

CANADA AND SOUTH AFRICA, 1987  
Where's the Beef?: by Linda Freeman

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 3 No. 3

1988

December 1987



## Stalling on Sanctions

*Set-back in South Africa: Rethinking the Strategy of Struggle*

*Consolidating Solidarity: The Parallel Commonwealth Conference*

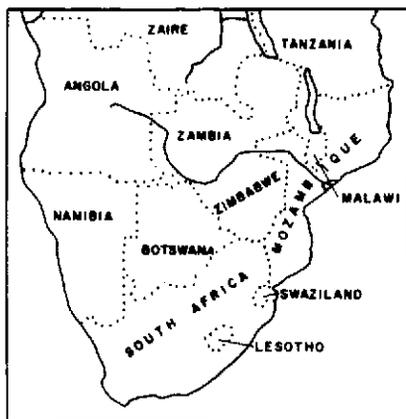
*Forging Alliances: Students and Universities Against the State*

price: \$3.00

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 3 No. 3

December 1987



## Southern Africa REPORT

is produced 5 times a year by a volunteer collective of the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa (TCLSAC),

427 Bloor St. W.  
Toronto, M5S 1X7  
Tel. (416) 967-5562

Submissions, suggestions and help with production are welcome and invited.

### Subscriptions

Annual TCLSAC membership and Southern Africa Report subscription rates are as follows:

#### SUBSCRIPTION:

Individual . . . . . \$15.00  
Institution . . . . . \$30.00

#### MEMBERSHIP: (includes subscription)

Regular (Canada) . . . . . \$30.00  
Unemployed  
Student . . . . . \$15.00  
Senior . . . . . \$50.00  
Sustainer . . . . . to \$200.00

Overseas add \$5.00

## Contents

Editorial	
Stalling on Sanctions . . . . .	1
Where's the Beef?:	
Canada and South Africa, 1987 . . . . .	3
Set-back in South Africa:	
Rethinking the Strategy of Struggle . . . . .	9
Forging Alliances:	
Students and Universities Against the State . . . . .	13
Consolidating Solidarity:	
The Parallel Commonwealth Conference . . . . .	15
Canadian Sulphur Trade to South Africa:	
The Problem . . . . .	17
U. S. Watch	
The State of Apartheid:	
Assessing Sanctions at Year One . . . . .	19
Reviews	
Marq de Villiers Dreaming . . . . .	23
A Sport of Nature . . . . .	24

## S. A. R. Collective

Jonathan Barker, Nancy Barker, Claudette Chase,  
David Cooke, Mark Fawcett, David Galbraith, Linda Guebert,  
Lee Hemingway, Carole Houlihan, Susan Hurlich, Bernie Kempen,  
Jo Lee, Blaine Little, Otto Roesch, John S. Saul,  
Heather Speers, Esther Vise, Joe Vise

Cover design by Art Work



## Stalling on Sanctions

There is a mood of rethinking, of sober reflection on the state of the struggle, in the two lead articles in this issue of *Southern Africa REPORT*. The importance of the goal of replacing racist rule in South Africa with a democratic constitution guaranteeing freedom and social justice to all the country's people has never seemed more urgent. The moral and political bankruptcy of the Botha regime is epitomized by the detention of thousands of children (and the torture of not a few of them) and by the wantonly destructive military interventions of the South African government in Angola and Mozambique. But finding the best means and methods for advancing the cause of freedom is not so easy.

Linda Freeman's "Where's the Beef?" reflects on the pressures from Washington and London, and from within the offices of External Affairs, which have brought

Canada's official anti-apartheid actions to a state of "stalled momentum", "coasting", and "confusion and waffling", even if Mulroney's rhetorical flourishes did score some publicity points at the Commonwealth summit in Vancouver.

Our South African correspondent, Geoffrey Spaulding, in a long interview "Set-Back in South Africa" offers his reflections on the new phase of struggle inside South Africa. He employs the terms "disorganizing regulations", "rocked by repression", and "unfavourable terrain" to describe the context for political action created by the draconian Emergency regulations and the highly militarized administrative structures which back them up.

Although the current setback and lull are real enough, the underlying changes in South Africa continue to strengthen the black workers (successful strikes and spread-

ing organization), politicize black youth (a process still evident in the townships), unite residents of townships (the rent boycotts), and undermine the ideology of apartheid (new liberal initiatives and splits of the right wing groups). The direction of change is not in doubt. What is not so clear is how further to weaken the opponents of change and how to build the political capacity to handle the conflicts and tensions which no democratic solution in South Africa can avoid.

The issue of how to wage the struggle in the new phase, Spaulding shows, is receiving serious discussion in the ANC and in several other settings in South Africa. The strong and united opposition, reported in the article "Forging Alliances", of students, faculty, and administrative heads to the new government regulations in South Africa seeking to force universities to become in-

formers and enforcers for the repressive state are particularly heartening in this regard. Certain universities have nourished critical analysis and debate which can hardly occur elsewhere in South Africa.

We also have an account "Consolidating Solidarity" of the Parallel Commonwealth Conference in Vancouver which shows how Canadians active in solidarity with southern Africans defined the issues they face and exchanged ideas for action. One of their areas of concern was sanctions, a topic which is raised in several of our articles. The case of Canada's expanding sulphur exports to South Africa is the subject of a short report. The U.S. Watch column focuses on the ins and outs of sanctions initiatives in the United States and finds that enthusiasm is waning, even among liberal Democrats.

Certainly rethinking is in order. Within South Africa and southern

Africa, the aggressive assertion of the power of arms by the South African state is but one indication of the deep social distemper which the disintegration and dismantling of racial capitalism must inevitably release. In Canada and the other countries sustaining South Africa's political economy via trade and investment, the hollowness of official criticism of apartheid must renew the efforts of the forces of solidarity to understand the limits of our governments' intentions and to find new and appropriate ways to support democratic power in South Africa and in our own countries.

A final note: This thirteenth issue of *Southern Africa REPORT* happens to appear on the fifteenth anniversary of the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa. We hope to continue to support the thinking, the informing and the action through which southern

Africans will achieve social justice and democracy. The current setbacks in southern Africa and the waffling and worse in western capitals make it clear that the struggle will be long and the difficulties great. We know also that the cause is worthwhile and that learning and working together is rewarding. That is why we are having a celebration on December fifth. Most readers will have missed that opportunity for a good time, but we welcome help in the form of subscriptions, articles, financial support, and participation in producing *Southern Africa REPORT* and in the many activities of the larger Committee. The struggle may be long, but there will be many reasons for celebration along the way.



**Moenie worry nie...  
we're still flying high!**

**SAA**  
SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS  
We make the difference

...thrown at us we found a way through - Sanctions or no sanctions, SAA still gets...  
...collaboration with our colleagues in the other leading airlines of the world, we've...  
...and a number of other American cities via London, Lisbon, Zurich, Frankfurt or...  
...SAA in Europe. With the option of an extended stopover in any of these European...  
...chain to the States...  
...wind down. So stay with SAA. With your support, we'll keep the flag flying high...

SAA ad - Johannesburg Star

# Where's the Beef? Canada and South Africa, 1987

BY LINDA FREEMAN

*Linda Freeman, who teaches Political Science at Carleton University, writes regularly in Southern Africa REPORT on Canadian policy.*

The fact that Canada has failed to adopt one single new sanction against South Africa in the past year should give us pause. Once again in the long struggle for change in South Africa, the momentum – both inside the country and outside – has been stalled in the face of the ruthless intransigence of the regime in Pretoria and the refusal of key Western powers to act. As a result, forces fighting against strong sanctions have gathered strength in Canada, and the official position has become blurred. To be sure, Prime Minister Mulroney reaffirmed his unequivocal support for sanctions at the Commonwealth conference in Vancouver in October, but his voice is becoming increasingly lonely within the Canadian state, and opposition to his policy is growing.

Though disappointing, this turn of events should not be surprising. Canada's policy on South Africa has always been influenced powerfully by external factors and these have changed for the worse. In South Africa, the state has stifled internal opposition through brutal repression. In the past four years, three thousand people have been killed and thirty thousand have been detained, including eight thousand children under fifteen. At the same time, censorship of media coverage has deflected world attention from the smouldering townships with the result that public pressure on Western governments has lessened. Also, the cause of Namibian independence has been pushed right off the international agenda. Finally, South Africa has been able to continue and intensify its genocidal campaign of destabilization in the region which, according to SADCC and UNICEF estimates, has resulted directly or indirectly in nine hundred thousand deaths and costs amounting to at least \$35 billion. While

the destruction of the Angolan and Mozambican economies reaches horrific proportions and atrocities continue with alarming regularity, the West has not helped to stop the carnage. Protestations notwithstanding, it is evident that Canada has not dealt with these realities either.

## The western approach

What to make then of the Western approach which conditions Canada's actions? In the past year, Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has taken the lead in formulating Western policy which is really the old policy of constructive engagement dusted off and again pressed into service. The approach is to oppose sanctions, sending a clear signal to Pretoria that Britain is on its side. For its part, the Reagan administration has ignored the compulsory provisions of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Guidelines passed by Congress in 1986 and has refused to take any further actions against South Africa this year. In addition, Thatcher, during the Vancouver Commonwealth summit, de-



Commonwealth summit, London, 1986.

nounced the ANC as terrorist, denied that senior British officials, including Sir Geoffrey Howe, had met with ANC President Oliver Tambo in their official capacity, and stated that "anyone who thinks that the ANC is going to run the government in South Africa is living in cloud cuckoo land."

At the same time, Britain has attempted to shift attention away from its continuing support of the current South African regime's domestic policies by providing generous assistance, including military assistance, to the Front-Line States, with a special emphasis on Mozambique. Throughout the past year, Britain has attempted to persuade other countries in the Commonwealth and the European Economic Community to follow its lead and substitute aid to the Front Line States for sanctions. In pursuit of this objective, the British Foreign Secretary visited Canada shortly before the Commonwealth summit, declaring that sanctions did not work and urging that the Commonwealth concentrate on the more "positive" contribution of assistance for the region.

In a fairly swift reply to this British offensive, the leaders of the Front Line States insisted that the Commonwealth must not change its priorities - with sanctions first and assistance second. They pointed out that, if apartheid was to continue its unfettered policy of destabilization and destruction in the region, it would negate even the salutary effects of development assistance. As President Kaunda of Zambia noted, the emphasis pushed by the British "is just like fattening us for the slaughter;" the point was to deal with the cause and not the consequences of suffering in the region. The Front Line States were happy to receive assistance, he said, but not at the expense of sanctions.

#### Where is Canada?

So where is Canada in all this? Sadly in 1987, Canada is back to making very strong speeches against

apartheid and coasting on past actions, while adding virtually nothing new on sanctions, providing only modest additional development assistance in the region, and ruling out military assistance - even of the non-lethal variety - for the hard-pressed countries in the region.

Yet, in the period since 1985, Canada had seemed to be on a new road and certainly Mulroney won international applause for the vigorous way in which he confronted British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on the issue of sanctions against South Africa. Mulroney first came to international attention at the 1985 Commonwealth conference in Nassau when, along with Prime Minister Bob Hawke of Australia and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India, he joined actively in the new determination to impose meaningful economic sanctions against South Africa. Following the Nassau conference, Mulroney delivered a stirring speech at the United Nations in October 1985 where he pointed to the uniqueness of the South African case in its "institutionalized contempt for justice and dignity." He then went on to pledge that,

*if there are not fundamental changes in South Africa we are prepared to invoke total sanctions against that country and its repressive regime. If there is not progress in the dismantling of apartheid, our relations with South African may have to be severed absolutely.*

Canada also strongly supported the Eminent Persons Group established by the Commonwealth at the Nassau meeting whose report concluded that "at present there is no genuine intention on the part of the South African Government to dismantle apartheid." They also saw "no present prospect of a process of dialogue leading to the establishment of a non-racial and representative government."

Accordingly, at the Commonwealth mini-summit in London in August 1986, Mulroney joined other

Commonwealth countries in imposing sanctions which included a ban on imports of South African agricultural products, coal, iron, steel and uranium. At this meeting, Mulroney earned a deservedly warm reputation in the rest of the Commonwealth for tackling Thatcher head on and arguing passionately for sanctions.

In addition, Prime Minister Mulroney travelled to southern Africa in January 1987, becoming the first Western head of state to visit Zimbabwe following independence. At the time, he reiterated earlier promises that Canada would invoke total economic sanctions against South Africa and was considering cutting off diplomatic relations as well. At Victoria Falls, he went further than any previous Canadian Prime Minister in support of the ANC when he said,

*We understand the ANC's contention - 'You ask us to drop our arms to do what? ... Accept more repression? Accept more brutality from the apartheid state that is armed to the teeth?'*

The tenor of Canadian government statements continued in this vein right through the year. At the end of September, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark argued forcefully at the United Nations that,

*We are at a critical stage in the campaign to end apartheid. There must be no relenting in that campaign, no pause in the pressure - because a pause might suggest apartheid is acceptable, and it is not. The pressure against apartheid must continue and increase. ...*

Right before the Commonwealth conference, Mulroney added that "Canada cannot be (merely) benignly interested in the greatest moral debate that is going on. Canada has to be on the high ground and provide leadership to its friends and allies around the world."

Despite such strong reaffirmations of Canada's commitment to

maintaining pressure on South Africa, there has been a definite softening of Canada's official position this year, and nothing new added to the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa. The substance of policy is vague and ineffectual, and contradictory signals have been given about the nature and timing of new initiatives. Despite the fact that Cabinet approval had already been secured for sanctions early in 1987, none have been forthcoming, and both Mulroney and Clark suggest that there is little left to do. As to the timing of new measures, these are always being postponed - until after the South African elections in May 1987 (P.W. Botha was considered to be a moderate by Canadian officials and they argued that he needed support against South Africa's resurgent right) or until after the Commonwealth conference in October (Canada needed to act in concert with other countries to have any effect), and now until after the next meeting of the G-7 (the group of seven major industrialized countries) in 1988.

### Confusion and waffling

Towards the end of the summer, Clark even seemed to suggest that Canada could regenerate the process of dialogue in South Africa and that South Africa is open to change. Although there were no discernible results from his five-day trip to Southern Africa in August, Clark insists that it is a clear sign of Canadian influence that he could meet one morning with leaders of the ANC and the next with South African government officials in Pretoria. In fact, Clark was told rudely by the South African press and politely by Pik Botha to mind his own business. His invitation to the ANC to foreswear violence to give a fillip to Canada's stature before the Commonwealth conference was given the short shrift it deserved. Amazingly, Clark returned to Canada and claimed that Canada has more influence than others in the West. Yet, in flat contradiction, Mulroney reaf-

firmed to journalists in Vancouver right before the Commonwealth conference in October his earlier "sad conclusion" that "the way of dialogue is not making progress but is regressing."

One sees this confusion and waffling also in the cool and low-key welcome which the President of the ANC received on his first official visit to Canada at the end of August. By comparison with Mulroney's earlier contention that, while he could not condone violence, he could at least understand why the ANC had pursued armed struggle, both Mulroney and Clark went out of their way during Tambo's visit to state that the issues of violence and Communist affiliation were stumbling blocks for additional Western (and Canadian) support for the ANC.



Mzimbo

Such conflicting indications of policy and the evident backing down on more substantive measures require explanation. We need to know what is going on underneath the smoke and mirrors which represent Canada's policy on South Africa.

The most important part of the answer lies in the weakness of Mulroney's position. Although there are no signs that his personal commitment to strong leadership on the South African issue has been abandoned, there are indications that he is discouraged by the refusal of Western powers to address the South African crisis with any urgency. At the G-7 summit in Venice in June, Mulroney could not get the big players - the United States, West Germany, Japan and especially Britain - to include South Africa in the final communiqué. Moreover in Canada, scandals in the early part of the year, the Meech Lake constitutional accord and the Free Trade

Agreement with the United States have pushed South Africa to the side. To say the least, given the dramatically low standing in both his personal popularity and that of his party in domestic public opinion polls, Mulroney has had other things on his mind.

Moreover, although the Conservative caucus and party have remained fairly discreet about their differences, there are indications that dissent about Mulroney's South Africa policy is gathering strength. Some of these feelings are mere comic relief - as when Donald Blenkarn, Chairman of the Standing Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs, recommended in a letter to Clark, (made public to the South African press during Clark's visit in mid August 1987) that Canada should occupy Angola and Mozambique militarily to choke off South Africa without the region becoming Communist. However, in recent months, party unity has been put to the test in the face of vigorous lobbying by pro-South African forces which included the presentation to all M.P.s of a particularly nasty video attacking the ANC. Significantly, it was narrated by Peter Worthington, a former Conservative party candidate and right wing journalist known in Canada for his strong support of Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi and his South African-backed guerrilla group, UNITA. Other signs of underground disagreement with Mulroney's South Africa policy can be seen in the links between his Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Bill McKnight and a group of Canadian Indians who appeared in South Africa at the same time as Joe Clark to embarrass the Canadian government about its treatment of the aboriginal community in Canada. While the Conservative party seems happy about the international kudos which Mulroney has earned on the southern African issue, the consensus on the policy itself is definitely weaker than it has been.

### Internal struggle

In addition, an internal struggle has developed over Canada's current South Africa policy between Mulroney and the Department of External Affairs. Mulroney has been a leader without much support from his troops on this issue, alone but for the strategic support of three Ambassadors: Stephen Lewis at the United Nations, Roy



Stephen Lewis

McMurtry in London and Roger Bull in Harare. External Affairs is sufficiently hostile to their influence on Mulroney that Lewis was not even included on the official Canadian delegation to Vancouver and arrived only with Mulroney's permission, having drummed up a speaking engagement to pay his way. Significantly, Roger Bull was also told to stay home. Earlier in the year, the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Cy Taylor, tried to prevent the extension of Bull's stay in Zimbabwe, an effort that failed only when Mulroney personally intervened. Canadian officials who support Mulroney's policy from within External Affairs have been ridiculed (one was told he had a "lurid imagination") and marginalized, with senior External Affairs officials dismissing Mulroney's southern Africa policy as "adventurist" and dangerous to Canada's tradi-

tional alliances with Britain and the United States.

Moreover, it is clear that Joe Clark is considerably less enthusiastic about sanctions than Mulroney. This difference can be subtle, but its meaning is fairly clear. From the start, Joe Clark attempted to delay and minimize sanctions even while making strong statements in their favour at the United Nations and in the Commonwealth. The first proposals for sanctions sent by External Affairs to Mulroney were excessively mild and had to be rewritten before presentation to the press in Baie Comeau on 6 July 1985. The following month, Clark was able to contradict Mulroney successfully when Mulroney first committed Canada to economic sanctions, but then Clark was over-ruled as a second set of measures went into effect in September. During the Commonwealth mini-summit in London in August 1986, Clark attempted to dilute proposals in drafting sessions which, the other Foreign Ministers pointed out, had been agreed to already by Mulroney. On a visit to London in early 1987, Clark told reporters that he did not intend to "harass" the British about sanctions on South Africa at the same time as Mulroney, touring southern Africa, was pledging that he would do everything in his power to make Western leaders deal with this issue.

In private meetings with African diplomats, Clark's tone about sanctions has been most revealing. Before the Vancouver summit, Clark again told them that he saw no point rehashing differences with Britain and that Canada would not propose any new sanctions. Clark insists that there is a widespread "sanctions fatigue" in the international community, and told a Canadian reporter that he has been "beating the bushes for new sanctions," but with little effect. Clark's examples of Scandinavia and the Front Line States were particularly inappropriate. The Front Line States on the one hand, and Denmark, Norway

and Finland on the other had unilaterally imposed a total trade ban on South Africa, while Sweden followed a few weeks later. As for the Front Line States, they had no choice but to continue economic relations with South Africa. In fact, Clark's emphasis on "sanctions fatigue" reflects his own position, his rationale for this softened approach being that of "effectiveness," that "lonely little sanctions offered by countries ... like Canada, don't have much impact on their own." (By contrast, Stephen Lewis was telling briefings at the Commonwealth conference that Canada was resolutely committed to strong sanctions.) Finally, for the time being, Clark has not supported the initiative of a Commonwealth sub-committee on southern Africa chaired by Roy McMurtry which called for military assistance for the Front Line States.

The reasons for Clark's position can only be a matter of speculation; at present, there are issues of personal ambition to consider. It is not clear that Mulroney will survive as head of the Conservative party given the impending electoral debacle predicted by public opinion polls. In regards to southern African policy, it is quite conceivable that Clark is signalling to strong conservative sections in the party, the corporate sector and the Canadian public that he is closer to their views on this issue and suited to resume his former role as head of the Conservative party. Of course, if any hint of disloyalty surfaces publicly, Clark will be in trouble - hence the care with which these deviations are expressed.

### Avoiding hard sanctions

While the differences between Clark and Mulroney help to explain some of the confusing developments in Canada's policy on South Africa, they should not obscure the fact that neither seems prepared to take concrete additional measures in the near future. The sanctions which have been adopted constitute the easy first step of sanctions and it is telling that the government has sug-

gested that there is very little left to be done. In particular, there has been no interest in tampering with Canadian exports to South Africa, and these have remained at between \$150 and \$200 million throughout the 1980s. Moreover, the most important of Canada's exports to South Africa is sulphur (about one-third of the total from 1980 to 1986) produced by (among others) federal and provincial crown corporations. Also, while the Canadian government has stopped the sale of materials covered by the U.N. arms embargo and sensitive electronic equipment to the South African government and its agencies, it has not prohibited such sales to the private sector.

In terms of imports, Canada has banned the sale of those South African products which are either easily obtained elsewhere or where Canada is a competitive supplier. Canada has been able to find other sources of fresh fruit, wine and liquor with little difficulty, and produces uranium, coal, iron, steel and gold coins in competition with South Africa. So, contrary to Canadian government protestations about there being few additional measures left to take, Canada has banned only about one-quarter of its total trade with South Africa.

When one turns to the area of capital flows, an even softer tone is evident. Although almost all Canadian banks had stopped providing loans to the South African

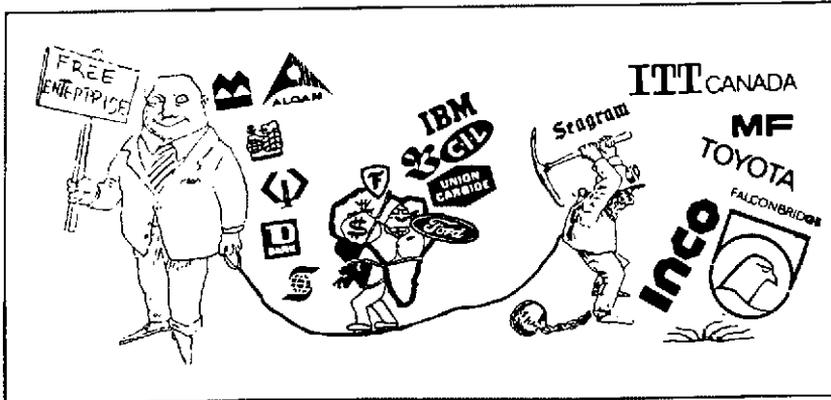
government and its agencies before the government's action, the ban is purely voluntary and there are no provisions for monitoring against any backsliding. The same applies to Canadian underwriters who have been involved in the past in supporting South African bond purchases. The Canadian government's request for a ban on new investments by Canadian firms or reinvestment of profits is also voluntary. Moreover, Canadian subsidiary companies in South Africa continue to be involved in supplying goods, equipment and services to the South African military, police and nuclear sectors. Canadian consulting companies operate in South Africa - particularly in exploring for alternative sources of energy and oil - in ways which run counter to the intent of sanctions. Most seriously, there is no provision yet for the extension of Canadian sanctions on South Africa to Namibia, thus leaving open wide possibilities for sanctions evasions. Finally it is a distinct anomaly to have Canada and South Africa still represented in each other's country at the highest level by ambassadors. It is high time that they should be withdrawn and Canadian relations with the ANC upgraded - following the more progressive example set by the Scandinavian countries.

Thus it is evident that, while Canada has attained a strong reputation in Africa and abroad for being a staunch defender of sanctions, the measures are modest and the voluntary nature of most sanc-

tions on financial flows leaves open alarming possibilities for a reversal of the policy. In defence of this rather peculiar concept of a "voluntary ban," Clark has argued that compliance indicates the support of key sections of Canadian society for government measures and not just obedience to government law. By the same token, "voluntary sanctions" enable the private sector to disregard the government's wishes without penalty. As just one minor indication, the Canadian tourist industry has gone out of its way to indicate its displeasure with the government request for a voluntary ban on tourist promotion to South Africa by regularly organizing well-publicized tours of South Africa "to let Canadians see for themselves." In 1986, Wardair bought from South African Airways three airbuses rendered redundant when an international campaign denied the airline certain landing rights. The value of this sale was about equivalent to the revenue lost in South Africa from Canada's import sanctions. In sum, Canada's choice of sanctions has been anything but comprehensive and its ability and willingness to monitor compliance with existing sanctions highly suspect.

**Resolute leadership?**

Therefore it is ironic that, during the Mulroney period, Canada's position on South Africa has been portrayed in the Commonwealth as one of resolute leadership. President Kaunda told Canadian reporters in 1986 that "only Brian can save the Commonwealth," and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe added in 1987 after the Vancouver summit that Canada is taking over from Britain as the effective leader of the Commonwealth. African leaders have adopted a shrewd policy of keeping Mulroney with them on this issue. On his visit to southern Africa, Mulroney was treated both to an extremely warm reception and strong views on Western policies towards South Africa. Lavish praise at the Vancouver summit (together



SSC - Trafficking in Apartheid

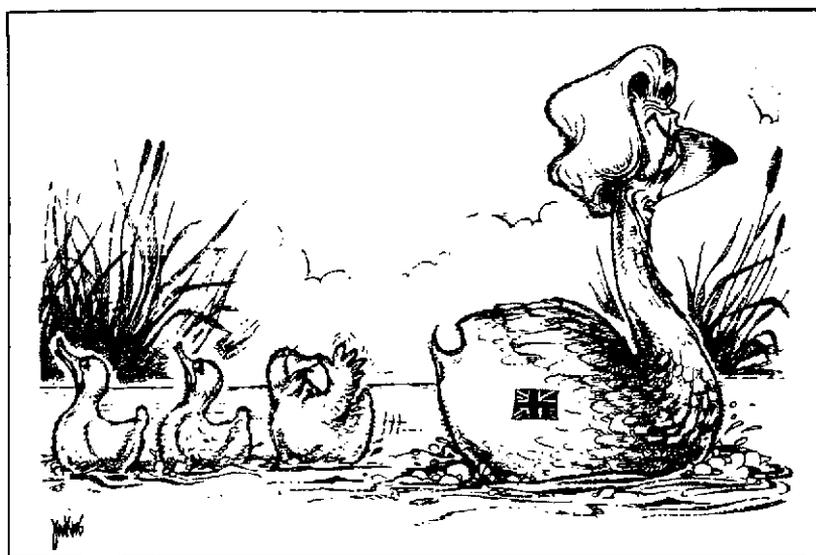
with British offensiveness) undoubtedly stiffened Mulroney's spine. The African leaders regard Mulroney as their friend and have continued to assume that he is solidly behind their cause which undoubtedly he is, on a personal level.

During the Commonwealth summit, the British also helped inadvertently to strengthen Canada's position. As they were annoyed by what they considered to be Canada's moral posturing on South Africa, the British started a deliberate

attempt was made to consolidate existing commitments through Commonwealth monitoring of the effectiveness of measures adopted so far. In addition, the Commonwealth is to look into the feasibility of new financial sanctions - investment, disinvestment and bank loans. Finally, Canada was appointed the first chair of an eight-nation committee of foreign ministers to focus attention on apartheid - an effort to counter South African propaganda and censorship.

line will force action on this front. The railway runs along the Mozambican border with South Africa and has been closed repeatedly by MNR attacks. Clark seemed to recognize such realities when he visited Mozambique in August, but since his return, he has steadfastly denied that Canada will provide any form of military assistance.

It is clear, then, that the Commonwealth summit in Vancouver produced only the smallest hint of progress. Generally, its results reflected the current attempt by the major Western powers to take the heat off South Africa while they work out a future which is acceptable to their material interests. The Canadian interest is also related to seeing a future South Africa in the Western camp. Clark has stated that Canada wants to deal with all currents of opinion in South Africa - "black and Botha, Buthe and Tambo, Mandela and Afrikaner." He added that the danger is that "continued intransigence on the part of the South African government will drive more and more people to radical solutions." Radical solutions are clearly not what the Canadian government, dominant corporate interests, the Conservative party and powerful sections of Canadian public opinion want to see in South Africa.



campaign of misinformation about Canada's sincerity on trade sanctions. They pointed out that Canadian trade with South Africa had increased dramatically from 1985 to 1986, neglecting to add that sanctions came into effect only in October 1986. In 1987, imports have dropped by fifty per cent in accord with Canadian commitments. In the end, Thatcher's aggressive and patronizing bullying united the rest of the Commonwealth behind sanctions and against the overt discourtesy Thatcher had shown to Canada as the host country.

While there were no new sanctions added to the Commonwealth list, the policy of sanctions against South Africa was reaffirmed and an

In terms of the complementary objective of assisting the Front Line States, Canada announced that it was forgiving any remaining debt obligations from its programme of official development assistance to Commonwealth African countries, of which about \$120 million affected Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Zambia. In addition, Canada and Britain jointly pledged to fund the rehabilitation of the Chicualacuala (or Limpopo) railway route linking Zimbabwe with the Mozambique port of Maputo. However, absolutely nothing was said about military assistance to the region, without which the Front Line States remain hostage to South African whims. One can only wonder whether the offer to refurbish the Chicualacuala

What this means for those of us committed to a more rapid and progressive resolution to the South African struggle is that we are facing a lull in government action both at home and abroad against the South African state. Once again the momentum has been lost until yet another wave of protest from within South Africa rekindles the effort outside. In the meantime, it is left to the Canadian anti-apartheid movement - the churches, trade unions and non-governmental organizations - to see that the issue of apartheid stays alive and on the agenda. The Canadian government has promised much and delivered very little. Now we must embarrass Mulroney and Clark into keeping their promises.

# Set-back in South Africa: Rethinking the Strategy of Struggle

Members of the editorial working group of *Southern Africa REPORT* met recently with Geoffrey Spaulding, our South African Special Correspondent, to discuss the current situation in South Africa. The context is, of course, one of a continuing "Emergency" and ever-escalating state repression. The following text which makes available a faithful synthesis of Spaulding's presentation, offers a sobering assessment of the impact of that repression on the resistance movement in South Africa. His observations may seem unduly pessimistic, but his was not, in fact, a despairing perspective; he fully expects the struggle to be raised to new levels with the passage of time. Nonetheless, Spaulding felt compelled to qualify strongly the optimistic, even euphoric outlook regarding the pace of revolutionary change in South Africa of a year or two ago. This must now give way, he suggested, to a more realistic assessment of how much remains to be done to fully loosen the grip of the apartheid state and the racial-capitalist system.

## The emergency

Spaulding saw the imposition of the second State of Emergency in June, 1986, as marking the end of the dramatic wave of resistance which had begun two years before. There was reason for optimism at that time. The rent boycotts in the Vaal Triangle in September, 1984 were the initial spark for the remarkable range of expression of political militancy by community associations, student and youth organizations and trade unions that characterized the subsequent period. Neither the occupation of townships by security forces, nor the first, selective State of Emergency imposed in June, 1985, could quell this militancy, despite thousands of arrests and detentions.

But the 1986 Emergency regulations which were imposed on a nation-wide basis (regulations renewed in June of this year) have been more comprehensive, more ruthlessly applied, and more successful in disorganizing township-based resistance. Spaulding acknowledged that draconian censorship regulations have served, simultaneously, to make the resistance less visible. But even so, he argued, the boycotts and meetings and funeral demonstrations which had continued under the first Emergency are now so much more difficult to organize that they have, in fact, tailed off.



Perhaps the most important casualty of the crack-down has been the United Democratic Front (UDF). With the broadening and deepening of the resistance from late 1984, the UDF had begun to move beyond its initial high profile, not always deeply-rooted, pyramid structure. It had been attempting to base itself more directly and effectively at the local level in new organizational forms such as the street committees

and people's courts. But this development had only just begun to take shape when the second Emergency struck. The latter not only undercut much of this kind of institutionalization of popular resistance, but also gave renewed life to informer networks and other state security devices which previously had been smashed (by "necklacing" and other methods). Now organizations like the UDF (or the National Education Crisis Committee whose own innovative parent-teacher-student committees have been brought to a standstill) can do little more than issue public statements from spokespersons who themselves are on the run. True, the UDF and the NECC (as well as the newly formed South Africa Youth Congress, SAYCO) have managed to hold "consultative conferences" in recent months but it is not clear how effectively these initiatives can link back to any organizational base closer to the ground. Cadres of such organizations seem reduced to leading a semi-legal, semi-underground existence, with vast numbers in detention.

## Militancy continues

"This is not to detract from the high level of popular militancy which continues," maintained Spaulding. Thus rent boycotts, which became so prominent beginning in 1984, ensue in many areas, defying state attempts to bring them to heel. And the ever more highly-tuned ideology of resistance that crystallized between 1984 and 1986 remains very much in place. But the loosely-structured form of organization first adopted by the "Charterists" of the UDF, which had been effective in undermining the state-imposed tri-cameral parliament and official councils in the townships and in



driving out the police from various of those townships, has proved incapable of carrying the challenge beyond that point. It has proved incapable, in particular, of defending the resistance movement from the state when the latter's level of repression was raised a couple of notches. Perhaps there was an underestimation of the power of the state to implement such repression, perhaps just not enough time to develop the popular alternative local organization referred to earlier. In any case, the big challenge now, in the lull before the build-up of a fresh wave of resistance, is to develop fresh tactics and to consolidate novel forms of organisation capable of confronting the new face of state power.

This is no small challenge. Spaulding reminded us of the density of the network of control which the state has recently been perfecting. At the head of this "National

Security Management System" is the State Security Council, a body outside of and now more powerful than the Cabinet, which draws together representatives from the government, the military and the business community. The attempt to stitch together this same kind of alliance is carried right down to the base of the system where Joint Management Committees (JMCs) have been created to streamline control in the townships. In the JMCs, security force representatives, government functionaries and business-people work hand in glove, as was apparent, for example, during a nation-wide strike earlier this year at the OK Bazaars chain store. JMCs apparently were involved in planning joint strategy to break off the strike and support boycotts!

There is also a continuation of the state's attempts to establish some minimal legitimacy for its in-

stitutions of local government. Some effort is being made to pump state and private resources into black communities to remove some of the underlying causes of the earlier unrest. "Inward industrialization" (featuring the stimulation of labour-intensive industries in or near the townships) and "township upgrading" (focussing particularly on housing) have become the catchwords of some JMC programmes. Targeted, in particular, for such treatment have been certain high-profile, politically problematic centres such as Alexandra township. Two years ago, Alexandra was a "no-go" area, run by the Alexandra Committee. It has now, according to Spaulding, been relatively pacified, mainly by force but also by the injection of some new funds via the township's Community Council. Yet this strategy is seen more as a kind of sweetening of the bitter pill of pacification, rather than as any serious effort at legitimisation. The revived Councils are still primarily the spawning grounds of informer networks and vigilante groups (these latter now increasingly formalized into para-police organisations). Nonetheless, the resistance movement, in initiating tactics ever more relevant to the new phase of the struggle, will have to address itself to the increased efficacy of some of the state's own tactics - by whatever name they are labelled.

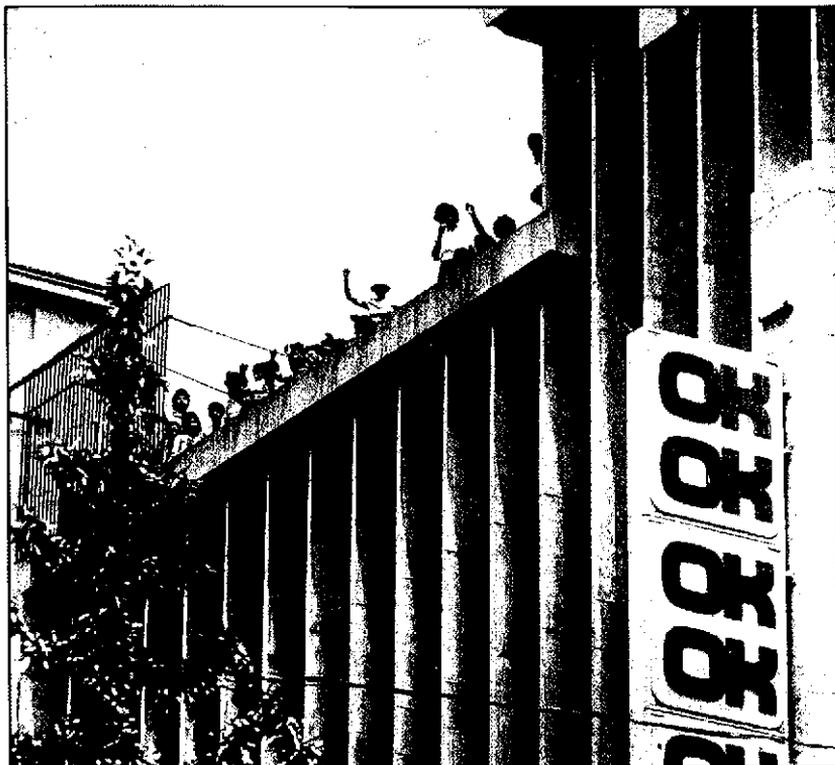
#### The union front

The trade unions, according to Spaulding, have come to play an ever more prominent *political* role in the context of this forced deterioration of the general level of political organisation. In fact, unions had already begun to take on a much higher political profile than previously with the broad escalation of the struggle from 1984. They were more prominent in the massive November stayaways of that year, for example, and in subsequent stayaways as well (May Day 1985, June 16, 1985 etc.) The politicization of the unions has more recently been marked by the adoption of the Free-

dom Charter by various unions – the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) itself. (NUMSA has called, in addition, for the development of a “Workers’ Charter”!) But this widened scope of militancy, linked to the fact that the solid shop-floor base has given the unions, in some ways, a greater staying-power than other organizations of resistance, has also made them even more of a target for state repression than previously.

A significant aspect of this escalation of political militancy on the part of the unions has been a higher level of strike activity *per se*. And here, too, the state has been acting even more aggressively than in the recent past to tilt the balance against the workers. In the aforementioned OK Bazaars strike, for example, the state, fearful that the strike might spread to other chain stores, apparently urged OK to take a particularly hard-line. As it happens, in this instance, the long drawn-out strike was eventually won by the union – even despite the fact that other sections of capital moved to back up OK. The heavy hand of the state was even more evident in the SATS (railway) strike. In this case, the arbitrary sacking of a worker brought 20,000 off the job behind a new and still somewhat shaky union. In response many strikers were shot, union offices were raided in a number of centres, and most dramatically, COSATU House, the union centre’s headquarters in Johannesburg, was bombed and vandalized by security forces. True, SATS had eventually to settle more or less on the workers’ terms and, in effect, accept the existence of the union. But the union movement clearly feels itself to be a little bit over-exposed politically and (correctly, in Spaulding’s judgment) is now acting somewhat more defensively.

The aggressive stance on the part of the state is matched by an intensi-



OK Bazaars strike

fied onslaught by capital itself, both in the workplace and in contract negotiations. NUMSA, one of the most militant unions, has faced an especially hard-line from its management opposite numbers. In one crucial instance, negotiations were arbitrarily short-circuited (by the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa), and in other instances “restructuring” is being used as an excuse for firings. To take another widely reported case, the National Union of Mineworkers, in its August strike, found that managements which used to seem ready to bargain in “good faith” were now refusing to budge. Thus, Anglo-American pursued a course of brinkmanship in its negotiations with NUM, apparently looking to force a strike this year before the union became stronger. NUM surprised the mine-owners by being strong enough to hold out for three weeks, thus eeking some elements of victory out of a situation in which, in fact, not too many con-

crete gains were made. Management tactics clearly reflected its new aggressive approach: at crunch time during the strike Anglo coolly fired 45,000 workers and even derecognized the union at one of its major mines.

#### What next?

In short, summarized Spaulding, the present moment is marked by an assault upon the broad resistance movement by both the state and by capital. This is a rather different situation than that of 1984-85 when it looked like some kind of tacit alliance of convenience might be beginning to take shape between the resistance movement and a significant grouping within the white community (notably certain sections of big business which were uneasy at the possible costs of apartheid to their long-term interests in preservation of a stable capitalist system). With the relative success of the Emergency in suppressing dissent in the short-run, the lat-

ter group has backed away from any strong criticism of the National Party (the craven retreat of Barclay's Bank being the most notable case in point). The more enlightened capitalists are unlikely to fall back all the way to their 1983-style support for such obvious shams as the Tri-Cameral Parliament and indeed none has come out in support of the P.W. Botha's latest ploy for dealing with Africans, the National Statutory Council. Business seems to realize that the government cannot really hope to legitimate the existing system, yet it obviously feels the political crisis to have become much less urgent and, in any case, it is not about to move into the camp of liberation.

This is not to say that white liberalism is totally moribund as a political force. Indeed, Spaulding felt that the significance of last July's meeting in Dakar between the ANC, on the one hand, and a contingent of Afrikaners led by Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert on the other may have been underestimated. Van Zyl Slab-

bert, since his resignation from parliament and from the Progressive Federal Party leadership, has been working through his Institute for Democratic Alternatives (IDASA), and more recently, the conference of the "Five Freedoms Forum", to establish ideological common-ground - democracy and free enterprise? - between nationalists within the broad resistance movement and liberals. While election results do suggest that the white electorate as a whole is moving right rather than left, it remains important for the resistance movement to encourage splits within the white community and to once again peel some elements of it (liberals, certain business interests, etc) away from the state's project. There is a danger, however, that the terms of any such meeting of minds will not be very favourable ones for socialists and for workers (especially so in a context where every effort is being made by both state and management to weaken the organized working class and where consequently, forums for

socialist ideas and strategies are diminishing!) Hence Spaulding's question: are key actors within the Charterist camp, rocked by repression, moving to the right - at the very moment when the unions themselves are becoming more active within that camp?

Such considerations carry us towards speculation about the precise nature of the ANC's own long-term project. For Spaulding concluded his remarks by reaffirming the centrality of the ANC to the current moment of struggle in South Africa, citing once again the strong pull towards unification around ANC positions (the Freedom Charter in particular) which has swept up even the most important trade unions this year. Viewed from one angle, the ANC's opening to the left-liberal wing of Afrikanerdom represented by the Dakar meeting is a shrewd political move, even if it does raise questions as to how links with the militant unions, and attachment to a working class project more generally, can be squared with it.

The question as to the real subtext of interaction between the ANC and Van Zyl Slabbert seems less important, in the immediate future, than the question of how the ANC plans to deal with the current situation of stalemate produced by the Emergency. The Congress' military strategy has not, recently, seemed as effective as one might hope, its sabotage actions not as dramatic as in the past and its promise to "arm the resistance" in the townships still far from being fulfilled. Spaulding's own hunch was that a major rethinking is underway in the ANC, both as to how better to ground the resistance movement politically at the grass-roots under the present circumstances and as how more effectively to use such a network to challenge and, by force of arms, neutralize state violence. Euphoria qualified, the ANC, too seems to be buckling down for a longer, more difficult haul to freedom than any of us would wish to be necessary.



Eric Miller/WIP

# Forging Alliances: Students & Universities Against the State

BY BILL MARTIN

Bill Martin is a research associate of the Fernand Braudel Centre, SUNY-Binghamton.

During the last week of October roughly 20,000 South African staff and students mounted coordinated protests at the universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Western Cape, and Natal. While helicopters clattered overhead and police used teargas at some campuses, demonstrators rallied carrying banners "Forward to People's Education," "You Have Struck Wits, You Have Struck a Rock," "We Won't Dance to De Klerk's Tune," and "Professors, Not Generals."

The slogans pointed towards a clear target: the state's attempt to force university authorities to police their own students and staff, and punish them if they commit acts prohibited by the government. Regulations issued by Minister of National Education F. W. de Klerk compel University Councils as of October 19th to:

- prevent any gatherings "which are unlawful by virtue of any law, the boycotting of classes or examinations or any other disruptive conflict";
- bar the use of any supplies, equipment, buildings, etc., for the promotion or support of "the aims or public image of any unlawful organization," "any campaign of civil disobedience", "boycott action against any particular firms... product... educational institutions";
- prevent "wrongful or unlawful interference with, intimidation of, or discrimination against students or staff members";
- ensure that "disciplinary action is taken against any student or staff

member" who is found by the university council "on proof furnished by the Minister of Education and Culture, at any place to have committed any act of which the council is notified by the minister," in contravention of the regulations.

This incomplete list only begins to document the sweeping scope of the regulations, and the complicated reporting and disciplinary procedures that follow any breach of the regulations. To implement the new rules would mean the elimination of almost all political activities on campuses, with the university policing student and staff activities on and off campuses. Failure to comply will allow the government to cut all or part of the state subsidies which underwrite about 80% of university budgets.

Government threats to cut subsidies are not new, and indeed far more repressive measures - such as direct police and military rule -

have been used on black university campuses over the course of a state of emergency which appears now to be permanent. What is new is both the broad-scale attack on the "open" or "liberal" universities and the strikingly united resistance that has arisen in response.

The open universities have long acted as venues for acts of protest and mobilization. Successive states of emergency have made this role even more visible, as evidenced by the recent national meetings on campuses of the UDF, COSATU, and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). Even more pertinent has been the broad debate and struggle around the role of students, staff and universities in the movement for "People's Education for People's Power."

As part of the extra-parliamentary opposition, the educational movement has found fertile ground at the liberal universities. Not only have student organizations such



Impact Visuals

as the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the South African Students Congress (SANSCO) grown in strength, but their activities have forced the universities to confront communities and struggles beyond traditional ivory towers. Over the course of the last few years university officials for the first time have seriously begun to address the issues of the role of universities en route to a post-apartheid South Africa. Signs of this change include the presence of UDF and NECC leaders as invited speakers at prominent annual lectures, and the establishment on several campuses of education research units in alliance with the NECC. For the state such actions portend a serious breach in the unity of apartheid.

Student activists stress in particular the threat posed to the state by growing nonracial student alliances such as joint campaigns by NUSAS and SANSCO - in 1986 there were 10,000 black students in addition to 36,000 white students at English-speaking universities. Not only have many university staff members, students and their organizations begun to play a valued role in the educational struggle, but they have done so by linking directly to campaigns waged by trade unions and other popular organizations.

As part of the wider and ongoing crackdown on the media, trade unions, UDF organizations and activists in every nook and cranny of the educational movement, the attack on campuses as a locus of opposition surprised few. The message from the state was clear: no longer would liberal campuses provide an oasis in a desert of repression.

The state has sought to mask its intent by proclaiming that new measures are intended only to prevent recurrences of isolated incidents when students have disrupted presentations by those perceived to be government supporters. Minister de Klerk thus announced he was only seeking to ensure the "uninterrupted academic functioning" of universi-

ties. In taking this tack, the state sought to build upon the highly manipulative campaign which has been waged in both the conservative and liberal media around the ostensible goal of protecting academic freedom.

Thus the sharpening in 1986 and 1987 of the issue of an academic boycott, for example, resulted in many academics rallying to the liberal defense of free speech and the autonomy of the university from all outside political forces. This pitted university administrators, and many academics (including self-professed Marxists), against student activists. While not necessarily calling for the disruption of speeches, those activists quite correctly pointed out both that free speech could not really be said to exist under the conditions of apartheid, and that elitist universities would have to be more responsive to calls for the democratic transformation of all educational institutions.

Yet far from the the state's new measures succeeding in dividing the university community further over the issue of free speech, they have rather served to unify both radicals and liberals - at least for the moment. In contrast to divided University Senates and Councils of the past, no one could deny the common cause against state intervention. As Acting Vice Chancellor John Reid of the University of Cape Town told 4,000 demonstrators, following the state's plans would turn him into an arm of the state, "a kind of academic Casspir [armored military vehicle]".

What actions will follow upon such forceful speeches remains to be seen. Individual staff and faculty members have committed themselves to resigning before acting as agents of state repression. For the moment a legal challenge will surely be among the first measures campus administrators will undertake. Whether this will be followed by civil disobedience by university authorities (as would be necessary if the state responds to a legal set-

back by more precise formulations) is yet an open question. This is however an historic moment for the universities, offering them a clearer role alongside the democratic national movement.

The counterpoint to official university positions and statements is the unequivocal response of opposition organizations in defence of the universities. As the new regulations were about to go into force the NECC, SANSCO, and NUSAS launched a joint appeal for united national resistance. Backing this call were lengthy messages of solidarity by almost every single opposition organization.

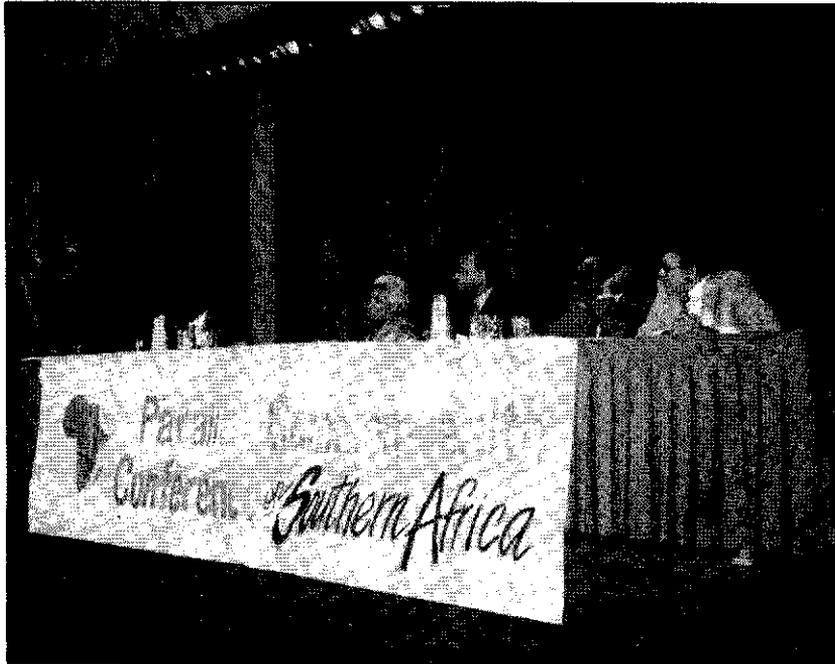
Of all these statements the NECC's posed the issues most sharply, arguing that present state policies reveal "a state caught in chronic political disorder." Under these conditions the state, argued the NECC, is increasingly dependent upon the only option that remains to ensure its hold on power, the deployment of violence. The state's present demand that universities act as apartheid police is merely one more instance of the general escalation of repression of opposition groups.

Strongly supportive of liberal universities' growing empathy with the struggle for educational transformation, and noting the the government "by virtue of its past history" has no right to talk of any "normal and lawful activities" in education," the NECC concluded by stating:

*As education becomes more and more an area of contest and change in South Africa, the universities will simultaneously occupy the centre of that arena. There lies the challenge of the day to the universities - that is, either to take cognizance of this reality and to respond to it creatively, or simply ossify in irrelevant traditions.*

So far the universities' response to the state's demands does seem to indicate that a common front against the state is being forged.

# Consolidating Solidarity: The Parallel Commonwealth Conference



Art Work

"Comprehensive, mandatory sanctions remain the only means by which the international community can help bring about the dismantling of apartheid." So states the communiqué issued by the Parallel Commonwealth Conference on Southern Africa held in Vancouver October 9-11. The communiqué, directed to the Canadian and other Heads of Commonwealth States, reflected the concern of Conference delegates that the Canadian government appears to be faltering in its stand on sanctions and responded to rationalizations that support for the Front Line States could be considered an alternative to the imposition of sanctions. "Increased assistance to the Front Line States is urgently needed," the communiqué states clearly. "But this can in no sense be seen as a substitute for sanctions. The two go hand in hand."

The Conference, sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and the B.C. Anti-Apartheid Network, brought together a broad cross-section of the Canadian public to pressure the Canadian government to take a stronger anti-apartheid position both at the Commonwealth Conference and in ongoing Canadian foreign policy. As a follow-up to the Montreal "Taking Sides" Conference held in February, the Conference also examined targets and tactics for ongoing anti-apartheid work throughout Canada and for expanding the southern Africa solidarity network. It was attended by 250 people from across Canada representing over 130 organizations from churches, unions, NGO's, solidarity groups, native people, women, youth and student and community groups. A number of international guests from southern African coun-

tries, Europe and the United States were also present.

A high-gloss public meeting on Sunday night attracted around 1000 people as well as national and international media coverage. It was without a doubt the most prestigious meeting ever hosted by the solidarity network in Canada. Keynote addresses were delivered by President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; Pascoal Mocumbi, the Mozambican Foreign Minister; Johnstone Makatini, International Affairs Director of the ANC; Andimba Toiva ya Toiva, Secretary-General of SWAPO; and Sydney Mafumadi of COSATU. The evening was opened by the eloquent Sir Shridath Ramphal, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and was moderated by Rosemary Brown. Saturday night delegates heard from a variety of prominent Canadian speakers, among them Juanita Westmoreland of the Council of Immigrant Communities of Quebec; Richard Mercier, the Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress; and George Erasmus, Head Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

## The communiqué

In addition to strong statements regarding comprehensive sanctions and support for the Front Line States, the Conference communiqué reiterated the demand of the Montreal conference to grant diplomatic recognition to the ANC and SWAPO as "the legitimate representatives of the South African and Namibian people," increasing material assistance to these two movements and severing diplomatic relations with the apartheid regime. The Conference also "recognised the right of the peoples of South and southern Africa to defend themselves against the violence directed



Art Work

against them," but it was evident that the issue of support for violent resistance presents serious concerns for some within the anti-apartheid network. Delegates from the churches, in particular, reported that their constituencies either opposed direct support for the ANC or were at best very reluctant to countenance armed resistance. Discussions during the weekend emphasized that the solidarity movement must take the lead in educating Canadians around this question.

Other themes emphasized in the communiqué included a refocusing of attention on the struggle for Namibian independence; a call to extend to Angola, the other "forgotten issue" of southern Africa, the international support and assistance that has in the past several months been accorded Mozambique; and a reaffirmation of solidarity with the struggles of indigenous peoples, in particular with Canada's aboriginal people.

#### Targets and tactics

The three days of the Conference provided the opportunity for the participants to discuss strategy and to focus on implementation and con-

crete action. Workshops on South and southern Africa on the first day concentrated on appropriate means for developing broad support for the liberation struggles in the region and for pressuring the Canadian government to give support to these struggles. Sectorial workshops on the following day gave these issues more specific and contextualized consideration.

The key areas of education and information, media strategy, lobbying, monitoring and material support were identified as areas for common strategy. It was suggested that educationals and information be more carefully tailored to particular constituencies, with greater use of popular and participatory education. The production of education materials and information resources should be coordinated and exchanged to prevent duplication of work. More systematic outreach into communities that have not previously been involved in southern African solidarity could be done as well. In considering a media strategy, a more consistent and coordinated approach was seen to be needed to counter the seepage of

disinformation in Canadian media. This could take the form of identifying and working with sympathetic people in the media and of adopting both a pro- and re-active response to the misrepresentations of the southern Africa situation encountered in the media. Monitoring was most fully discussed in relation to the sanctions campaign, with delegates specifying government and corporate activity to be monitored and suggesting ways in which this could be done. The linking of sectorial organizations in Canada with their counterparts in South and southern Africa and other ways of forging personal connections, such as tours and exchanges, were regarded as the most promising for generating political and material support for the liberation struggle.

Several specific campaigns and projects were proposed. One was a national campaign focussing on South African children as political detainees. (A representative of the Detainees Support Committee attended the conference.) A second proposal, coming out of the women's sectorial workshop, was for a national workshop for women in the southern African solidarity network to be held within the next year. In addition, a national steering committee is to be created to build up a national sanctions campaign. This committee will coordinate different local actions within the broader goal of total, mandatory sanctions and establish priorities for action in consultation with unions and the liberation movements.

#### Strengths and weaknesses

Most delegates found the Conference to be useful and energizing. It was not without its tensions or problems, however. There were questions around methods of work which centred on region, race and gender. Conference organizers did appear to heed criticisms about the invisibility of women in the Montreal conference, with the result that women were relatively well represented as resource people.

*continued on page 22*

# Canadian Sulphur Trade to S. A.: The Problem

BY JEFFREY GOFFIN.

*Jeffrey Goffin is an instructor in the Department of Drama at the University of Calgary and an active member of Calgary's Committee Against Racism (CAR). This article is adapted from Jobs, Famine and Apartheid: Banning Canadian Sulphur Exports to South Africa, co-authored by Don Ray, Richard Stuart and Jeffrey Goffin.*

The recent Commonwealth Parallel Conference on Southern Africa, held in Vancouver on October 10-11 of this year, reaffirmed once again the centrality of economic sanctions against South Africa in the international campaign to end apartheid. The question of sanctions, however, raises complex issues concerning effects on the economies of South Africa and its neighbours, and on the countries which impose them. The following article by Jeffrey Goffin examines some of the issues with relation to the campaign currently underway in western Canada to have Canada's sulphur exports to South Africa banned. In a subsequent article Goffin will report on the origins and development of the campaign itself, and on the problems and challenges it has presented for anti-apartheid activists in western Canada.

Canada profits from apartheid. To be more specific, the Canadian oil and gas industry profits from apartheid. In 1986, \$59 million worth of Canadian sulphur was exported to South Africa by companies such as Petro-Canada, Shell, Mobil and Amoco. This commodity makes up the biggest single export from Canada to South Africa.

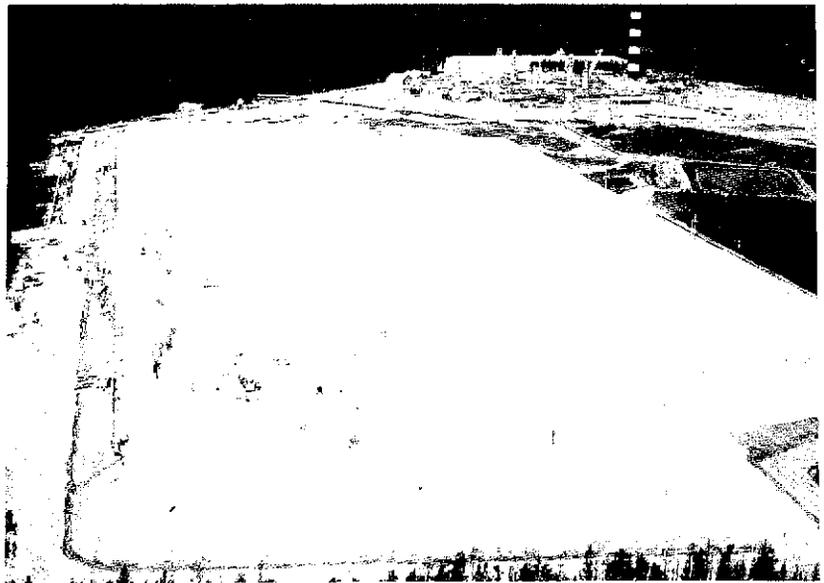
Many voices are now calling for economic sanctions against South Africa in order to pressure the current government into ending the system of apartheid. These include not

only major black leaders in southern Africa such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, President Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, but also the members of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group on Southern Africa. Even Prime Minister Mulroney has voiced qualified support for sanctions. To the average Canadian who accepts sanctions as a valid method of expressing concern about the continued turmoil in South Africa, it appears that sanctions, already extended to such things as oil and gas, should be extended to cover the sulphur trade. This would reduce our exports considerably and would send a strong message to Pretoria. What could be simpler?

Unfortunately, the various players involved in the sulphur trade do

not share this point of view. According to the Canadian producers, any reduction in markets would result in layoffs in an already troubled industry. Also, while sulphur is used in the production of munitions and in many industrial processes in the form of sulphuric acid, most of the sulphur shipped to South Africa is used to make fertilizer. Everyone knows that food production is Africa's number one problem. Can Canadians really be so heartless that they would knowingly aggravate the situation over politics? Lastly, we must not forget that the South Africans are good customers; always honouring contracts and always paying promptly.

Beginning with the domestic situation, these arguments do not stand up to analysis. Canada provides South Africa with approximately 50 percent of its sulphur requirements. In 1986, Canada supplied South Africa with 320,000 tonnes of sulphur to the value of \$59 million (Canadian). Yet, while the



Canada Development Corporation Canterra Energy subsidiary sulphur operations

SSC - Trafficking in Apartheid

Canadian sulphur industry is important to South Africa, it is a relatively small part of our oil and gas industry. According to Bob Phillips, a sulphur expert and president of Can-sulex Limited, at a Canadian sulphur conference in Calgary in October 1986, sulphur as a percentage of total oil and gas operator revenues was 3.4 percent in 1985. Canada exported 7.5 million tonnes of sulphur to world markets in 1985 of which approximately 418,000 tonnes went to South Africa which represents 5.6 percent of the total export market. The export market absorbed approximately 80 percent of total Canadian sales in 1985.

As a result, a ban on sulphur sales to South Africa equals 0.152 percent of total oil company revenues. The economic effect on Canada of a ban on sulphur exports will be negligible. Companies such as Canterra Energy Ltd. which derives 36 percent of its net revenue from the sale of sulphur will be affected to a greater extent, but the effect should not exceed 1.75 percent of gross revenues using single proportion.

The overall effect on the western Canadian economy will be more than offset if new markets for sulphur and/or fertilizer in the Front Line States are pursued. This would also help avoid the negative effect that a ban might have on food production.

At present most of the fertilizer produced in South Africa using Canadian sulphur is exported to the Front Line States, which helps perpetuate the economic dominance of South Africa within the region. While cutting off the supply of Canadian sulphur would hurt the South African economy, it would also stop the flow of fertilizer to countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

Yet, several alternatives exist which could be implemented in conjunction with sanctions to minimize their effect in the Front Line States:

- **OPTION 1:** Finding alternative markets to South Africa for sulphur in the Front Line States of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC): While the fertilizer industry in these countries is very limited at present, with appropriate assistance from international agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency new markets can be developed to replace those lost in South Africa. Both Angola and Zimbabwe have developed and undeveloped deposits of phosphate which could be used to make phosphoric acid using Canadian sulphur.



SSC - Trafficking in Apartheid

- **OPTION 2:** Direct sales of Canadian fertilizer to the Front Line States: The Front Line States are currently dependent on South Africa for fertilizer, particularly phosphate fertilizer. The fertilizer industry in Canada is in recession due to declining markets. Phosphate fertilizer plants are suffering from underutilization. If the Canadian fertilizer industry increased its exports to these countries, it could easily offer new life to itself, which in turn could lead to increased demand for sulphur here in Canada.

- **OPTION 3:** Redirection of Canadian sulphur to other suppliers of phosphate fertilizers which currently have abundant sources of cheap phosphate such as Morocco or Togo: Phosphate fertilizers could then be exported directly to the Front Line

States. This option should result in Canada maintaining its share of the international sulphur market.

Exploration of the feasibility of these proposals by all concerned parties may result in a solution in which revenues to oil and gas operators and governments will not be lost. Besides weakening apartheid, these proposals could easily lead to job creation for Canadians, as well as helping to feed Africa's hungry.

Despite statements to the contrary, South Africa is sensitive to sanctions. The huge defence budget needed to maintain apartheid is very expensive. Any additions to the Government's budget weaken its ability to defend apartheid, the costs of which in administration, defence and built-in efficiencies consume up to 50 percent of this budget. At the same time, 60 percent of South Africa's gross national product is linked to the outside world either as markets for its mineral and agricultural exports or as a source of capital and technology.

Military and petroleum sanctions have led to the development of costly alternatives. For example, an indigenous lack of hydrocarbons coupled with sanctions on oil imports has meant the development of a very expensive oil-from-coal process. A ban on the sale of sulphur to South Africa will force that country to try to obtain sulphur from other sources or to develop costlier alternatives, e.g., igneous volcanics and pyrite both have relatively high production costs. At present South Africa must import up to 50 percent of its sulphur needs - almost all from Canada.

In 1977 John Vorster, then Prime Minister, said that "every sale of a South Africa product is another brick in the wall of our continued existence." Rather than helping to support apartheid, the Canadian oil and gas industry should end its ties with South Africa and take up the leadership role that awaits it in the development of southern Africa.

# The State of Apartheid: Assessing Sanctions at Year One

BY MIKE FLESHMAN AND  
JIM CASON

A year after Congress overrode his veto and imposed limited sanctions on South Africa, U.S. President Ronald Reagan remains adamantly opposed to the use of economic pressure against his "old friends" in Pretoria. In a report to Congress in early October, Reagan declared, "I continue to believe that punitive sanctions are not the best way to bring freedom to South Africa."

The president said that while sanctions had had minimal impact on the South African economy they had nevertheless somehow contributed significantly to black unemployment and in some cases had concentrated "marginally" more economic power in white hands - although the report concedes that black South Africans are disenfranchised economically as well as politically under apartheid. Reagan also noted that the sanctions had accelerated corporate disinvestment, which he charged hurt blacks by eliminating many of the educational and social welfare programs U.S. corporations had been funding.

"In addition," the report continues, "our sanctions measures have made it more difficult for the United States to persuade the South African government to act responsibly on human rights issues, to move toward negotiations, and to restrain its behaviour in the region."

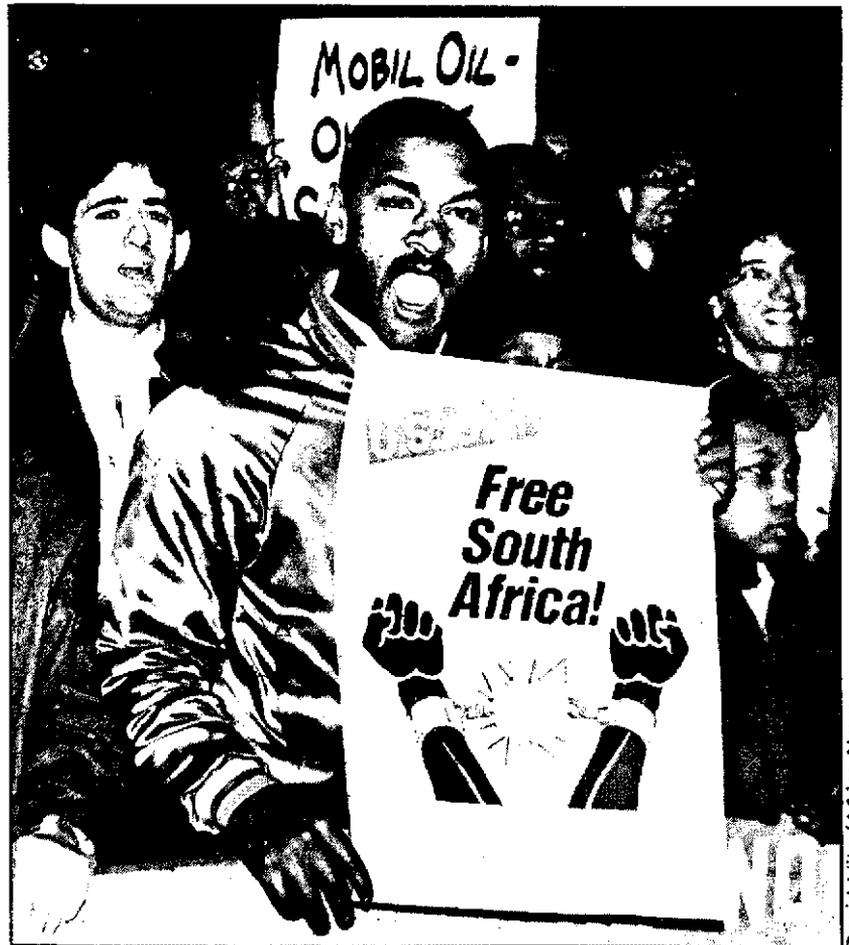
"I believe that the imposition of additional measures ... would exacerbate these negative developments without adding any additional positive benefits in support of our objectives," concludes Reagan.

The report to Congress - required by the Comprehensive Anti-

Apartheid Act of 1986 - attempts no resolution of the glaring contradiction between the administration's opposition to sanctions against South Africa and its support for sanctions against Nicaragua, where Washington also seeks changes in the government's human rights policies, negotiations with opposition groups and regional "restraint." Nor can it reconcile administration charges that sanctions have only hardened government atti-

tudes and driven whites further into the laager with its own account of the recent splits within Afrikanerdom and between capital and the state.

But if the arguments against sanctions are tired and familiar, the harsh tone of the report is not. After one year of sanctions, Reagan acknowledges, "I regret that I am unable to report significant progress leading to the end of apartheid and



A U.S. National Divestment Day protest last year

David Vita/Africa News

the establishment of a nonracial democracy in South Africa."

"No clear and credible plan has been devised for negotiating a future political system involving all people equally in South Africa, and many of the legitimate representatives of the majority in that country are still banned, in hiding, or in detention.

"The Government of South Africa has not ended military and paramilitary activities aimed at neighboring states. Instead, such activities have been stepped up ... " including "the increase in unexplained deaths and disappearances of anti-apartheid activists throughout the region."

Strong stuff, coming from an administration which has been one of

The problem with the administration's formulation on sanctions is that it's illegal. Under Section 501 of the 1986 law. "It shall be the policy of the United States to impose additional measures against the Government of South Africa if substantial progress has not been made within twelve months of the date of enactment of this Act in ending the system of apartheid and establishing a nonracial democracy."

Under the law, the absence of such "substantial progress" requires the President to submit additional sanctions against Pretoria to Congress. The administration's refusal to recommend new sanctions prompted House Africa subcommittee chairman Howard Wolpe to ac-

plete corporate disinvestment and cut off all trade (except "strategic metals").

Other bills would deny tax credits to U.S. companies in South Africa, would prevent U.S. oil companies from operating inside South Africa, and would ban the importation of South African diamonds. A fourth bill, introduced by Texas Democrat Mickie Leland, would prohibit investments in the United States by "certain South African mining interests." (Interestingly enough, among those who turned out to testify in favour of this last piece of legislation was corporate raider T. Boone Pickens, who many observers believe convinced fellow Texan Leland to introduce this legislation as part of a failed effort to take over the Anglo American controlled Newmont Mining Corporation.)

But while there seems to be no shortage of legislation, there is little Congressional enthusiasm for stronger sanctions measures - even among liberal Democrats. Senate Africa Subcommittee Chair Paul Simon, a leading liberal contender for the Democratic presidential candidacy, was the only Democrat to attend a Senate hearing on the president's sanctions report - and he left in the middle of the proceedings.

In the House, meanwhile, action on any of the proposed additional sanctions measures has been postponed until at least Spring 1988, and congressional staffers are not optimistic about passage of new sanctions even then. Significantly, since its introduction last spring, the Dellums bill has garnered only two cosponsors in the 100-member Senate, and just 65 in the House.

At the heart of Congressional indifference toward sanctions is the demobilization of American public opinion around South Africa. It's now been eighteen months since South African censors effectively removed the compelling images of racial violence from the nightly news, and the public has moved on



U.S. Senator Paul Simon

the staunchest defenders of the "reformist" Botha government. But policy changes have not accompanied the changes in rhetoric. Instead of additional sanctions - "that would be harmful to United States strategic or economic interests" - all the administration can offer is "a period of active and creative diplomacy" somehow leading to negotiations between the government and its black opponents.

accuse Reagan of "apologizing" for apartheid and has set the stage for a confrontation with Congressional liberals. Both the House and the Senate have begun to hold hearings on the Presidential report, and a range of additional measures will be proposed.

A comprehensive sanctions bill, introduced by Representative Ron Dellums, is already before Congress. This legislation would mandate com-

Africa Report

to other more visible issues. Indeed, U.S. television networks have been so cowed by South African press restrictions, that CBS refused for almost six months to air a hour-long documentary on children in detention filmed secretly by Walter Cronkite for fear of official retaliation.

Compounding this problem is the public perception that U.S. policy shifted against apartheid with the passage of sanctions. The clear moral imperative that inspired such critical efforts as the Free South Africa Movement during 1984-85 has ironically been diluted by the very success of last year's sanctions campaign.

Over the past year U.S. anti-apartheid activists have struggled to find new issues and new campaigns to revive public outrage about apartheid. A number of campaigns to focus attention on detentions have been initiated, including some involving prominent members of Congress and TV personality Bill Cosby. TransAfrica is attempting to inject southern Africa into the presidential race through its "Faces Behind Apartheid" television ads targeting Kansas Republican Bob Dole for his voting record on sanctions. But those efforts have met with only limited success.

Attempts to revitalize the sanctions and divestment movements in the U.S. have been further hampered by the conflicting signals about sanctions coming from the democratic movement inside South Africa. Over the last year there has been an increasingly visible debate within, particularly the trade union movement, over the impact of sanctions and divestment on black workers and the state. As international sanctions, combined with the deterioration of the South African economy, have begun to cost jobs in such industries as automobile assembly, some trade unionists have begun to question the desirability of sanctions and divestment.

A resolution on sanctions passed by COSATU this year called for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the regime, but went on to say that "selective sanctions ... as currently applied will not be effective against capital or the state; that they cause serious regional unemployment, and that they often serve the interests of the imperialist states



SSC - Trafficking in Apartheid

rather than the South African working class." The resolution, echoing arguments that sanctions are ineffective and hurt blacks most, is often cited by the administration and big business as proof that black workers oppose sanctions.

COSATU's increasingly ambivalent attitude towards corporate withdrawal from South Africa has also begun to undermine the divestment movement - by far the most important and successful anti-apartheid campaign in the United States. Divestment and selective purchasing actions by hundreds of private institutions and dozens of state, local and city governments now deny tens of billions of dollars in investment capital and hundreds of millions of dollars in sales to U.S. corporations who operate in South Africa. But COSATU's sanctions and divestment resolutions make no call for corporate withdrawal, and divestment is pointedly excluded from a list of selective

sanctions endorsed by the COSATU congress earlier this year.

The recently announced "disinvestment" agreement between the Ford Motor Co. and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), a COSATU affiliate, appears to be even more damaging to the sanctions and divestment movement. As reported by the U.S. press, the accord requires Ford to transfer 24 percent ownership in its South African subsidiary to NUMSA, with the remainder of Ford's shares to be sold to the Anglo American Corporation, which already holds a majority stake in the Ford operation.

The agreement thus eliminates all of Ford's direct investments in South Africa, but at NUMSA's insistence, will continue the parent company's licensing, sales and transfer agreements with the South African firm. Anti-apartheid activists in the U.S. point out that many local divestment and selective purchasing laws include corporations with such licensing and sales agreements. They also charge that the transfer of shares to South African unions is part of an increasingly sophisticated U.S. corporate strategy to neutralize the divestment movements and drive a wedge between the unions and the international solidarity movement.

Adding to this perception of softening support for sanctions within the labour movement have been increasingly vocal attacks on sanctions and divestment from the "workerist" faction of intellectuals clustered around the black labour movement. Indeed, in recent months the strongest opposition to divestment and incremental sanctions has seemed to come from the intellectuals - and not from black trade unionists themselves.

This summer, several studies critical of the impact of sanctions and divestment were prepared by white workerist intellectuals for COSATU and the Catholic Bish-

ops Conference. The studies, intended for internal discussion and review and not as position papers of the federation, were then leaked to the press in an apparent attempt to influence the debate in the United States. These reports received wide press coverage, particularly in *The Wall Street Journal* and the ultra-right *Washington Times* and are being cited by conservatives and big business as evidence that inside South Africa the trade unions and the churches oppose sanctions.

In the United States, the surge of academic, corporate and institutional interest in South Africa has created a growing demand for information and research on virtually every aspect of South African society, from the economy to education to black public opinion. This is giving the researchers, drawn from South Africa's predominately white academic community, an influence in the debate here that appears to be disproportionate to their num-

bers and to their role back home. Their relationship to the liberation movement, and to the democratic movement inside South Africa, is often unclear to their U.S. audiences. The ideological and tactical debate within the progressive movement, and the political views of the academic "experts" who come to the United States are often poorly understood. Moreover, the rigorous defense of clearly defined political positions inside South Africa can have a much different interpretation outside, with conservatives eager to portray disagreement as division within the ranks.

This is not to discount the importance or legitimacy of the debate on sanctions inside South Africa. It is easy to understand the dilemma of a shop steward at a U.S. multinational in South Africa explaining COSATU's support for sanctions. But there is growing sentiment in the United States that the debate is not being accurately represented

here, and that individuals and organizations hostile to the ANC and to sanctions are using their privileged access to the West to weaken the international sanctions drive. The unprincipled manipulation of this important debate by people with uncertain mandates is beginning to pose problems for the U.S. movement and for future sanctions efforts.

---

*Editors' note: - As the above article indicates, the issue of sanctions raises a number of complicated questions - e.g. the nature and precise impact of various types of sanctions, the attitude of South African trade unionists towards them, the role of South African intellectuals in the sanctions debate - which the anti-apartheid movement must continue to address. Views will differ within the movement and Southern Africa REPORT hopes to present a range of opinions on these various questions in succeeding issues. We welcome further comments from readers.*

---

## The Parallel Commonwealth Conference

*continued from page 16*

Although they fostered many constructive and creative ideas, the workshops varied greatly in the amount of concrete planning and specific results they were able to achieve. The format of many of the workshops (large and formal, with resource people in front and participants seated in rows) inhibited much constructive exchange, and there were few creative group facilitation techniques in evidence. Some workshops spent too much time rehashing issues that had been presumed resolved in Montreal; consequently, a number of delegates who came with high expectations of moving forward in action and organization were frustrated at the vagueness of the content and conclusions of some discussions. Those workshops which were more homogeneous in composition, such as the sectorial ones and those with more specific

objectives, tended on the whole to have been more successful in realizing the practical objectives of the conference.

A pervasive theme of discussion over the weekend was the future form and structure of the solidarity network. While a minority felt that a formal national anti-apartheid organization should be established, the prevailing view held that the regional specificity of Canadian politics and concerns demanded the strengthening of local initiatives and organization. Delegates felt that the loose network of solidarity activists and organizations already in place is more appropriate and viable at this stage than the setting up of a national organization. They stressed, however, the importance of improved cross-country consultation, coordination and information flows, and more effective use of existing networking tools.

Regional distinctiveness within Canada is one of the reasons why more concrete and definitive planning did not get under way at the Parallel Conference. Obviously a locally-grounded knowledge and practice is required to build solidarity through linking with issues of local and immediate concern and to develop and refine appropriate tools for mobilization - as the conference recognized. There is a danger, however, that local initiatives may be overemphasized, risking subordination of the objectives of the liberation struggles to local political issues, and perhaps losing the strength in concerted campaigning that comes with a national movement. Recognition of the need to build and consolidate that national perspective and network affirms the importance of future meetings like the Montreal and Vancouver conferences.

# A Sport of Nature

BY DAPHNE READ

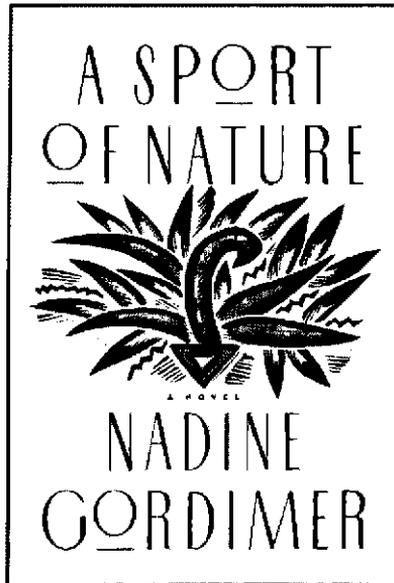
Daphne Read, who lives in Toronto, has recently completed a doctoral thesis on Nadine Gordimer's work.

Nadine Gordimer. *A Sport of Nature*. Viking/Penguin Books: Markham, Ont., 1987. 341 pp.

As a writer Nadine Gordimer yearns for a utopian space of individual freedom and creativity – a space unfettered by the pull of social responsibility – but her sense of “place” as a white South African – “a white; a dissident white; a white writer” – has led to a reluctant acceptance that the freedom of the individual is socially determined. As a writer she would prefer to explore the individual life lived in its own terms, but her sense of social justice (injustice) wrests her away from the privilege of examining private lives in themselves and impels her to focus on the relationship between these lives and the political struggle against apartheid. This constraint – the ethical necessity to situate the private in the political – is experienced as a kind of aesthetic violence, a freely chosen social limitation but one that leads to its own distortions in her writing.

The central conceit of *A Sport of Nature* is one such distortion. A “sport of nature” is “a plant, animal, etc., which exhibits abnormal variation or a departure from the parent stock or type ... a spontaneous mutation; a new variety produced in this way.” Two ideas are held in synthesis here: the idea of abnormality or a “freak of nature” and the idea of a “new variety,” suggesting something more positive and lasting than a freak. But if Hillela, the novel’s “sport of nature,” is a prototype of a new variety of white South African who will survive and thrive after the revolution, then one can only note with dismay the limits of the vision.

The strains between Gordimer’s political commitment to a democratic South Africa and her commitment to the bourgeois liberal concept of the “truth” of fiction are revealed in the stark contrast between *Burger’s Daughter* and *A Sport of Nature*. The central question in Gordimer’s fiction is the “place” of white South Africans, both in the struggle against apartheid and in the making of a new society. In the best sense of the realist tradition, *Burger’s Daughter* acknowl-



edges the erosion of a moral high ground for white liberals who, confronted by the challenge of the black consciousness movement, must come to consciousness of their whiteness. But the shift in power that *Burger’s Daughter* marks, from the possibility of a heroic white leadership to black leadership and a diminished, secondary role for whites, is experienced in the novel as an uncomfortable limitation on the liberal principles of individual freedom, equality and “brotherhood.” In a surprising – and disturbing – shift of focus, *A Sport of Nature* investigates and ap-

pears to celebrate a kind of anarchic female individualism.

In *Burger’s Daughter* and now in *A Sport of Nature*, the violence and conflict of the political struggle in South Africa provide the realist social backdrop, but the emotional level of both novels speaks to a yearning for healing and a desire for wholeness that overrides the conflict. In *Burger’s Daughter* the healing and the political intersect in the figure of Lionel Burger, a medical doctor whose political activism is initially inspired by his horror at the suffering of blacks. Rosa Burger continues in her father’s footsteps, on a smaller scale, as a physiotherapist who does what she can politically. In contrast, in *A Sport of Nature* the mechanism of social healing and reconstruction is the marriage of white female sexuality with black male political power.

Hillela, the main character, is a free spirit who follows the whims of her body. Her life moves forward through various sexual relationships with men, which take her from her position on the margins of political consciousness in South Africa into the “heart” of the revolution, literally and figuratively. Through her marriage to Whaila Kgomani, a leading black revolutionary in exile, she realizes a moment of utopian happiness and fertility, which is confirmed in the birth of their black daughter. Both Hillela and Whaila see their relationship as “a sign [of] the human cause, the human identity that should be possible, once the race and class struggle were won” (p. 208). For Hillela the marriage marks the beginning of a consciousness of her place in history. The handclasp she shares with Whaila after their lovemaking establishes her covenant with the future. Although he is later assassinated, out of her experience of romantic personal love is born a revolutionary love that transcends mere sexuality and leads her eventually to the “perfect” meshing of the personal and the political in her marriage to a powerful African

leader. Gordimer herself has provided the gloss in a recent interview in *Ms* magazine: "Revolution is people who bring about change - some people do it in one way, some people do it in another. I see a relationship between Hillela and the true courtesan. They were always politically powerful; and their field was always men."

Heterosexuality and marriage are classically the relationships through which society is symbolically restored to wholeness and harmony, and Gordimer adheres to this convention in her novels. The complexity of the exploration in *Burger's Daughter* of the identity and place of white South Africans committed to the struggle against apartheid is reduced in *A Sport of Nature* to a single certainty: the body. For Rosa Burger, political exigencies overrule the desire for a private life: the body politic prevails over the sexual. But Rosa's imprisonment at the end also signifies an impasse for whites: what

is their future? *July's People* provides one kind of answer - there is no place to go. *A Sport of Nature* provides a peculiar utopian alternative. In an inversion of the political determinism in *Burger's Daughter*, Hillela moves from an essentialist apolitical trust in the "truth" of her body to a political and revolutionary integrity.

Increasingly in Gordimer's novels a dichotomy between male and female sexuality is struck for whites: white males are sexually impotent, white females express a "natural wholeness" and fertility in their sexuality. This polarization incorporates both Gordimer's critique of the white regime (male sexuality) and her vision of the possibility of social reconciliation and regeneration (female sexuality). If redemption for whites lies symbolically in the direction of female sexuality, then social reconciliation lies in the heterosexual union of white female and black male. *A Sport of Nature* enacts this social drama.

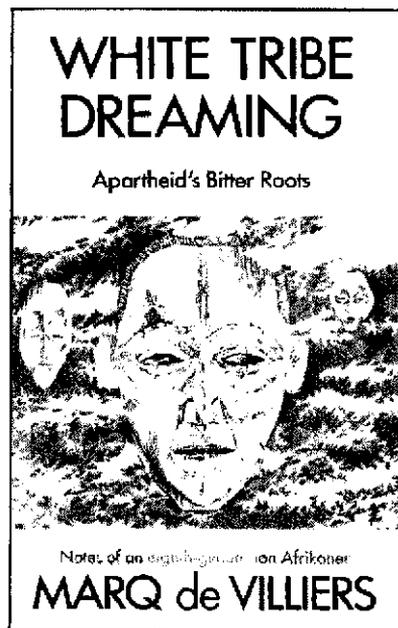
This utopian reductiveness is difficult to accept: it is startlingly out of step with current debates about sexuality, and with radical critiques of the institutions of heterosexuality and marriage. But more importantly, it exposes the limits of Gordimer's thinking about political and social change. Gordimer comes close to fetishizing female sexuality as embodying an essentialist life force, while political power, whether that of the white regime or of black revolutionaries, is always construed as male. In spite of her close observation of everyday life these polarities are never really called into question or challenged. Gordimer has made it clear that Western feminism has little place in her thinking about South Africa. Yet feminism could have led her to scrutinize more critically the institutions of everyday life that prop up totalitarian regimes. Is the model of the courtesan really a progressive way of looking to the future of South Africa?

## Marq de Villiers Dreaming

This review of Marq de Villiers' *White Tribe Dreaming*, *Apartheid's Bitter Roots*, *Notes of an Eighth Generation Afrikaner* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1987) was written by John S. Saul and first appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, October 10, 1987.

Marq de Villiers, "an eighth-generation Afrikaner" and currently editor of *Toronto Life* magazine, has written a disturbing history of his people, the Afrikaners of South Africa. It is disturbing in its own right, as any serious book about South Africa must necessarily be. But in revealing as much as it does about the poverty of vision of the contemporary South African liberal, *White Tribe Dreaming* is also disturbing in ways the author undoubtedly did not intend.

There are, in fact, two books in *White Tribe Dreaming*, the first being the history of Afrikanerdom



that comprises the volume's 26 substantive chapters. The second is

a polemic about present-day South Africa and its critics, one that itches to explode throughout the volume, and finally does in a pugnacious postscript.

What links these twin texts? His historical survey is, quite self-consciously, a "tribal history," one de Villiers clearly feels to be his own (even if he seeks, simultaneously, to stand at a certain crucial distance from it). Perhaps this in turn has helped to determine that the postscript can do little more than bring a "tribal perspective" to bear on the tortured question of the future of South Africa. Of de Villiers' anti-apartheid sentiments there can, of course, be no doubt. They are evident throughout, not least in a moving chapter of "personal memoir". Yet there remains, especially in the postscript, a narrowness of perspective, and it is this that ultimately defines the failure of *White Tribe Dreaming*.

Look first at those 26 chapters of history, however. Here de Villiers has provided a serviceable narrative of the adventures of the Afrikaner "tribe" ever since the Dutch first arrived at the Cape in the seventeenth century. His account is derivative, certainly, but it is well written and on the whole quite accessible, its accessibility heightened by de Villiers' skill in interweaving his own family history - drawn from eight generations' worth of diaries, letters and archives - into the narrative. Such material also helps humanize the record he is surveying and in this way further secures one of the main purposes de Villiers has set for himself in writing this book. For he wishes to remove the Afrikaners from the ranks of demonology, to reveal their history as exemplifying an intensely human response to a concrete set of changing historical circumstances. And to suggest, as well, that all was not completely predetermined but was (and remains) subject to struggle and debate within "the tribe".

Here too is the first bridge to his postscript. For the latter is so crafted as to inveigh against each and every tendency to push the Afrikaners "too hard". This will merely force the hard-liners into even greater defensiveness, he implies - and besides there is an openness in Afrikaner attitudes (not least a "deep reservoir of inter-racial good-will") that can be tapped. Yet de Villiers provides virtually no concrete evidence that would be likely to convince Africans struggling for democracy in South Africa that they will not, in the end, have to fight for their freedom.

Indeed, the evidence of de Villiers' own historical narrative suggests far more strongly that the majority tradition within Afrikanerdom will push for repression rather than genuine reform when significant substantive demands are made (a point that the State of Emergency and other recent events in South Africa

have amply demonstrated). There is also a weakness inherent in de Villiers' almost exclusive preoccupation with ideological interests (ethnic nationalism, for example, and racial hierarchy). Had his book probed equally thoroughly the dense web of economic power and class privilege that also ties so many white South Africans into a militant defense of the status quo, he would have found it even more difficult to sustain the argument that there exists a peaceful path to democracy in South Africa.

But is de Villiers himself actually in favor of "democracy?" It is here that his preoccupation with "tribalism" - with the Afrikaners as one tribe among many in South Africa - has led him further astray. Most movements for significant change in South Africa (the African National Congress, for example) seek to transcend tribalism and wisely advocate "one person, one vote in a unified South Africa." Yet de Villiers finds himself pressing for talks - possible "consociational" constitutional arrangements - between "the Afrikaners and the Zulu and the Xhosa and the Sotho," in which these groups "could talk secure in the knowledge of their Tribal Own."

Once again, the question arises: why should an African democrat not interpret this advocacy of checks and balances, and possible "tribal" (read: minority) veto, as designed primarily to defend Afrikaner-cum-white interests, including the latter's substantial material interests? Could this be the hidden agenda of de Villiers' presentation of Afrikaner history as a tribal history, an attempt to paint South Africa as a country of tribes, not a nation of people - in effect the Bantustanization of liberalism? Perhaps not, but it bears noting that it is precisely regarding questions such as these that de Villiers' arguments become most fuzzy, and his emotions most heated.

He is even more heated about the question of economic sanctions -

and equally beside the point. Again, the touchstone is the historically beleaguered Afrikaners, victims of the Boer War and now victims of hypocritical Western moralizing, concretized as sanctions. The West (including our own "morally bankrupt Prime Minister") "has been obsessed with punishment," de Villiers writes, and this kind of charge is repeated over and over again in the postscript.

Yet this is a perversely misleading way of structuring a debate about sanctions. For it is not "outsiders" but rather black South Africans themselves (beginning with Nobel Peace Prize winner Chief Albert Lutuli in the fifties) who have been the initiators of the call for sanctions. These South Africans have been sensitive, in a way that de Villiers is not, to the tight link that has existed historically between the structure of racial oppression in South Africa and capitalist profits. They look to sanctions not as an alternative to their own struggle, but as a way of weakening the economic underpinnings of the apartheid state. Then, they argue, they may have a better chance to defeat the latter quickly and thereby, in Lutuli's words, "shorten the day of bloodshed."

The fact is that the response of Western governments to such a call has been minimal. However, when certain limited sanctions have been implemented, the intention behind them has generally been far more tactical than moralistic: they have been designed to jog Pretoria into an accelerated pace of reform in order to pre-empt the possible radicalization, in a long drawn-out struggle, of the democratic movement into a social revolutionary movement.

How could de Villiers so mistake the heart of the matter? One is forced to a harsh conclusion. For all his highly nuanced liberal sensibilities, but like too many Afrikaners before him, de Villiers is deaf to the urgent voice of the black population in his native land.