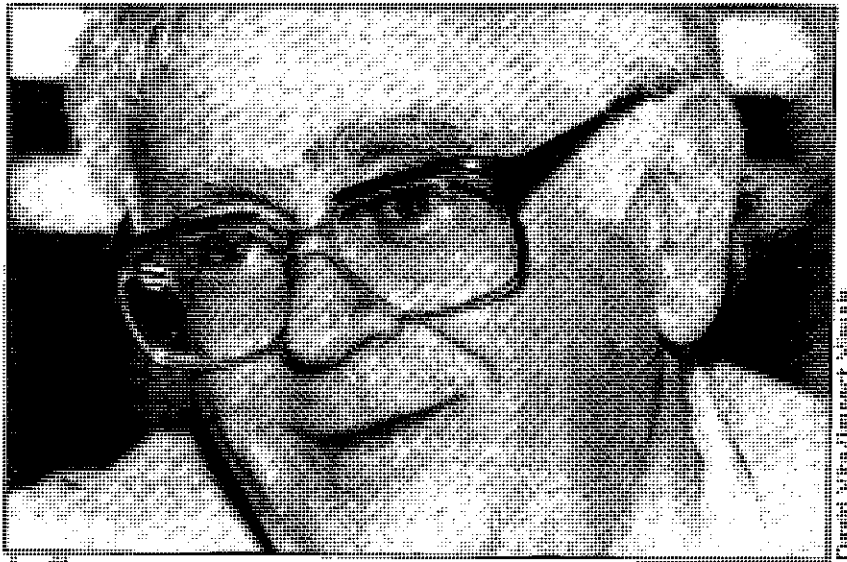
Nonetheless, the challenges they address to Slovo at the end of their article will be with us a long time. For they are far from counseling that the ground merely be yielded up uncontested to imperialism. They correctly warn against the smug conflation of all dictatorial regimes into a single category and see the adoption of "a plague on both your houses" as an impractical option in a world where imperialism seeks to establish global dominance. Though there are no easy choices, choices have to be made.

#### The independent left

I was among the few members of the ANC who took up Slovo's challenge to debate the issues raised by his pamphlet, which I did in an article widely published in Southern Africa (in *Transformation*, no. 11 and in SAPEM, for example) and entitled "Crisis of Conscience in the SACP." My central thesis was that, although Slovo's pamphlet signalled the emergence of a refreshing critical spirit in the ranks of the SACP, it offered a deficient explanation of the root causes of Stalinism. I pointed to a long tradition of critical anti-Stalinist Marxism, dating back to the writings of the Soviet Left Oppositionists of the 1920s and up to those Rudolf Bahro in our day.

These critics had sought to explain the phenomenon in terms of the material realities in Soviet Russia after the Civil War, especially – given both the need to industrialize and the insufficient numbers of personnel possessing managerial skills – the growth of a bureaucratic layer who took charge of the state and the

economy. In addition I stressed the effect of the dispersal of the working class in the chaos occasioned by the civil war and the political crisis of legitimacy the Bolsheviks faced in the cities in the early 1920s. In short, I specifically challenged the liberal notion that Stalinism was the logical outcome of Marxism-Leninism and invited the South African Communists to reexamine these anti-Stalinist positions on the road to re-discovering Marxism.<sup>3</sup>



Karl von Holdt

Ironically, when Slovo was afforded the opportunity to respond to his critics he appeared to ignore all the others and to concentrate only on me. Even here, however, he excluded the greater part of my arguments from consideration by choosing the unfortunate course of suggesting that a critique of Stalinism from a Trotskyist perspective is less than useless since Trotsky him-

<sup>3</sup> From a slightly different perspective Karl von Holdt of the *South African Labour Bulletin* argued that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had a rather weak conception of civil society and consequently tended to regard the party as the principle active element in society; in von Holdt's view, this encouraged the trend to vest too much authority in the party.

self was not committed to democracy. To begin with, this conveys the mistaken impression that my point of departure was Trotskyist. Moreover, the weakness of Slovo's response begs even more questions than the original pamphlet.

Basing himself on a quick reading of Deutscher's *The Prophet Armed* and a less than certain grasp of the issues involved in the Trade Union Debate, Slovo suggests that the seeds of Stalinism were in

fact sown by the future oppositionists themselves – specifically naming Trotsky, Bukharin, Kamenev and Radek – long before Stalin was in the saddle. Slovo, it would appear, still has difficulty in crediting the oppositionists with defending, against great odds, the basic principles of the CPSU. The debating points he tries to score against them amount to nit-picking when one considers that the terror of the mid-1930s would probably have descended on the Soviet Union at least a decade earlier had they not been there to impede Stalin's plans.

Not that any of Slovo's critics have ever denied the responsibility that the old Bolsheviks bore for the ultimate outcome. On the contrary I myself stressed the grave er-



ror they all committed by supporting the outlawing of the ideas of the Workers' Opposition in 1921. But does Slovo really wish to suggest that Stalinism was latent in Bolshevism? By so spreading the blame is he not also exculpating Stalinism's chief architect? Whatever faults in Bolshevik theory and practice assisted Stalin's rise to pre-eminence there was a point at which a crucial transformation – a qualitative change occurred – thereby separating Stalinism from all that preceded it. That crucial turning-point entailed, among other horrors, the slaughter of precisely the oppositionists he suggests should now share the burden of guilt with their murderer!

Moreover, by so directing the debate, Slovo seeks to evade the chief gravamen of my argument. This he dismisses as "class reductionism," insisting that since economic rewards under socialism are still determined by contribution rather than need economic differentiation and privilege will arise. This is uncontested by myself and others. More to the point, however, a distinction must be drawn between a system that recognizes the unavoidable and unpleasant necessity of such a differentiation and one that glorifies it, as Stalinism did. Slovo glosses over the empowerment of factory directors (beneath whose feet Kaganovitch expected the earth to tremble) and their superiors (before whom the planets presumably trembled) at the expense of the working class with a glibness that I find alarming. For it is evident that these were not merely persons who received greater remuneration because of the value of their contribution. They had in fact been transformed into petty tyrants with inordinate powers over the working class.

The sociology of this bureaucratic caste is not the small matter Slovo seeks to reduce it to. It lies at the root of the massive discontent that finally drove millions of East German workers to prefer Kohl over Honnecker or Egon Krenz. In

the Soviet union itself the unthinkable has happened. Socialism in whatever shape or form has been totally discredited and pro-capitalist, nationalist and Russian chauvinist elements have acquired the upper hand. The democratic socialist critique of Stalinism, let alone any legacy of the Bolshevik opposition to Stalinism, has been completely marginalized.

Thus, for the time being, it can be said that socialism has been defeated in the former socialist countries. This degeneration of "communism" was particularly evident in the events surrounding the August coup attempt against Gorbachev when it was only the explicitly pro-capitalist Yeltsin and his supporters who could marshal significant popular demonstrations and mount any mass resistance to the coup. Yet to expose the roots of these earth-shattering events requires a rigorous and unsparing critique of the Stalinist past, a critique that cannot be shirked merely because it might ruffle feathers in high places. Slovo's reluctance, in the end, to seize this nettle was a disservice to the South African Communist movement.

#### The old Adam

The majority of liberal and right-wing social scientists did not bother to address the issues raised by Slovo. The media and spokespersons of big business have adopted a triumphalist posture, while capitalist politicians crow about the virtues of the "free market" and the basically flawed nature of socialism. In fact, only one liberal scholar, Heribert Adam (a visiting professor from Simon Fraser University in Canada) has actually deigned to debate (*Southern Africa Review of Books*, June/July, 1990).

Adam, a German-born sociologist who aligns himself with the latter-day Frankfurt School, has written extensively on South Africa since the early 1970s. Yet, while remaining an outspoken opponent of racism, he has always been a se-

vere critic of the national liberation movement, one who appears most comfortable in the company of the liberal opposition. In his opposition to Slovo, he now manifests fundamental antagonism to the very idea of a socialist project as well.

Although correctly identifying some problems – the sense of betrayal felt by the common people of Eastern Europe, for example – Adam chooses to interpret Slovo as saying there was essentially nothing wrong with past socialist practice except for the persons placed in charge (i.e., Joseph Stalin and the men who followed him). Beyond this Adam seems reluctant to defend any kind of state intervention in the economy – something extensively applied, after all, in the most devoutly "free enterprise" systems – lest he be mistaken for a closet Bolshevik. And even when he does acknowledge the need for affirmative action to redress the racial imbalances produced by decades of white privilege, he caricatures such initiatives as a mere device to secure the plums of public office for a black petit bourgeoisie.

That affirmative action, which has only been tentatively applied in the U.S., could be extended to make more meaningful inroads into areas of white privilege in South Africa and thus benefit even the black poor eludes him. Adam stubbornly clings to the eccentric and sectarian view that the leadership of the national liberation movement must inevitably sell its poor constituency short. Indeed, such is Adam's distaste for socialism that if he sees any virtue in the SACP it is that its moral authority among the young and the poor will facilitate just such a sell-out! Quite a startling lesson to draw from the experience of Bolshevism.

Yet the fact remains that Stalinism – and the unfortunate tradition among many Communists to extol it as being "socialism" – have made socialism an easier target for such attacks by liberals, social democrats

and the right. This merely underscores how much more of the work of rethinking remains to be done. As for Adam, he says nothing that distinguishes him from the chorus of complacent fat cats who seem to feel the demise of the Soviet Union vindicates their own myopic contempt for the most elementary principles of social justice. His predilection to carp and find fault, rather than offering serious criticism of the national liberation movement, makes no contribution to the search for solutions which could assist socialists in South Africa in creatively recasting communism in a democratic mould.

#### In lieu of a conclusion

Not surprisingly, the contrast with Slovo is a sharp one. Slovo's pamphlet, for all its weaknesses and faults, served to initiate a much-needed dialogue among South African socialists by focussing on real problems. Few other political figures here enjoy the moral and political authority to have achieved this. No-one suggests that the debate about the character of socialism and the impact of Stalinism upon it has now been exhausted. But the seriousness with which the subject has been approached is indicative of the troubling questions that the events of 1989-91 has raised in the minds of those activists who see socialism as the future of our country.

Despite the differences in emphasis and the awkward defense of orthodoxy that the debate sometimes occasioned, most of the participants have evinced a concern to learn from the errors of the past and radically dissect the post-capitalist societies of eastern Europe to get to the root of the problem. *The debate appears to have arrived at an emergent consensus that either socialism is democratic or it ceases to be socialism.* The divergences that remain hinge on the exact character of the democratic institutions that should underpin a socialist order. While parliamentary democracy is not discounted, few of the contributors to the present debate regard it as being

unproblematic. The role and autonomy of civil society and more complex modes of ensuring democratic accountability to the working class are seen to be among the necessary foundations of a socialist society.

Nonetheless, with the exception of those I have termed the left oppositional critics, many authors tend, like Slovo, to underestimate the danger of the emergence of a "new class" or bureaucratic caste and the contradictions this generates in a society that is attempting to build an egalitarian socio-economic order. This is rather ironic in view of the experience of most other African states where control of the levers of state has been used as the principal means of accumulation. A bureaucratic bourgeoisie which has become the bane of African countries has been spawned by many a liberation alliance, including those that mouth socialist rhetoric. The discrepancies in skill, knowledge and basic education that separate the bulk of South Africa's working class from its leadership (to say nothing of the socialist intelligentsia) will tend to reinforce the extreme concentration of power in the hands of an elite. And in South Africa this tendency will very likely be overlain by the inherited racial division of intellectual labour, causing even deeper alienation between leaders and led.

Moreover, despite South Africa's one hundred years of industrial capitalism, the imperatives of primitive accumulation still loom large among the numerous tasks a democratic socialist regime in South Africa would have to undertake. The coexistence of third and first world conditions, cheek by jowl, within the boundaries of one country will act as a spur to resolve these tensions by the fastest possible route. The temptation to cut corners will be great as will the temptation to silence critical voices who insist on counting the costs. These dangers can be addressed only through an historical materialist account of the various forces, including class forces, re-

sponsible for Stalinism. Further and deeper exploration of that theme remains essential to our understanding of the phenomenon and to the devising of methods to avoid it.

#### Is there a way forward?

The long-term historical decline and ultimate demise of "actually-existing socialism" cannot but be considered a serious reversal for the fortunes of socialism internationally. Yet it would be foolish to abandon hope in the promise held out to humanity by the socialism of Marx and Engels. Even in the leading capitalist countries late monopoly capitalism has proven incapable of providing many of the basics of human existence - such as decent housing, health-care, schooling and meaningful work - for all citizens. And the disastrous impact capitalism has had on the third world does not require repetition here. The prospect of its uncontested dominance over the globe can only fill one with dread.

Socialism must be salvaged from what the CPSU and its sister parties had reduced it to. As the one Communist Party which its own working class regards as a repository of its hopes, the SACP could take the lead in such a project. But in order to do so the SACP will have to come more fully to terms with both its own past and that of the Soviet party from which it took its inspiration. I would therefore repeat my challenge to the SACP to begin a more inclusive, rigorous and thorough reexamination of the meaning of socialism in order to shed its Stalinist baggage and reinvigorate its jaded intellectual traditions. The participation of others who have traditionally spoken up about the shocking deficiencies of "actually-existing socialism" without ever losing hope in socialism's promise should also be welcome in such a re-examination. In short, the collapse of Stalinism offers all socialists, including those once seduced by the siren songs of Stalin and his successors, the chance to make a new beginning.

# Two Into One Won't Go?

## Integrating the Armies in South Africa

"Who will control the security forces—the military and the police—?" is a crucial question now facing the South African people. It is an issue currently surfacing in the pre-negotiations phase itself as the merits and efficacy of the recently signed "Peace Accord" between the ANC, the de Klerk government and Inkatha are being debated in South Africa. But significant differences of opinion have also begun to surface around one central long-term issue as well: the likely character of South Africa's armed forces after apartheid. Here democratic forces—the ANC principal amongst them—face huge obstacles vis-à-vis the existing power structure. The state has considerable capacity to set the agenda: "Inkathagate" was merely one example of its continuing ability to intervene massively and one-sidedly in the present moment. But the imbalance of power that exists between SADF (the South African Defence Forces) on the one hand and the ANC's "MK"/Umkhonto we Sizwe (the "Spear of the Nation") on the other has even broader implications for future bargaining over the security question—not least because of the obvious intransigence that characterizes SADF's outlook. This is a clear challenge to the ANC.

<sup>1</sup> *Indeed the present article draws in significant measure on Nathan's paper (from which we also quote directly here), entitled "Riding the Tiger: The Integration of Armed Forces and Post-Apartheid Military" and we are grateful to him for allowing us to so use his work; Laurie Nathan is a senior researcher at the Centre for Intergroup Studies, University of Cape Town, and a research associate at the Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape.*

Of course, the issue is one that will be settled at least as much by the outcome of the broader political struggle between the ANC and the government as by the relative strength and nature of the two armies themselves. Nonetheless, a well-informed observer like Laurie Nathan can conclude his recent study of the issue by suggesting that the process of unifying government and guerilla forces is likely to be more conflictual than in either Zimbabwe or Namibia.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he fears it will merely "result in the absorption of MK into the SADF rather than a balanced integration of the two forces. The new defence force will probably be dominated by white SADF officers. A kind of 'dual power' may exist after apartheid with formal political power held by the ANC while the military and police institutions remain in the hands of the incumbent security establishment."

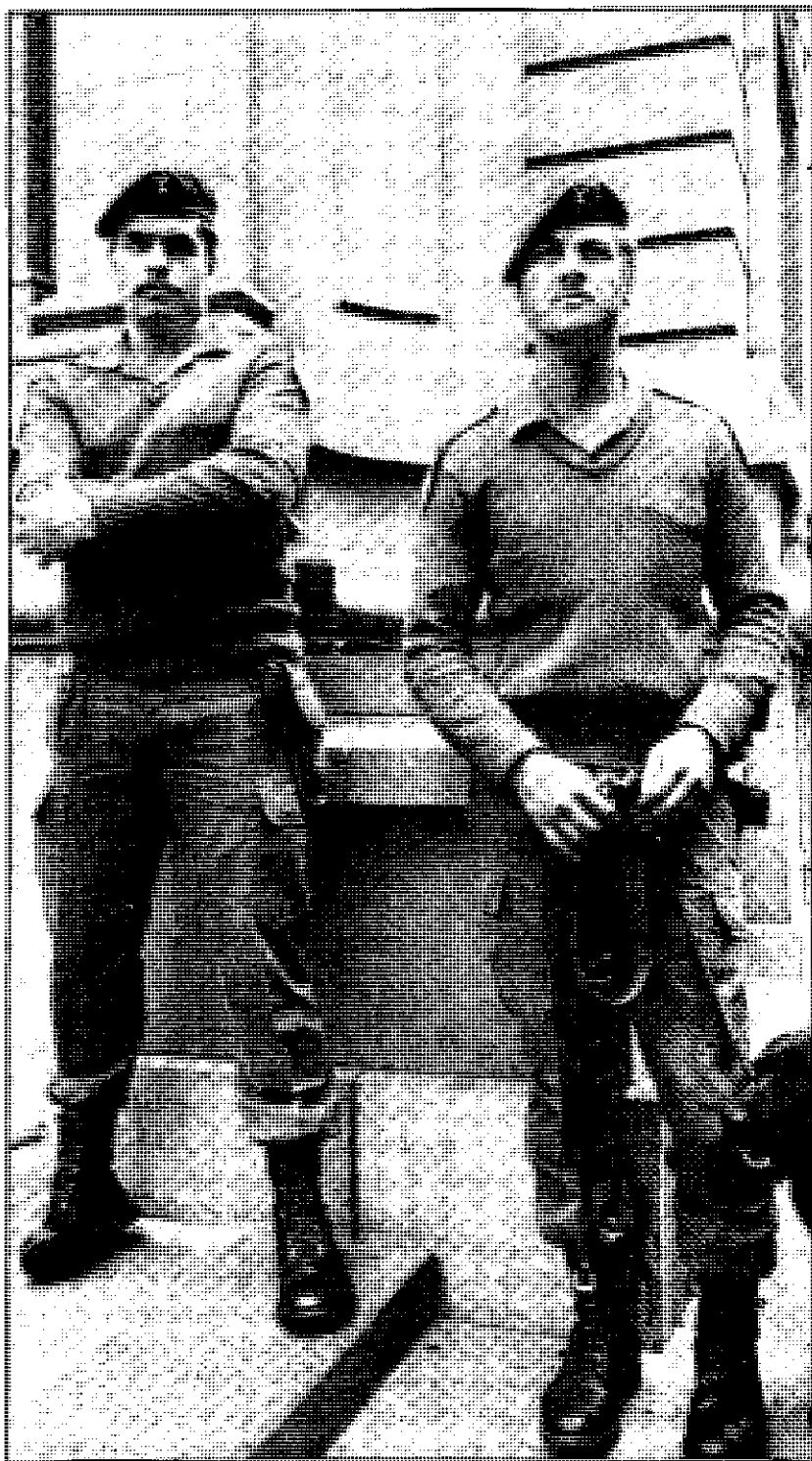
### Different perspectives

Is this too dour a prophecy? It is much too early to know for certain, of course, but as the various military protagonists have themselves begun to speak out on the issue stark differences of approach are patent. Thus, in a series of statements during 1990-91, Chris Hani, Chief-of-Staff of MK, listed a clear set of demands concerning the future armed forces. South Africa, he argues, needs an entirely new defence force, one that would include MK and SADF, as well as the armies of the homelands and representation from political groups like the PAC and Azapo.

SADF, he argues, can't any longer serve as the state defence

force on its own: as it is the racist, "military wing of the National Party," repeatedly serving, Hani states, as a "brutal army to suppress the aspirations of the people." By contrast, the new force he envisages would be accountable to parliament, would uphold democratic norms, and would act in a politically non-partisan way. Moreover, to be successful the "transition period" to a new South Africa must be structured in such a way as to ensure the organized return of MK to South Africa, and the confining of both SADF and MK to barracks. Meanwhile, MK head of Intelligence, Keith Mokoape, urges the building of mutual trust between the two armies through a process of discussion and "political reorientation programmes." And ANC executive member John Nkadimeng calls not only for a "democratic army" but also the reorientation of resources away from the military: "... not more tanks and Hippos [military vehicles] but more tractors and harvesters."

Meanwhile, the government and SADF have drawn up their own battle-lines on the subject. Contrast the tone of Hani and his colleagues with that of General Magnus Malan. In a 1990 statement worthy of Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf charging the infidel, Malan emphatically rejected the integration of SADF and MK. The two armies, he claimed, were different in their roles and technical capabilities. While SADF "protects the security, life and property of all people," said the then Minister of Defence, the MK "conducts the revolutionary struggle against the population" and aims to destroy those it disagrees with. The



SADF soldiers at a military parade where an all-black regiment received the "key to the city", Johannesburg 1986

MK, in other words, appears in a familiar light – just the way many whites see it – as a terrorist organization. Not only that, Umkhonto, in Malan's view, won't even be able to shoulder arms adequately – because it hasn't got what it takes to handle SADF's new "exceptionally advanced" weaponry.

Or consider a 1990 interview in *Armed Forces* with Lt. Gen. Meiring, the newly appointed chief of the South African army. Addressing the theme of "the new army in the new South Africa," Meiring spoke only of the need for new training methods and professional standards – and the retention of whites-only conscription and the commando system. Bizarrely, but with deadly seriousness, he defined the army as "the only organization in South Africa that spans the whole political spectrum;" as it stands, he said, it has "succeeded in welding a diversity of cultures, population groups and also political beliefs into a formidable fighting machine" that has "a unifying effect" on the country!

Of course, even more revealing may be the actual track record of the security forces since President de Klerk assumed office. They have at times respected the newly established political rights of anti-apartheid organizations but, more often, have behaved in the same aggressive manner that characterized their conduct in the P. W. Botha era. As noted above, Inkathagate has shown earlier accusations regarding their provoking and instigating violence in the black townships and engaging in a wide range of dirty tricks (through e.g., the work of the Department of Military Intelligence) to be all too accurate.

#### The realities

True, there have been some more hopeful signs: an unofficial SADF delegation did attend a mid-1990 conference in Lusaka on "the future of security and defence in South Africa." Hosted by the ANC and Idasa (the Institute for a Demo-



Dave Hartman / Afrapix-Impact Visuals

*Armed soldiers patrol Cape Town's Crossroads to prevent residents from returning to the squatter community, 1986*

cratic Alternative for South Africa), the conference included senior ANC members and officers of the homeland armies. These parties, who had only recently been enemies, proposed a number of wide-ranging and far-sighted moves which included a set of principles to guide the formation of the future defence force (e.g., non-racial, upholding democratic values, fully accountable to parliament); a call for intensive all-round training for all personnel in the force; a period of affirmative action or "Africanization" before proceeding to recruitment and promotion on merit; and no prosecutions for war crimes and atrocities.

At first sight the Lusaka proposals may appear both reasonable and realistic. They suggest that the integration of the SADF and MK could

occur in a relatively smooth manner. Nevertheless, there are factors that analysts like Nathan suggest are likely to warp any such process – and to do so to the disadvantage of the ANC. A first factor is that the international community will not be involved in the transition process in the same way it was in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Even though it was not possible to avoid some violence in these countries, international involvement through UNTAG and others introduced third-party observers to monitor the process. But South Africa's transition will likely consist of internal elections and negotiations; even if this process should involve the creation of an interim government (as the ANC, but not the government, envisages), this government will have difficulty

in establishing effective moral and practical authority as regards security matters.

Related to this is a second problem: there are no plans for a formal ceasefire. Although the ANC called for one in the OAU Declaration of 1989, it has since suspended its armed struggle without a reciprocal gesture from the government. Hence, the repressive powers of the state and its security forces remain virtually intact. If this were to remain the case it would also give Pretoria a distinct advantage.

A third factor distinguishing South Africa from Namibia and Zimbabwe concerns the relative size, capability and technical sophistication of government and guerilla forces. Briefly put, the balance is

far less nearly equal in South Africa than in either of these other two countries. Thus, the highly sophisticated Permanent Force of the SADF numbered 75,000 members in 1990, with a total reserve of over 450,000. In contrast, the MK, a comparatively ill-equipped force, can number no more than 10,000. Nathan fears, in consequence, that MK soldiers will merely be absorbed into the SADF after independence. "Some of these soldiers may be placed in top posts in the new defense force for political reasons, but for practical reasons most of the senior and middle-level positions will be filled by white SADF officers with the skills and experience to manage a large and complex organization." (Small wonder that recent news reports speak of Chris Hani seeking professional military training for MK members in the UK, India, Pakistan, Canada and Australia!)

The strong possibility of white domination of the post-apartheid defence force is strengthened by a fourth factor. The South African government is likely to be operating from a relatively stronger position within the negotiations process than did its white counter-parts in Zimbabwe and Namibia. In such negotiations, it will seek, above all, to ensure a substantial measure of protection for the future well-being of its constituency. And there can be little doubt that it will seek such protection, in important part, through guarantees of significant "continuity" in the security sphere.

A dangerous prospect, then. For if these concerns are, indeed, well founded, the negative consequences of undue SADF influence within a post-apartheid defence force could be considerable. Certainly, the legitimacy of the "new" armed forces would be greatly undermined within South Africa; potentially disruptive tensions could be expected to grow both within the military and between it and sectors of the population. Moreover, the existence

of a post-apartheid South African army that too closely resembles the old destabilizing force so familiar in the region would merely feed regional tensions, discouraging Frontline states from entering into new security arrangements or from cutting back on expensive levels of military preparedness.

### The challenge

A new South African government will have its work cut out for it, then, in reshaping the central features of the defense force – its size, composition, system of manpower recruitment, structure, and deployment. Such a government will be constrained, to a greater or lesser extent, by the organizational characteristics of the SADF as presently constituted and by resistance to change from the military. With any luck, the establishment of a non-racial democracy will inaugurate less conflictual domestic and regional circumstances. This may, in turn, grant the new government some space for significant action. But, in Laurie Nathan's view, the essence of the task at hand will remain: to address the issue of the SADF's domination of the armed forces without antagonizing the white officer corps, or to, in her image, "ride the tiger without ending up inside it."

Moreover, the future is also now. Thus, the peace accord signed by the de Klerk government, the ANC and Inkatha in September is designed not only to deal with present tensions but also begins to sketch some aspects of a long-term resolution of the security question. Some have expressed profound scepticism about the wisdom of entering, well before the resolution of broader political questions, into any arrangement of this kind. Neville Alexander for example, quoted elsewhere in this issue, is one who views the accord as a virtual surrender. Indeed, he sums up his sense that the ANC has unwisely acceded to the on-going centrality of existing state security ap-

paratuses by harshly labelling the accord "Nkomati II."

Others, more positively, have emphasized that the democratic movement must indeed take any steps necessary to demilitarize the current political situation. But they also see promise in some of the more long-term dimensions of the accord, particularly the agreement to establish codes of conduct (to be overseen by impartial arbiters) for the security forces. If brought into being successfully, these codes might not only help hold such forces to closer account in the current context but also provide a framework for neutralizing and disciplining army and police in the post-apartheid round. But will they hold? And even if they do, could they, as a *fait accompli*, also help serve to compromise the ANC's stated intention to transform the security apparatus even more fundamentally in that next round? Is this, in fact, the present government's real aim?

SAR will stay tuned to this issue. Clearly, it's a crucial one. But television viewers already have been given a graphic reminder of just how deeply dangerous is this whole terrain of struggle when the chilling BBC documentary, *Children of God*, was shown recently on a Canadian network. Here, on film, were to be heard a cross-section of white security personnel – policemen, in this case – expressing their prejudices with alarming bluntness. A typical comment: "Black majority rule? One man one vote?... They don't have the understanding to rule. It's been proven throughout Africa. Wherever they've gotten independence and taken over the reins of a country, the country has gone to wrack and ruin. They don't have the expertise to run a country."

Or, as another officer is overheard saying to a black leader at a street demonstration, "I am not your brother in the first instance."

# “Negotiations Will Fail”

## Neville Alexander in Toronto

Neville Alexander spent ten years on Robben Island (1964-74) and a further five years under house arrest but has never lost his political combativeness or his intellectual edge. During his recent visit to Toronto he participated in academic gatherings, met with support group workers and spoke to a well-attended session with a cross section of the South African community living here. He outlined some of his activities in recent years on a number of applied fronts: work with the National Languages Project in helping think through a multilingual future for South Africa, for example, and, increasingly, work in the area of developing new school curricula and school structures for a post-apartheid future.

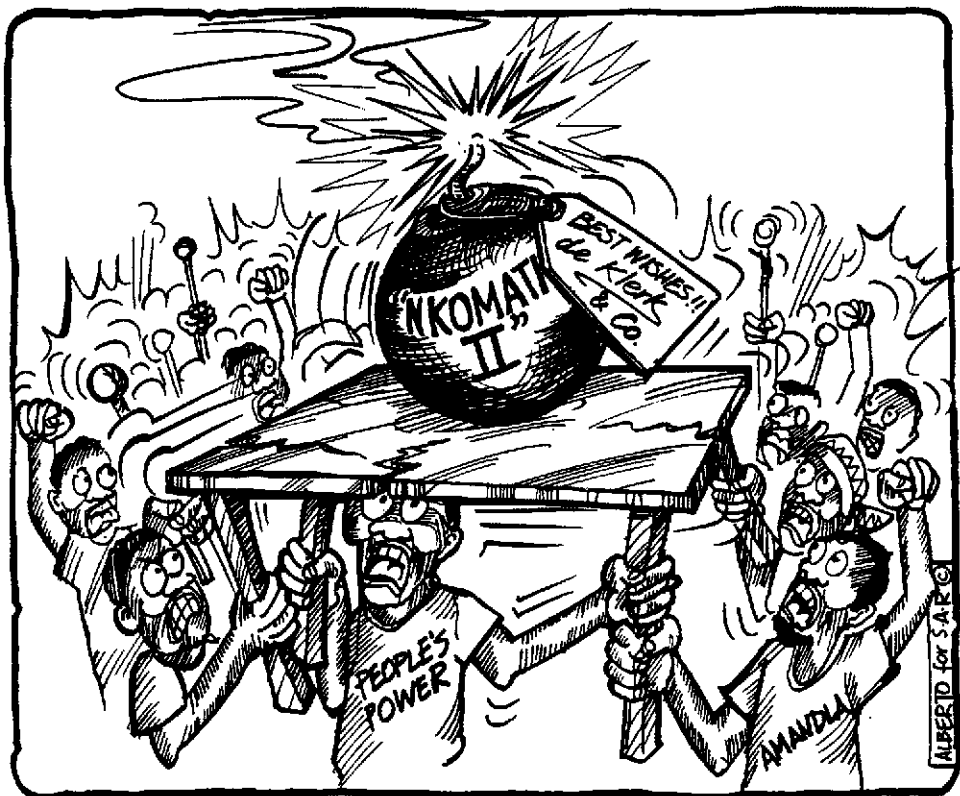
Alexander, as both author and activist, is also well known as an important figure on the left in South Africa. He was prominent in both the Cape Action League and the National Forum and now heads the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), formed in April, 1990. Toronto audiences were interested to hear his rather heretical take on current developments in South Africa as a figure in left circles outside the ANC/SACP orbit.

Heretical? The bottom-line of Alexander's approach is a profound scepticism about the appropriateness of the whole negotiations strategy now adopted, especially by the ANC,

vis-à-vis the de Klerk government. Indeed, Alexander presented “negotiations” as being as much or more an index of failure as of success. With the collapse of Soviet support for militant struggle in South Africa and with the effective recolonization by global capitalism of the Frontline states, continuing politico-military action against the apartheid state by the liberation movement became increasingly difficult. The Frontline states' own Lusaka Manifesto had, as early as 1969, urged that movements enter into negotiations with incumbent white regimes if the latter showed any sign at all of opening the door. Now, Alexander argued, the Manifesto has come into

its own. The slightest indication that de Klerk was prepared to negotiate has brought down massive international and regional pressure on the ANC to lay down its arms and “behave reasonably.”

The failed insurrection of 1984-86 also had important implications. While it was relatively easily repressed by the state, the National Party regime realized that such repression had done little to drain off the oppositional energies that had fed insurrection. Increasingly they acknowledged to themselves that they would have to talk to “authentic leaders” – albeit only from a position of relative strength – in or-



der to establish a more stable *modus vivendi*. As for the ANC/SACP leadership, the collapse of Eastern Europe had robbed it, in Alexander's view, of some of its confidence. Moreover, renewed repression and the souring of the rather naive euphoria that had accompanied the failed insurrection also disposed such leaders to latch on to negotiations as a providential way forward.

Yet the costs of adopting such a route are likely to prove high, not least in terms of sapping the energies of youth and workers in the demobilizing context of intra-elite negotiations. This is particular costly as regards any socialist prospect for South Africa. Alexander stressed the way in which racial/black consciousness is the most immediate and intuitive response of black people to a situation like that found in South Africa. Yet the 1980s had seen workers moving more firmly towards a class-defined sense of themselves (the concept "black working-class" being particularly important to Alexander in crystallizing such a developing class consciousness). Under the present circumstances, there is the danger that some of this growing revolutionary consciousness will merely seep away, rather than deepening in the course of genuine struggle.

Moreover, for those within the popular movement who have put so many of their chips on negotiations rather than on the genuine conquest of power, the hard fact is that relatively little change is actually being offered by the apartheid state. To Alexander this is not surprising since, in order for negotiations to lead to a real settlement, you would need at least some comparability of force between the two parties. Yet in South Africa, he argued, business remains so overwhelmingly in charge of the economy and the military so overwhelmingly in control of the society that the best one can expect is a co-optative strategy from

the powers-that-be. There could be some further deracialization of the elite perhaps, but, from the point of view of the mass of blacks, no very significant change is in view.

For Alexander the recent peace accord between the government, Inkatha and the ANC was a defining moment in this process. He termed it "Nkomati II" and saw it as an accord that has tied the ANC into working with the government to police the peace in extremely compromising ways.

In Alexander's view there is also a problem for the white ruling group, however. It may have had some success in seducing a wider range of black leaders with the siren song of negotiations. But that black leadership knows it will not be easy to sell some limited version of "democratization" - the kind of constitution with entrenched minority vetoes that is the best de Klerk has to offer so far, for example - to the mass of the black population. In short, Alexander argues, negotiations will inevitably fail. For him the only hope is that the popular movement will not have weakened itself too much in the course of pursuing them!

Alexander's evoked the most sceptical response from his Toronto audiences with his prognostication regarding the likely strategy to be pursued by the government once negotiations have failed. He predicted a coup - yet not a coup from the right so much as from the centre and under the auspices of de Klerk (or someone very much like him). The logic: conditions are not yet quite ripe for co-optation. But a post-coup government could move, more authoritatively, to wind up both the white right (with its obstreperous resistance to any deracialized rationalization of the capitalist system in South Africa) and the black left (who, it is feared, might eventually bring into further focus mass resistance to a process of controlled change). Only after a period of such rule might the white establishment

feel sufficiently confident to attempt the stage-managing of a constituent assembly and the creation of a pliable multi-racial government.

As noted, this rather baroque scenario did evoke scepticism. Yet in the course of reaching his conclusion Alexander gave his listeners ample reason to think again about the ambiguities of the current negotiations process. And if democratic and/or socialist solutions are indeed unlikely to emerge from such a process, what then? In many ways the popular movement will be back to square one, argues Alexander. It will be forced to think less about "negotiations" or proposed "social contracts" between labour and management than about remounting popular resistance and sustaining it over a period of some years (Alexander referred here to Rosa Luxemburg's model of the "mass strike"). Such mobilization will demand in turn that the large abstractions of "democracy" and "socialism" be brought down to the level of concrete, programmatic demands. A demand like "one family, one house," for instance, links the struggle to people's lives and interrogates the racial capitalist system in quite fundamental ways.

For Alexander, the responsibility of the South African left for guaranteeing such a revitalization of struggle is considerable. Yet too often, and at too great cost, the left inside the ANC has tended to see itself as the unique agent of progressive activity. It is late in the day for any such illusions to continue. The realities of the moment are such that the left inside and outside the ANC will have to move closer together if the left, broadly conceived, is not to be swamped. Fortunately there are signs that such a process of dialogue and consolidation on the left may be beginning. According to Alexander, this is one ray of hope in a situation rather bleaker than many other observers and activists have been willing to admit.



# Interpretations Matter: Evaluating the War in Mozambique

BY BRIDGET O'LAUGHLIN

The success of the war waged against the Mozambican government by Renamo and its external backers has been one factor forcing a re-evaluation, amongst academics and activists alike, of the entire Frelimo project. Indeed, one body of writing on this theme has been hailed (by British academic Gervase Clarence-Smith, writing in the *Southern African Review of Books*) as marking a "paradigm shift" from explanations that give primacy to South African destabilization as inducing Mozambique's decline to those that emphasize the centrality of Frelimo's own policy failures, notably in the agrarian sector. A key contribution to grounding such a "revisionist" approach to Mozambique has been the work on Nampula's Erati district of French anthropologist, Christian Geffray. This work is represented

most forcefully in his recent book, *La cause des armes au Mozambique: Anthropologie d'une guerre civile*.

We asked Bridget O'Laughlin, a noted American-born anthropologist who has lived and worked for well over a decade in Mozambique, to review Geffray's book for us. Unconvinced that either Geffray's book or the facts of the Mozambican case demanded anything so sweeping as the paradigm shift urged by Clarence-Smith, she seized upon the challenge eagerly, producing, in the end a fascinating but outsized manuscript, one far too vast for us to reproduce here. Nonetheless her own critical reflections on the Mozambican experience occasioned by a reading of Geffray seemed so much more alert than anything discussed by Geffray or by Clarence-Smith to the real dilemmas and difficulties that have confronted

the Mozambican leadership that we have felt compelled to print here, with only minor cuts, the long central section of her manuscript containing these reflections. Unfortunately we have had merely to précis an equally extended opening section that gives a nuanced and informed reprise of Geffray's book and to pare away altogether a concluding section in which O'Laughlin refers to her own analysis of the trajectory of the Mozambican experiment, and draws out some of the implications of that analysis for on-going support work.

We have invited O'Laughlin to return to this latter theme in some future issue of SAR, while also encouraging her to publish her longer manuscript in Mozambique itself, in *Estudos Mozambicanos*. We begin, then, with Geffray's book — our précis of O'Laughlin's précis.

## Christian Geffray's Argument

When Renamo forces moved into north-central Mozambique in March of 1984, they were welcomed by some traditional leaders who brought thousands of their followers under Renamo's control. In his book Christian Geffray, a French anthropologist with considerable experience in Mozambique, tries to explain why this allegiance was given and then traces its consequences for the peasantry in Nampula and for the course of the war.

As the book's subtitle suggests ("The Anthropology of a Civil War"), Geffray places more emphasis in his analysis on internal political and social conditions than he does on the undisputed support that Renamo has received from Rhodesian and South African forces. Geffray believes that Frelimo's plan of socialization of the countryside was politically and economically alien to rural Mozambicans and that it ignored or rejected the diverse cultural traditions of the peasantry. Left to itself, Geffray admits, peasant dissidence would not have become armed warfare. With the arrival of Renamo, however, local contradictions, which had already turned violent, provided the social base for a civil war.

Geffray addresses two main questions: why did some people in Erati district voluntarily align themselves with Renamo, allowing the rebels to develop a political base in north-central Nampula? and how does Renamo's war strategy in the countryside affect the local population?

In Erati, Geffray argues, people were forcibly removed into villages. If they resisted their homes were burned and, in one instance, a traditional chief was executed. Finally one of the chiefs invited Renamo to construct a base in his territory and other chiefs and headmen, with large numbers of their people, joined him. Geffray does suggest that ethnic divisions helped determine who went over to Renamo, the latter movement's sympathizers coming almost entirely from the Macuane who had been relatively marginalized under both the colonial and Frelimo administrations. But he argues that even those who stayed under Frelimo control shared with those under Renamo a common sense of injury towards Frelimo.

Crucial to this outcome, writes Geffray, was the consistent disrespect for the values of the peasantry implicit

in Frelimo's conception of nation-building and socialization of the countryside. Indeed, Frelimo is said to have treated the peasantry as a "blank page": ignoring traditional religious values and mocking traditional authority the party tried to imprint upon peasant society a single strategy of national development. Indeed, "villagization" is interpreted not so much as a strategy for development as a means of constructing the state apparatus in the rural areas. And, rather than the villages being based in the rural culture, the people most involved in their construction were not ordinary peasants but rather members of an urban oriented petty-bourgeoisie (carpenters, traders, primary-school teachers) who had broken with "lineage authority" and allied themselves with Frelimo's project.

Geffray uses interviews with a number of people who were formerly under Renamo control to assemble an account of life in Renamo-dominated villages. He confirms that most Renamo recruits are captives (taken in attacks on villages or on public transport); nonetheless, he doubts that internal discipline is guaranteed merely by systematic terror. Rather the lack of alternative opportunities for young men in the countryside, together with the perks derived from becoming part of the dominant group, make staying with Renamo a better alternative than desertion for many.

Renamo bases are separated from surrounding villages while those who organize the peasantry politically are local chiefs (the mambo) generally recruited by Renamo from those regarded by the population as legitimate successors of pre-colonial chiefs. These latter set up a local police force, collect the food tax that feeds Renamo, and integrate captives into local households. (For those who are brought to Renamo areas as captives, Geffray affirms, life is much as it was for slaves in 19th century Nampula society.)

Geffray does note that civilian disenchantment with Renamo, and reaction against its parasitism and its atrocities, is virtually inevitable. But he also emphasizes that the Frelimo party and state have themselves become defensive and inept: both the army and the militias are relatively inactive (if rather less corrupt than Renamo) and Frelimo itself is increasingly less visible, allowing local governance to depend more and more on the traditional chiefs who have been given the new administrative titles of 'chiefs of production'.

O'Laughlin concludes her review of Geffray's argument by emphasizing that "the changes which the war has brought to Frelimo ideology and to the organization of the party are indeed important. The early Frelimo party congresses were preceded by wide-scale discussion and debate of the party programmes in the society at large. The political program formulated by the recently concluded Sixth Congress still has not been publicly discussed. Frelimo's conception of communal vil-



*Child refugee from MNR area in Sofala province, 1987*

Anders Nilsson/AIM

lages was initially linked to the socialization of agricultural production. Today the position of both agricultural and consumer cooperatives is weak and defensive. Much state farm land has been redistributed to multinational corporations, private Mozambican farmers (including military commanders) and peasants. There is a great deal of concern with ethnic and racial representation in state and party structures and little preoccupation with class. The fiscal basis of the state has become external financing and the taxing of trade and salaries also based in externally funded projects. The leadership of the Frelimo Party once spoke with almost unbreachable unity; now the Minister of the Interior and other long-time Frelimo figures are in jail, charged with participation in the planning of a coup d'état."

Can we therefore say with Geffray that to considerable extent Renamo has won its war? More immediately, O'Laughlin asks, what of Geffray's analysis of the causes of the war? "Is this Renamo's war? Is it a peasant war? A civil war? What is the social basis of this conflict that has withered and burned the pride, hope and ambition of the first years of Mozambican independence?" It is just such questions that she then proceeds to address in the second section of her manuscript.

# The Anthropology of a Civil War

Socialism cannot be built on the destruction of the people whose interests it pretends to materialize. Thus a critique of the Mozambican revolution requires an identification and analysis of errors, not simply an attribution of blame. Geffray seeks to contribute to this discussion with a general theory of the causes of the war: "If that which we have found in Erati applies to that which is occurring in all of Mozambique, then things must be represented in the following way: Renamo has managed to make the opposition of people to the Villagizing State take on a violent form everywhere where people were marginalized in the colonial situation and remained so within independent Mozambique and where they thought that they could take advantage of Renamo's weapons to put themselves out of reach of the State (pp. 219-220)." How useful is this analysis? Does it raise the main questions we need to ask about the errors of the Mozambican revolution?

The essence of anthropological method is immersing oneself in the everyday life of the people one is studying, trying to see the world through their eyes. There are risks in this method. The community may be very differentiated yet we mistake a particular view of the world for a general truth. The elders may not think as do the youth; women may not think as men do; elders of royal lineages may not think as do those who have had no share in political power. Or the causes of the events we are studying may lie outside the boundaries of space and time that we have defined for our study, but this is not clear either to us or to the people we are studying.

That is why the quality of anthropological work is dependent on the way that anthropologists theorize their questions. It is theory that draws attention to the contradictory

positions of different social groups and obliges us to look for differences in their experience and views of the world. It is theory that allows us to decide how much history we need to know to understand the present, and how far in social space we need to go to understand why people act as they do.

We are forced to rely on Geffray's considerable experience in Nampula and in Mozambique and his feel for context in his interpretation of events since his book does not actually present much empirical evidence to back up its arguments, particularly in its discussion of Frelimo's errors; there are few examples presented, there are no numbers, there is no bibliography. It is unfortunate, then, that his work is heavily informed by a theoretical perspective based in a certain anthropological tradition, for it is a perspective that limits him, conditioning what he sees and doesn't see in the war in Nampula and the way in which he analyzes the strategy of socialist construction in Mozambique.

I think that there are two principal weaknesses in the theoretical tools which Geffray uses in his analysis of the war in Mozambique: (a) he dichotomizes internal and external class forces and (b) he dichotomizes the traditional world of the peasantry and the modern world of the cities. These misleading divisions are part of the theoretical baggage with which many anthropologists survey the world. At the same time, Geffray ignores the classical concerns of Marxists and socialists in the analysis of revolutionary situations. He also fails to treat problematically the nature of the political, economic and cultural structure formed by colonialism which any strategy of socialist transition had (and has) to confront. These are mistakes.

Many of the problems which Gef-

fray tries to understand have indeed been analyzed and debated by revolutionary movements themselves (including Frelimo) and by socialist analysts of many and diverse tendencies trying to understand where things went wrong. There is sometimes a tendency to place African revolutions outside world revolutionary traditions, because African peasants are viewed as being bound up in a pre-historic world of clan, tribe and magic. However, I think that many of the difficulties Frelimo met in building socialist democracy in the countryside are part of the general heritage of socialist revolutions that we must be willing now to confront directly and to critique.

## Inside/Outside

Geffray sets to the side what he calls "the war of the secret services" in order to concentrate on the internal political and social conditions underlying the establishment and spread of hostilities. He recognizes that Renamo was set up by the Rhodesians and sustained by the South African security forces, but he argues that this aspect of the war is well known and thus he does not deal with it.

This seems to me a very dangerous abstraction to make, precisely because the development of class forces within Mozambique and their effect on Frelimo ideology and practice are so intimately related to the dynamic of external aggression - economic and political as well as military. For the war in Mozambique is one of a recent series of conflicts in which internal forces have been promoted, financed, trained and logistically supported by the United States, U.S. backed regimes like South Africa, and various other capitalist states, to undermine socialist governments through low intensity rural guerrilla warfare.

Generally the foci of attack have been chosen precisely to exacerbate



or create conflicts between the socialist government and the peasantry rather than to confront directly the power of the state or to construct a counter-power. The targeting of road transport and the consequent breakdown in mercantile relations between town and country and between different regions of the country is an example. Such low intensity warfare is generally accompanied, as it was in Mozambique, by the imposition of economic sanctions, political isolation and limited intervention by conventional forces. But there is little investment in the political future of the counter-revolutionary guerrilla force; its purpose has been served when the socialist government is either removed or redefines its objectives.

Abstracting his analysis from any consideration of imperialism as a system articulating external and internal forces leads to a number of particular problems in Geffray's account of the war in Mozambique. Firstly, he strains to find explanations for Renamo activities which seem incompatible with the build-

ing of a political base. But his arguments only clarify that those who formulate Renamo strategy have not been until recently particularly concerned with its political legitimacy. Geffray asks at one point, for example, why Renamo undertakes the random massacres on the roads. His answer: "Almost all travellers are people from the town and cities or they are country-folk with a network of urban contacts, caught out precisely when they were coming or going to town. These people belong to the strata of the population whose conditions were profoundly transformed in the colonial situation: employees, workers, traders, artisans, wealthy businessmen engaged in tri-lateral or quadrilateral trade, the unemployed living on odd jobs and dealing, women visiting their rural in-laws or coming back with a sack of cassava, families looking for a cousin who has made it in town . . . In other words, the travellers in the convoys are people whose condition is opposed to that of those marginalized by the colonial state and left to fend for themselves by the independent state, those who entered into dissi-

dence against this state and placed themselves massively under the shelter of Renamo's weapons" (p.216).

In fact, all rural families whom I have met in Mozambique, including in those areas of north-central Nampula which Geffray considers marginalized, have kin and friends on the roads. By stopping the movement of people and goods in the country Renamo does more than, in Geffray's phrase, "gravely affect the material and social living conditions of the urban and peri-urban milieu." He does not see how debilitating the breakdown of trade has been for rural people themselves (even though he has previously noted that this is one of the factors that has led to disenchantment with Renamo in its occupied zones). If we do not assume that Renamo has been concerned with building a popular base in the first place, then the reason behind the attacks on rural transport are transparent. Stopping trade will certainly undermine any programs of social or productive investment and undermine Frelimo's popular base by worsening the standard of living in both country and city.

Secondly, Geffray's abstraction from the relationship between external and internal forces leads him to look at the evolution of Frelimo with a particularly jaundiced and ahistorical eye. The Frelimo that emerges in Geffray's work is a parasite, a creature of false fronts and empty promises. Yet the evolution of the war itself had created new class forces both within Mozambique and within Frelimo well before Geffray's arrival. If we abstract from this history, we tend to see only the defensive measures of the 1980s and forget the optimism, sense of reconstruction and broad mass participation in activities organized by Frelimo, in both rural and urban areas, during the first years after Independence.

When Geffray began his fieldwork in Nampula, a large part of the neighbouring province of Zambezia, Mozambique's most populous and most productive agricultural area, was occupied by Renamo forces and road transport was paralysed. The forced movement of the population of Erati into villages was dictated principally by military considerations. These villages were more like the familiar, and often similarly ill-advised "strategic hamlets" of the Portuguese than Frelimo's original conception of communal villages ("aldeias comunais") based in the building of common social infra-structure and new forms of agricultural production. By the mid-80s, Frelimo was indeed concerned with the building of a defensive local-level political apparatus in the context of a successful internal military opposition.

Earlier, however, there was much greater importance given by Frelimo to mass political participation *per se*. In 1979, for example, I worked with a Centre of African Studies (CEA) research brigade close to Nacaroa in southern Erati district. It was evident that most families were not particularly interested in moving their houses to the site of the new communal village (where our

own brigade also camped), but they were interested in the better common social services on offer there. Moreover, the youthful members of the local dynamizing group did go out and talk with the families in their area; people were frank and the dynamizing group heeded what was said.

When Geffray began his fieldwork in Nampula, however, parallel markets were well developed in rural areas and commercial profit was being rapidly accumulated by the new traders, many of them with links to the state apparatus and the army. Of course, parallel markets did not develop only because of the war, but the speculative accumulation of capital is probably endemic to any war economy. The state and army became bases of recruitment for new class forces that parasitically came to leech from both peasants and workers, and to sap the efficiency of both government and defence.

Thirdly, Geffray falls into thinking at several points of Renamo as an autonomous force. He speaks of Renamo having won its war, of Renamo as an armed social body functioning on its own account. This emphasis on the autonomy of Renamo influences Geffray's analysis of how the conditions of war are reproduced. He offers, for example, an explanation of the localization of Renamo bases: "Every Renamo base is thus like a 'metastasis', favouring the eruption in the Mozambican social fabric of a pathological pattern of development of the conflicts upon which it parasitically feeds. Thus we can explain the strange spatial configuration of the hostilities, like a leopard's coat." Yet what of the importance of the rearguard support lines in the establishment and maintenance of Renamo bases. Local conflicts are significant - Renamo is indeed a force within Mozambican society - but note that the leopard's spots have at various times been concentrated most dramatically along (and some-

times over) the Rhodesian, South African and Malawian borders. The waging of the war continues to depend on support from outside.

#### Peasant society in Nampula

Geffray tends to assume that in Nampula there is a homogeneous peasantry sharply differentiated from townspeople and living within a traditional world dominated by traditional cults, rules and practices. The clearest voices in this world view are those of the lineage elders. Others, like migrant-workers, masons, tailors, traders, and the travellers in the road convoys massacred by Renamo, are treated as urban intruders. For Geffray, Frelimo ignored or rejected the traditional world of the peasantry and found its base among the urbanized. Thus the peasantry rejected Frelimo.

This point of view has recently gained considerable credence in Mozambique. Strategic choices made by Frelimo, such as the abolition of the system of *regulos* (chiefly functionaries within the Portuguese administrative system), are viewed as errors. Inversely, the integration of traditional chiefs, spirit mediums and healers into the system of governance is viewed as a key to Renamo's success. For some within the army Frelimo's rejection of tradition thus explains why it was not possible for Frelimo to win the war militarily.

Yet the peasantry of northern Mozambique was dominated for much of the colonial period by forced cotton cultivation, while cash-cropping by the peasantry expanded and diversified from the 1960s on. Moreover, for men who came of age in the 1960s in Nampula some period of wage-labour was also very common, the construction of the Nacala-Malawi railway, expansion of the port and the presence of Portuguese military bases both in the city of Nampula and in Nacaroa all having their impact in this respect. And many women and children worked the Portuguese farmers' own cotton fields.

The expansion of the settler community and increasing dependence on wage labour and/or cash-cropping led to greater social differentiation in Nampula, as in the rest of Mozambique. There were conflicts over ownership and use of land; some families had the labour to expand commercial production while others worked in their fields or depended on remittances; lineage elders generally had an advantageous position in the expansion of cash-cropping, but so also did well-paid migrant workers who could use their wages to recruit labour from outside their families. In sum, rural life in Nampula at the end of the colonial period was contradictory and these contradictions were further compounded by the presence of returned migrants (and would-be migrants) who became trapped in the countryside with the collapse of the economic base of the cities of Nampula and Nacala at Independence.

Rural political structures and peasant ideology at the end of the colonial period reflected these contradictions. We cannot simply distinguish elements which were legitimate and acceptable to all of the peasantry and those which were imposed from outside. As in any society, the peasantry's cultural beliefs are both systematic and internally contradictory, reflecting the present terms of their social life. It is thus impossible to distinguish political structures which are legitimate and untainted by colonialism because they are rooted in pre-colonial systems. For example, it is true (as Geffray points out) that the colonial administration often overlooked or replaced legitimate title-holders when it named its *regulos*. But the language and organization of the system of local administration which underlay forced labour and forced crops appropriated and compromised the positions of traditional chiefs and clan headmen.

Abstracting from this social differentiation and looking so intently

for the traditionalism of the peasantry leads Geffray to analyze the question of peasant opposition to, and support for, Frelimo in a very partial way. I think that the base that heard and embraced Frelimo's language in the period from 1975 to around 1980 was much greater than Geffray records. I do not think that it is accurate to describe this base as essentially urban. Even Yamaruzu - a defender of traditional rituals and a critic of Frelimo who is much cited by Geffray - says that those who destroyed the paraphernalia of ritual practices were "our sons"!

#### **Frelimo's practice: terms for a critique**

I want to consider just three aspects of Frelimo policy which meant a direct and deliberate assault on the existing organization of rural life: local level administration, cultural policy and economic policy. In each of these areas, Frelimo met substantial support as well as some opposition in rural areas. In each of these areas today a particular critique of the past is being used to put forward a view of the future. Although I am not prepared to analyze thoroughly these questions here, I do propose to show why I think that Geffray's rural/urban dualism is not a useful way to understand what happened.

#### **(a) The "Villagizing State" or the administrating party?**

Here we must return to Geffray's critique of what he terms the "Villagizing State." He notes that in Zambezia, a major Renamo target, very few communal villages were actually formed. He argues, however, that villagization was a corner-stone of Frelimo's political strategy, whether or not villages materialized. This is because the state and the party are only present in the rural milieu through the village secretary, the village party-cell, the national youth organization (OJM) of the village. What is really in question, then, is Frelimo's system of local-level administration, one which made a di-

rect and frontal assault on political dualism.

In colonial Africa, French, English or Portuguese, the lowest level of political administration integrated legitimate local kings and chiefs (or, where others were named in their place, the accoutrements of power were reestablished on traditional lines to promote legitimacy). But these local chiefs were subordinated to the colonial administration and the tasks of local level administration profoundly altered: collection of the head and hut-taxes, recruitment of forced labour and implementation of forced cotton-cropping. In sharp contrast, the European code of law and system of administration applied to urban areas, and to capitalist farms and mines where most Africans were legally only visitors (and workers).

In most of Africa after independence, this legal and administrative dualism was maintained, although the boundaries between the two systems and movement between them were made more flexible. Looking at 15 years of African independence, Frelimo saw this dualism as divisive, anti-democratic and responsible for maintaining economic backwardness in the countryside. I agree. I think it would be a fundamental error to conclude that the war in Mozambique shows that Mozambican peasants need colonial-style *regulos*.

Of course, Geffray's argument is not that Mozambique needs *regulos* but rather that people want respect and recognition for their traditional chiefs. He notes that many of the ex-*regulos* stayed in Frelimo zones and that Renamo tried to recruit the true traditional title-holders. In a recent interview, he suggested that Frelimo must implement three measures to break the present impasse in the countryside: let people live outside the villages, maintain the amnesty law, and honour the authority of traditional leaders who were not on the side of the Portuguese. But this last measure seems to me politically naive. Per-



Alirio Chiziane/AIM

*Villagers training for local militia, Zambezia province, 1986*

mit people to respect and honour religious figures and title-holders, to be sure, but the underlying question of how local governance and political power is to be organized cannot be conjured away. Instead it opens up a series of complex considerations that Geffray does not even begin to consider. But these must be part of the Marxist debate on socialist transition and, indeed, were continually discussed by Frelimo itself. I will refer only to a few of them here.

(i) **Didactic politics** All colonialism was fascist, but Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique, based as it was in a fascist regime in Portugal, was politically very repressive. There was thus little political experience and organization upon which Frelimo could base its conception of people's power. The political pro-

cess at the base was therefore viewed as largely didactic. There was mass participation and a great deal of discussion and debate, but decisions made at the base considered to be politically incorrect were, as Geffray notes, sometimes annulled by higher authority. Nonetheless, the question of how to build political experience seems to me a real one and was directly confronted by Frelimo in the first years of the revolution. It is now largely pushed aside by the assumption that Mozambique has become democratic simply because the new constitution has introduced a multi-party system.

(ii) **Double subordination** In Marxist theories of socialist transition, the party should constitute a force separate from the state and capable of entering into opposition to

it. Frelimo talked about the need for the party to throttle the colonial state and to construct an alternative based in people's power. In practice, however, it opted for a system of public administration in which the party secretary at a particular level was also the top official in the government hierarchy. The provincial first secretary was always the governor of the province. The district administrator was the first secretary of Frelimo at the level of the district. In situations of contradiction, such as labour shortage on a state-farm or abuse of power by a public official, this system tended to make the party the defender of the state in its existing form. It also meant that the power of the local elected people's assemblies, to which the government was theoretically accountable, was very weak.



Sergio Santimano/AIM

(iii) **Restricted role of mass organizations** Mass organizations in Mozambique were created by Frelimo. Coming out of colonialism and fascism, it is hard to imagine another political or social force which could have done so. The problem that then emerged is one which other socialist revolutions confronted: should such organizations be autonomous from the party?

Mozambique never did develop a peasants' association. It was thought that the mass of the peasantry would move quickly into cooperatives and thus organize through cooperative unions. The tight control exercised by Frelimo over unions and the women's and young people's organizations would seem to indicate, however, that even if a peas-

ants' organization had been formed it would not have been allowed to operate as an independent political forum. Frelimo never allowed democratic institutional forms aimed at reaching the broad mass of peasants and workers to develop outside the party.

There is a related issue in Frelimo political practice which Geffray does address quite thoroughly and sometimes passionately. This is the blank slate problem: the tendency to impose an ideal pattern without any attention to how rural people actually organized their lives. Geffray attributes this problem to Frelimo's weak rural base. This seems to me to be a simplification of a complex problem. For the urban and, I would say, bourgeois bias, in Frelimo's approach to the peasantry ac-

tually sprang from the weakness of the party and democratic organizations vis-à-vis the state.

Given the educational biases of the colonial system, technocrats were often recruited from among the sons and daughters of the liberal bourgeoisie, often settler in origin. Most thought of themselves as enthusiastic supporters of the revolution and were tireless in their work. Their class and cultural perspective was not, however, consistently tempered by political intervention based in democratic discussion and debate on the part of those who were the objects of state policy.

Furthermore, Frelimo's tremendous confidence in the support that it had from the peasantry was used to justify ambitious programmes of



rapid political and economic change. It was initially expected that people would be living in communal villages within five years, and thus the political structures appropriate to urban areas would also work in the countryside. Gradualism was considered to be a defeatist dirty word which the then minister of agriculture asked us to remove from a document prepared in 1980 by the CEA on planning in cooperatives.

When radical strategies did not work, Frelimo often closed its eyes and allowed local compromises to determine what kind of political system really worked. One of the reasons I find Geffray's general analysis of the war unconvincing is that in many areas headmen early reasserted their control of local level politics. Yet this was not necessarily an unqualified good. Geffray argues that traditional chiefs entered the war not to reclaim the privileges that those who had been made regulos enjoyed in the colonial period, but rather to reconquer their dignity and the exercise of their authority which had been repressed by Frelimo. The problem is that dignity and authority were enmeshed in a system of local governance which any socialist political strategy would have to alter.

#### (b) Frelimo's cultural nationalism

Dualism also characterizes the cultural heritage of colonialism. Here, too, Frelimo declared an assault on dualism, attempting to build a single national culture which would meld the experience of diverse groups of Mozambicans. In the period immediately following Independence, the Mozambican Revolution was culturally very radical. There was a strong sense that colonialism had kept the people in ignorance, superstition and fear, and a corresponding affirmation of their right to education (adult literacy, for example) and science.

The other side of this positive policy was a tendency to try to crush



*The "Mapico", a Maconde dance, Nampula 1988*

or suppress values and beliefs that were viewed as anti-scientific, separatist or unprogressive, like consulting a diviner, identifying oneself by one's ethnic group of origin or paying lobolo (bride-price). This did not mean a general assault on peasant culture. The national music and dance festival, for example, brought

together groups from all over the country, army recruits sang drills in many different national languages, and school-books were rewritten to make them more relevant to rural children.

Religion was generally viewed as reactionary in itself during the first years of the revolution. Nation-

Fernando Lima/AIM

alization of health and education meant that many mission schools and hospitals were taken over by the government, but churches and mosques were also closed and sometimes vandalized. Traditional healers and ancestor-cults were treated with similar disrespect. This period is referred to by Yamaruzu, and was discussed and criticized at length in the meeting between religious leaders and Samora Machel in 1982.

Geffray sees these events as a reflection of Frelimo's petty bourgeois and urban bias. This seems to me a misreading of the problem. A good number of the worst abuses were carried out by members of the FPLM, generally recruited from peasant households. The notion of the total rupture with the past, the sense of redefining the world in a revolutionary context, is not alien to the peasantry and not specific to the Mozambican revolution. Rather, as in the case of the political restructuring of the countryside, Frelimo's problem in the area of cultural policy was that it expected to effect so rapid a restructuring of rural and urban life that it was not necessary to have a strategy for getting from where people were to where Frelimo dreamed they could be. The way people thought and felt and talked was to change in accord with the changes in the organization of material life.

In consequence, as the literacy campaigns slowed, as economic problems deepened, as the communal village program stagnated, Frelimo found itself without any clear cultural policy. Although the truce with the institutionalized power of the Christian churches and with Islam took longer, a tacit truce with peasantry's values and beliefs was declared early on. I simply did not find in my work in rural areas, as Geffray asserts, that the peasantry lived in a world of shame, afraid to show their allegiance to traditional beliefs. In Gaza in 1979, for example, middle-aged rural women argued in a public meet-

ing that exchange of lobolo protected women's interests and Zionist preachers openly tied their symbols on their roof-tops. In 1982, one night in Angonia, our research brigade was invited to see the nyau, danced with full knowledge (and attendance by some) of village authorities. In 1983, young soldiers told of officers in their units who were bullet-proof and entered into conflict with local spirit-mediums. All of this was troubling for Frelimo, which never resolved its attitude toward the ideological training of its own cadres and even less the meaning of Marxism for the broad mass of both peasants and workers.

### (c) Frelimo's economic policy

In sum, I think Geffray's tendency to attribute the spread of the war to Frelimo's rejection of traditional politics and cultural values to be simplistic. I also think it somewhat dangerous, since arguments of this type are now being used to justify the need to re-institute dualist systems of political administration. However, the most serious analytical failure resulting from Geffray's own conceptual scheme is not so much what he says, but what he doesn't say. For Geffray does not discuss the implications for the peasantry of Frelimo's strategy of rapid accumulation based in wage-sectors of the economy. Here he seems to me to neglect a fundamental element, a link between economic and political contradictions, that did help shape the social basis of the war.

Interestingly, an earlier report co-authored by Geffray (with Mogens Pedersen, 1984) on peasant discontent with Frelimo in Erati provides a good example. They told how a consumer cooperative sold much sought after consumer goods only to a privileged few who were part of the traditional hierarchy in the area where the cooperative was situated. The form of rationing was based in the local structure of power, but the source of the contradiction was a fund of consumer goods so limited for the country-

side that market incentives ceased to function in the state's relation to the peasantry. The state sometimes tried to intervene politically to recruit casual workers for the state-farms or to increase peasant marketing. Geffray gives quite a lot of credit to the former governor of Nampula in the mid-1980s, Gaspar Dzimba, for agreeing with him that people should not be forced into communal villages. This was indeed commendable, but this same Dzimba is the governor who made himself infamous by declaring that the peasants of Nampula should recognize that cultivating cotton was not a favour but an obligation they owed to the state.

The goods shortage in the countryside reflected Frelimo's development strategy of concentrating investment in public sector enterprises and aiming for an extremely high growth rate. The war exacerbated this goods shortage but it did not initiate it. Peasant discontent with the state has reflected the unfavourable movement in the terms of trade. However, this type of problem falls outside Geffray's field of vision, even though his own dissertation research gives much evidence of increasing peasant involvement in the market at the end of the colonial period.

The question of economic strategy is also central when trying to understand the processes of uneven development which lie behind what Geffray calls "marginality." It is true that Renamo often entered first into areas that had been marginalized by the colonial government and continued to be so after Independence. Yet the vulnerability of these areas is not necessarily rooted in the strength of traditional authority or looser dependence on the market. In its attempt to implement a policy of rapid accumulation, Frelimo tended to concentrate investment in the same areas where colonial capital had invested. It also invested more in the defence of these areas once the war began.



Alfredo Mueche/AIM

*Unemployed Mozambicans, returned from the GDR, sell their possessions, Maputo 1991*

"Marginal" areas were often labour reserves, with little investment in infra-structures and defence. Their basic social institutions were nonetheless deeply affected by colonialism. Structural unemployment of young men was a major problem in these areas after Independence, the 1980 census showing high rates of out-migration by them in many of these labour-reserve areas. In turn, the young and unemployed were frequent targets for Renamo recruitment, forced and voluntary, inside and outside Mozambique. But how best to interpret developments like this? Surely they represent less the "revenge" of traditional society than the negative fall-out from weaknesses in Frelimo's own application of "modern," socialist policies.

\* \* \*  
For O'Laughlin, interpretations

matter. At the very outset of her manuscript she worries Geffray's analysis will help fuel a rewriting of Mozambican history that is all too convenient for many who now hold political and economic power in that country. If the Mozambican crisis did indeed spring in significant measure from internal errors, such Mozambican notables now suggest, the problem was the socialist option itself - at best the projection of an impossible dream, at worst a plot to impede the development of national capital. To continue the struggle, the left in Africa and elsewhere must therefore present an alternative critique, one grounded in a rigorous evaluation of the errors and successes of the experience of Mozambique and other socialist revolutions but one cast in its own terms and grounded in its own principles.

In her concluding section, entitled "Where do we go from here?", O'Laughlin reverts again to the issue of the practical implications of our interpretations of the Mozambican situation - although here it is the implications for solidarity activists that concern her. She underscores the changes in Frelimo's policies - stated openly enough at the party's Fifth Congress in 1989 when Frelimo "defined itself as a broad mass party engulfing all classes" and presented a programme which, in O'Laughlin's words, "no longer includes the end of exploitation as a strategic objective." For her, the question is thus posed as to whether "Frelimo today represents class interests that we as socialists can continue to support?" As noted earlier, we hope to return to her thoughts on this question in a future issue of SAR.



Lorraine Michale



Lorraine Michale



Alice de Wolff

The  
Launch  
of the

# South-South-North-Network Harare November 1991

More in next issue of SAR.....