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Black Politics in South Africa

I. The Level of Mass Resistance

The massive resistance to apartheid in South Africa shows few, if any, signs of abating. From the state of emergency declaration of July 20, 1985 (exempting all security forces from legal responsibility for acts of brutality) until mid-October approximately 250 people were killed, 1,500 injured, and 3,800 arrested (with over 2,000 still in detention). The government has not been able, despite heavy repressive measures, to quell the unrest. There may, perhaps, come a lull, but it will be followed by still larger waves of protest.

In 1960, three months after the Sharpeville massacre when the authorities had detained 11,000 individuals, relative calm returned to the townships. But the present upheaval is not Sharpeville 1960. Rapid industrial development since that time has doubled the black urban population, from 35 percent of total urban residents to over 50 percent. The small black trade union movement of the 1950s (of 50,000 members) had been crushed before Sharpeville. Today the ranks of independent black trade unions have swelled from 150,000 after their qualified legalization in 1979 to close to 750,000. Though the national leadership of the broad nonracial antiapartheid coalition, the United Democratic Front (UDF), has been detained, its decentralized structure seems to generate new leadership daily. And two consecutive generations of grade- and high-school students have been radicalized by the South African Student Organization (which provided the core leadership of the Soweto uprisings, and was banned in 1977) and by the Congress of South African Students (a UDF affiliate, banned last September).

Much of the Western press has failed to note that the current state of resistance has been going on for nearly three years. The new period of mass resistance began with opposition to the Black Local

Authorities Act of 1982 (which supposedly devolved powers for operating basic services—such as electricity, roads, fire and police duties—to local elected town councils). In reality, however, this law curtailed Pretoria's financial support for the satellite urban townships, rendering them "autonomous" from the wealthy, urban white authorities. The most lucrative source of local revenues—home rents—remains in the hands of the central white authorities, while sales of alcohol, property levies, fines, and utility charges are now to pay for local services.

Resistance in the black townships grew beyond proportions that state authorities, and initially the black political activists, could have envisioned. What began as a boycott of the November–December 1982 Local Authority elections (Pretoria claims a 21 percent turnout, while the United Democratic Front claims that under 10 percent participated) mushroomed into general resistance to the apartheid regime. The threats and violence visited upon local town councillors have led over 90 percent of them to resign. The rest now live under permanent government protection. Of the 38 local councils created under the act, only two are still functioning.

Almost simultaneously, the trade union and student movements witnessed massive rejuvenation. In 1979 the government's Wiehan Commission recommended the legalization of independent black trade unions as a way of controlling a plethora of wildcat strikes. Legalization was accompanied by legislation severely limiting the right to strike (strikers can still be fired and strike votes can only be taken after lengthy cooling-off periods).

The government hoped that legalization would prevent the wave of aggressive and political trade-union organizing that immediately followed. By the

summer of 1985 over 700,000 black South African workers (close to half of the black industrial work force) had joined one of the major independent black trade unions. (The two most significant confederations are the nonracial 250,000-strong Federation of South African Trade Unions [FOSATU] and the 180,000-strong Council of Unions of South Africa [CUSA], which originated mainly in the Black Consciousness wing of the resistance).

In early September 1984 the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) led the first legal black strike in South African history. After negotiations were deadlocked, the Chamber of Mines (the owners' consortium) called for a government-conducted strike vote, believing that with a threat of job dismissals the union leadership could not win a strike authorization. Instead, more than 40,000 workers voted to walk off their jobs and after a militant two-week strike (in which 10 miners were killed fighting police and scabs), the miners won a settlement that was three percentage points higher than the original Chamber of Mines' offer. The failure of last September's miners' walkout has been cited in much of the American press as a sign of weakness in the black trade union movement; but the blow to the movement can easily be exaggerated. With the threat of a strike, the NUM had already won a 16–22 percent wage increase at the Anglo-American Corp. and other leading mining companies.

Pressed by union militants, Cyril Ramaphosa, president of the NUM (and head of CUSA), reluctantly called for a walkout at two mines owned by Gemcor and Anglovaal, the two most intransigent antiunion employers. Though the union had few members at these mines, it succeeded in getting approximately 30,000 of the 60,000 workers to walk off their jobs—but severe police and company repression forced Ramaphosa to call off the strike after three days. He then decided to challenge in the courts the government's provision allowing employers to fire striking workers. Overall, the trade union movement now is stronger than ever, and last November's merger of FOSATU and seven independent unions will produce a union federation of over 400,000 members organized on an industrial basis, which will curtail the jurisdictional competition that has sometimes plagued this rapidly growing movement.

The most noteworthy political resistance consisted of a series of general strikes (community, school, and labor boycotts) that broke out in September and November 1984 and March 1985 in the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape. On November 4–5, 1984, the Transvaal Stayaway Committee

called a two-day job and school boycott. The demands were many and varied—the strikers protested, among other things, against increases of rents, property taxes, and utility rates. The message was clear: open declaration of war against apartheid. The response was massive, with over three-quarters of a million workers and students staying out and demonstrating in the streets. The government responded by killing scores of demonstrators, and by arresting 379 people in a one-day sweep of the black townships ringing Johannesburg. On March 21, 1985, the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, the police killed 43 unarmed funeral attendees in Langa township on the Eastern Cape.

In all, from August 1984 to mid-October 1985 over 1,000, mostly unarmed black South Africans have been killed by the police. Yet such violence has not daunted a resurgent student movement; during the past academic year an average of 300,000 secondary-school students were participating in political strikes at any given moment. In early September 1985 the regime closed over 460 schools that serve 300,000 predominantly “colored” students (of mixed race) in Capetown. With massive unemployment (over 50 percent) confronting black and “colored” school-leavers, the struggle for freedom is more appealing than the struggle for achievement in a school system controlled by the white authorities.

II. The United Democratic Front: Rise of a Mass Movement

THE MOST HOPEFUL SIGN in the recent wave of unrest is the emergence of the United Democratic Front (the UDF) as a broad nonracial coalition (“multiracial” in South Africa, in contrast, connotes the apartheid policy of recognizing the “separateness” of each race). The UDF was formed to resist the constitutional “reforms” of August 1983. The “reforms” called for the establishment of a tricameral parliament in which a “colored” and an “Indian” chamber would each be granted some administrative powers in its community. (The South African government legally refers to people of mixed race as “colored.”) The UDF contended that this divided the nonwhite oppressed communities of South Africa. In response to the UDF's call for a boycott of the August 1984 elections for the two new chambers, only 18 percent of the “colored” and 15 percent of the Indian electorate participated. This, in turn, gave rise to a national resistance movement broader than any since the Afri-

can National Congress (ANC) was forced underground in 1960.

The UDF consists of a loose coalition of 600 community, religious, student, and trade union organizations that represent 2 million South Africans of all races. The government has continually arrested and harassed its leadership. (Last June a trial began of 24 of its national leaders, charged with high treason, and another 150 have been arrested since the beginning of the emergency.) And yet, so far, because of its decentralized, coalitional nature, the UDF has been able to weather the repression. Although the UDF denies formal ties to the ANC (such admission would immediately lead to its banning), its advocacy of a nonracial South Africa governed on the basis of one-person one-vote reminds all South Africans of the ANC's Freedom Charter of 1955.

Almost every casket buried at the mass political funerals (which by now over a million black South Africans have attended) is draped with the banned ANC's black, green, and gold colors. Foreign press accounts note continually the mass singing of the ANC anthem *Nkosi Sikel' i-Afrika* ("God Bless Africa") and chants in praise of its armed wing *Umkhonto we Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation").

The repressive capacities of the South African state cannot be underestimated. How long the opposition can maintain an unrelenting policy of noncooperation remains to be seen. And there are the political tensions between the UDF and the smaller, but militant, Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), which have led to some violent internecine disputes. AZAPO (and the somewhat broader coalition it initiated, the National Forum) is the spiritual offspring of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and a wing of the Black Consciousness movement (in exile many Black Consciousness veterans moved closer to the nonracial ANC, which they had criticized in the mid-1970s).

These organizations argued in the 1960s and '70s for a black-only mode of organization, contending that progressive whites should fight racism in the white community rather than usurp leadership roles in the African struggle. The UDF-AZAPO split became evident to American journalists when AZAPO denounced the UDF-supported visit of Senator Ted Kennedy early last year as "an imperialist plot." Bishop Tutu held a meeting with both AZAPO and UDF leaders last May and organized a jointly sponsored anniversary celebration of the Soweto uprising on June 16. By summer, however, most observers believed that the UDF had emerged as the politically dominant factor in the townships.

III. Scenarios for Transition: The State of White Politics

ALTHOUGH THE REGIME'S REPRESSIVE CAPACITY is by no means exhausted, it is questionable whether anything short of mass slaughter can quell the unrest. And, with the South African debt crisis rendering it vulnerable to international pressure, there are some external limits on the regime's ability to bare its iron fist.

By openly calling for negotiations with the ANC, and sending seven of its leading representatives to Zambia to meet with Oliver Tambo, the ANC's exiled president, South Africa's corporate leadership has registered its no-confidence vote in the Botha regime, and made clear that, indeed, it can no longer tolerate so high a level of instability. When Chase Manhattan refused to roll over short-term loans in July '85 the panic began, with international banks refusing to renew \$2 billion in short-term loans. (Over \$12 billion of South Africa's \$22 billion in international debt comes due within the next 18 months.) The rand plummeted from 50 to 35 cents (it was valued at \$1.20 in December 1983). In response, the government closed the foreign and stock exchanges for four working days (August 27 to September 2) and announced a four-month moratorium on foreign-debt repayments.

The (Nationalist-party) Botha government, of course, is unwilling to negotiate its own dissolution, no matter how gradual. Whether the white liberal community—as embodied in the Progressive Federal party (PFP)—and its business allies are capable of advancing a program that might garner the support of credible representatives of the black majority is also problematic.

The "reform program" of the *verligte* (Afrikaans for "enlightened") wing of the Nationalist party has no chance of gaining such acceptance. President Botha outlined this program in his speech last September 30 at the Cape provincial Nationalist party conference. "My party and I are committed to the principle of a united South Africa," proclaimed Botha. "One citizenship and a universal franchise." But this franchise would be exercised in federated or confederated "units" based on geography and race. President Botha made clear his view that a universal franchise in a unitary state would mean the end to "a civilized South Africa."

Many white liberal critics of the regime—such as Sheila Duncan, president of Black Sash (a white women's organization that aids pass-law victims) and PFP leader Helen Suzman—stated that realization of the government commission's recommendation of September 11, 1985 that the pass laws be

abolished would, in Suzman's words, "mean the beginning of the end of apartheid." But the black struggle is mainly concerned with the democratization of political and economic power—not merely with the restoration of that minimal human right, the freedom of movement.*

Botha made clear what the "free movement" of the government report would mean. Workers who hold permanent jobs in the urban industrial sector might be granted permanent-resident status, along with their families (many of whom currently reside in the Bantustans). But after this integration of industrial labor into the modern sector, all surplus labor would be relegated to the destitute Bantustans. The economic essence of the apartheid labor system would remain in place. Botha also explicitly stated that his party's commitment to "security for each group" would mean the continuation of segregated schools, housing, and "culture in the general meaning of the word."

The chasm between the *verligte* wing of the Nationalist party and the demands of the democratic movement would be less distressing but for the reality that the Nationalist party still commands the allegiance of a majority of the white population (and by no means just the Afrikaner population). While the liberal PFP, which gained 19 percent of the vote in the last election, is the official opposition party, the right-wing Conservative party (a Nationalist split-off that favors partition) and the hard-line *Herstigste Nasionale* party of rural Afrikanerdom together commanded over 20 percent of the white vote in recent polls.

Even more distressing is that the Progressive Federal party (PFP) has never endorsed the principle of one-person one-vote in a unitary state, or supported the redistributive welfare state outlined in the ANC Freedom Charter of 1955. While the PFP has campaigned courageously in favor of greater civil liberties (abolition of the pass laws and the homelands policy), it has not advanced policies that would begin to deal with the economic misery of the black population—whose median income is one-eighth that of whites, and half of whom are forced to live in the Bantustans, areas as impoverished as those of the poorest nations of sub-Saharan Africa. (According to the World Health Organization, the majority of children born in the Bantustans die before the age of six.)

* The pass laws require that all blacks over the age of 16 carry a pass stating their legal place of residence and employment. The system separates many male workers from their families and forces "open surplus" population—the elderly and unemployed—to live in the barren Bantustan.

The one nonnegotiable demand of the ANC has always been that South Africa should be nonracial, unfragmented, and governed according to a system of majority rule and universal suffrage. In order to help alleviate the extreme maldistribution of wealth and employment opportunities, the Freedom Charter envisions the nationalization of the few monopolies and mining companies that control over half of South Africa's industrial assets. Small wonder that Gavin Relly, chairman of the Anglo-American Corp., the country's largest mining conglomerate (and one of the monopolies the Freedom Charter slated for nationalization), stated after his meeting with Oliver Tambo that, while he and Mr. Tambo hoped to build a South Africa in which both their children could grow up free, "There is little community of interest between us. Our positions are very far apart."

The basic stalemate between the black movement and even the most liberal sector in mainstream South African white politics concerns the concept of a unitary national government elected by one-person one-vote. In the abstract, partition and federal arrangements that devolve significant powers to different regions and racial groups sound attractive. In the absence, however, of a unified national government with the power to reshape the South African political economy, such a solution would only yield "apartheid with a human face." There are no relatively separate black and white South African political economies. Urbanization and industrialization have not only severely eroded the tribal identity to which rural-based chieftains such as Gatsha Buthelezi appeal; they also necessitate that black and white must govern together, if they are to live as equals.

IV. Inkatha and "Tribalism"

THE ARGUMENTS FOR FEDERALISM rest on claims that South African blacks are tribally divided between Zulu (6 million), Xhosa (5 million), Tswana (2.1 million), Northern Sotho (2 million), Southern Sotho (1.6 million), Shangaan, Swazi, Venda, and other small tribes. This argument ignores studies by Martin West, an anthropologist at the University of Capetown, which demonstrate that urbanization and industrialization have radically eroded tribal loyalties. National black identity is paramount to most black South Africans, even those in the homelands. Besides, the Zulu, Xhosa, and Swazi languages are closely related, mutually intelligible, and collectively called Nguni—and the majority of urban blacks speak fluent English.

The other standard part of the argument, re-

cently made in a *New Republic* editorial in favor of partition, is that the Zulu people have "all the characteristics of nationhood," as evidenced by their loyalty to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement. Recent violence between Inkatha and UDF supporters in Durban proves little, as almost all blacks in the Durban area are Zulus. But what of Buthelezi's strength among the rural residents of his Kwazulu homeland? It is difficult to measure Inkatha's voluntary membership statistics, as all Kwazulu state employees and teachers are required to join Inkatha. The South African government's claim that there are 1 million members is not taken seriously by anyone. In October 1982 Buthelezi claimed 350,000 members; just three months later he claimed membership had grown to 750,000.

Undoubtedly, Buthelezi has some mass support in the rural areas of Kwazulu. But his popularity has clearly declined after his 1980 open break with the ANC and with the recent wave of Inkatha attacks on UDF supporters. While South African polls are not the most reliable, a recent Gallup poll commissioned by the *Sunday Times* of London raises serious doubts about Buthelezi's popularity, both in Kwazulu and among South African blacks in general (25 percent of whom are Zulu). Residents of Kwazulu (excluding Zulu urban residents of Durban, who are likely to be more sympathetic to the ANC and UDF) were asked whom they would favor as president of a free South Africa. The three leading candidates were Nelson Mandela with 50 percent, Chief Buthelezi with 27 percent, and Bishop Tutu with 12 percent. When the same question was put to a representative national sample of urban and rural blacks, the results were Mandela 50 percent, Tutu 24, and Buthelezi only 6. Helen Suzman drew 11 percent of the vote, further refuting the view that rampant tribalism characterizes the overall political attitudes of South African blacks.

V. Resurgence of the African National Congress

A LEADING SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOLAR of the ANC, Professor Thomas Lodge of the University of Witwatersrand, asserts that today the ANC "has succeeded in reestablishing itself as the center of gravity in black politics within South Africa." In the 1970s many would have reacted skeptically to assertions that the ANC would once again become the dominant political force in black South African politics. The ANC suffered tremendously from the mass arrests and exiling of its leadership following

its outlawing after Sharpeville. As an organization that had operated legally, nonviolently, and above-ground from 1912 to 1960, it was ill-prepared for the clandestine activity forced upon it. After the treason trial of 1964 those few ANC leaders, such as Tambo, who had been sent abroad spent most of their time seeking diplomatic and financial support overseas. The political lull was broken in the early 1970s by the spontaneous strikes of nearly 100,000 workers in the Durban area in 1973 and the emergence of a "Black Consciousness" movement of African, "colored," and Indian students who emphasized "psychological liberation" and black empowerment as the initial step toward liberation. Rejecting the ANC's tradition of nonracial organizing, the Black Consciousness movement explicitly excluded whites from its organizing efforts. Initially, ANC exile publications rejected the "racialism" of the Black Consciousness movement, and the ANC's allies in the small, exiled Communist party denounced it as a "petty-bourgeois deviation."

The ANC also did not have a leading role in the trade-union organizing of the late '70s and '80s. The origins of the two largest South African union federations did not render them initially attractive to the ANC. The Council of South African Unions was founded by unions who favored an all-black membership and wished to limit the role of hired white staff in internal union matters. The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), which is strongly nonracial and syndicalist in orientation, focused on building strength at the shop-floor level and on avoiding affiliation with any political party.

No love was lost between CUSA, FOSATU, and the ANC when the ANC-affiliated South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which had largely lost its rank-and-file base after 1960, tried to block the development of FOSATU's and CUSA's international trade-union contacts. For those who see Communist-party domination (despite its small membership and its repression) at every level of the South African freedom struggle, it is worth noting that CUSA chose to affiliate with the International Federation of Free Trade Unions (and *not* the Moscow-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions). In 1981 FOSATU sent a delegation to Austria asking the leaders of Solidarność to warn their exiled, industrially skilled membership against accepting South African government offers to emigrate there. Solidarność's exiled leadership cooperated, initiating a close working relationship between some FOSATU leaders and exiled Solidarność activists.

The exile of thousands of black South African student activists to the front-line states,* after the banning of all Black Consciousness organizations in October 1977, provided the ANC with its first influx of potential guerrilla recruits. Returning to its non-doctrinaire nationalist roots, it successfully recruited key leaders of the Black Consciousness movement, exiled Durban and Eastern Cape independent trade-union activists, and even Chief Sabata Dalindyebo, the main opponent of the dictatorial leader of the nominally independent Transkei homeland, Chief Kaiser Mantanzima (Nelson Mandela's cousin).

By early 1980, the training of a new generation of exiled activists began to yield results in sophisticated sabotage attacks. By 1983, according to

* Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, and Botswana—the states on the “front-line” borders of South Africa—are also in the front line of the struggle against its pro-apartheid regime.

Joseph Lelyveld of the *New York Times*, the stunning attacks on the SASOL coal-gasification plants, the Koeberg nuclear power plant, and the Air Force headquarters in downtown Johannesburg had immensely increased the prestige of the ANC among South African blacks. Only in June '85, at its second congress-in-exile (the first was held in 1969), did the ANC announce it no longer would guarantee that its attacks on economic and military targets would not result in innocent deaths. “We will confront the armed police and the soldiers and anyone else identified with the police or soldiers,” Tambo stated; “but we will not go onto a football field and explode a bomb to kill players or into a cinema.”

At the founding meeting of the UDF on August 20-21, 1983, the ANC had clearly reasserted its presence in South African politics. Though much broader based and decentralized than the ANC, the UDF's three co-presidents (all now in jail) are veteran ANC activists Oscar Mpetha, Archie

A Brief Guide to South Africa's Mass Organizations & Political Groupings

NONRACIAL LIBERATION & POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

ANC (African National Congress) — oldest, most significant liberation movement. Founded in 1912, engaged strictly in nonviolent protest until its outlawing in 1960. Underground presence has grown significantly in past eight years. Its imprisoned leader Nelson Mandela is the country's most popular black political figure. ANC calls for a non-racial South Africa, governed by one-person, one-vote majority rule in a unitary welfare state with a mixed economy.

Umkhonto we Sizwe (“Spear of the Nation”) — ANC's armed wing, founded in 1960. Confines most sabotage attacks to “hard” military and industrial targets. These past five years coordinated frequent attacks on government and Bantustan agencies with popular protests. Still rejects terrorist attacks against white civilians, but as of June 1985 no longer guarantees that it can avoid injury to innocent civilians in attacks on state targets.

UDF (United Democratic Front) — grass-roots

coalition of 600 trade-union, religious, community, and political organizations representing nearly 2 million South Africans of all races. Formed in August 1983 to oppose constitutional “reforms” establishing separate “colored” and Indian parliaments. In several townships UDF-affiliates have established vibrant local government alternatives to official “puppet” authorities. Its most militant national affiliate, the *Congress of South African Students (COSAS)*, was banned last September.

South African Communist Party — outlawed in 1950; has worked in close collaboration with the ANC. Predominantly black membership and leadership, but whites play a significant role. Was key in trade-union organizing of 1940s and '50s. Hard to estimate its influence today.

BLACK NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS

PAC (Pan-Africanist Congress) — split off from ANC in 1958. Hostile to white and CP role in ANC. In exile some PAC members became Maoists, partially

Gumede, and Albertina Sisulu, the wife of imprisoned secretary-general Walter Sisulu. Its patrons include Mandela, Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, and other imprisoned ANC leaders. But the UDF is truly broader than the ANC, including in its leadership such Black Consciousness veterans as Popo Molefe, Mosiuoa Lekota (both now jailed), and the secretary-general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Rev. Smangaliso Mkhathshwa. Its most visible patrons—Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Rev. Allan Boesak, and the whites, the Rev. Beyers Naude (Secretary General of the South African Council of Churches) and Andrew Boraine (former president of the National Union of South African Students)—have never been openly associated with the ANC. Yet the historic connection between the UDF and ANC could not have been far from many people's minds when a defiant reading of a message of solidarity from Nelson Mandela, smuggled out of prison, provided the high point of the UDF's 12,000-person founding meeting.

ANC leaders know that their guerrilla forces of at most 8,000 (who will have to infiltrate individually into South Africa now that South Africa has bombed Mozambique into submission) cannot militarily overthrow a standing army of 83,000, a police force of 40,000, and 450,000 white reservists. The ANC recognizes that only a combination of mass political and labor protest and selective armed sabotage might lead to the bargaining table. And foreign economic pressure can profoundly influence South African behavior. Those working for economic sanctions must continue to let South African whites know that prosperity and apartheid may eventually be a contradiction.

WHAT OF ALLEGATIONS that the ANC is dominated by Communists? True, the ANC has worked closely with the small South African Communist party since the 1930s, partly because it was one of the few nonracial organizations with a significant white membership that would cooperate with the

because of aid from China. Suffered greatly when South African government discovered membership list and arrested 2,000 members of its armed wing *Pogo* in 1964. Further divisions in exile have severely curtailed PAC's role in South African internal politics.

Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) —filled political vacuum left by the outlawed ANC and PAC in early 1970s. Predominantly a nonwhite student movement, though influence broadened during 1976–77 Soweto uprising. Argued that "psychological liberation" of blacks meant excluding whites from liberation organizations. Urged white progressives to fight racism in their own community. When *South African Student Organization (SASO)*, founded by martyred Steve Biko, and other BCM groups were outlawed in October 1977, approximately 10,000 members fled into exile. It is estimated that 75 percent of them joined ANC, despite the initial ideological tensions. Black Consciousness, however, remains a powerful ideology within the liberation movement, though the UDF's and ANC's nonracial, coalition strategy definitely predominates.

AZAPO (Azanian People's Organization) —main current successor to the BCM and PAC. *The National Forum*, its coalition meant to rival the UDF, never got off the ground. AZAPO is best known for its opposition to the UDF-supported visit of Sen. Ted Kennedy in February 1985. Criticized recent ANC

talks with prominent white business leaders and liberal politicians as "class collaboration."

Inkatha — Zulu tribal organization headed by government-appointed Kwazulu homeland Chief Gatsha Buthelezi. Has significant base among rural residents of Kwazulu, though voluntary membership is hard to estimate because all Kwazulu government employees are required to join. Has definitely been weakened by its recent violent attacks on UDF and ANC activists. Until 1980, ANC tried to cooperate with Buthelezi, recognizing him as a legitimate political figure. But his constant attacks on ANC since and his opposition to international economic sanctions severed those relations. He is likely to be a key figure in any "moderate" or "compromise" solution.

BLACK & NONRACIAL TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS

FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions) — FOSATU affiliates represent 250,000 of South Africa's 700,000 black trade unionists. Organizes on a nonracial basis, with whites playing a significant staff and technical role. Though shop-floor and syndicalist in orientation, FOSATU has cooperated with UDF, particularly in the recent wave of consumer boycotts of white businesses. Most of

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ANC. Three open Communists are members of the 30-person ANC Executive Committee, including Moses Mabhida, general secretary of the CP, and Stephen Diamini, president of SACTU. In June '85 CP member Joe Slovo, acknowledged as a key military strategist, became the first white member of the ANC Executive.

The dominant tendency among ANC leaders, however, is an African nationalism committed to building an egalitarian, democratic South Africa. The ANC has always affirmed its broad ideological character—ranging from democratic nationalists to liberal nonracialists to Christian radicals, socialists, and Communists. If there is one ideological orientation common to the leading elders of the ANC (Tambo, Mandela, Mbeki), it is the Christian, humanistic nationalism that emerged out of

the Protestant missionary schools and universities (notably Fort Hare) they all have attended. Mandela and Tambo joined the Congress Youth League in 1943, when, as followers of the nationalist leader Anton Lembede, they argued that CP members should be expelled from the Congress because their commitment to nonracial working-class unity diluted the African struggle. Tambo and Mandela later accepted the arguments (often offered by “conservative” members of the Congress) that, as a Congress of the African people rather than a political party, the ANC should admit Communist-party members who did not violate ANC principles.

The key ANC document remains the Freedom Charter of 1955, which outlines a liberal democratic state, characterized by a strong state eco-

the independent regional and community-based trade unions merged with FOSATU last November to form an industrially organized union confederation of over 400,000.

CUSA (Council of Unions of South Africa) — approximately 180,000 members, one-third of them in the National Union of Mineworkers. CUSA adheres largely to a Black Consciousness style, limiting the role of white staffers. Almost merged with FOSATU in November, but pulled out at the last minute.

SACTU (South African Council of Trade Unions) — ANC-affiliated trade-union congress of the 1950s whose membership rose to 70,000 before it was brutally repressed in 1960. Many veterans of that wave of organizing have helped build FOSATU, CUSA, and today's independent trade unions.

WHITE POLITICAL PARTIES

The Nationalist Party — party of Afrikaner nationalism. First came to power in 1948 as an all-class national party favoring Afrikaner political and economic power and rigorous institutionalization of racism. Today the Nationalist party has its strongest base among middle-class Afrikaners and civil servants, and nearly 40 percent of white English speakers vote Nationalist.

Conservative Party — recent right-wing split from the Nationalist party led by former Information Minister Connie Muldar. Opposes the Botha constitutional “reforms” and favors a “partition” preserving white control of industry, black labor, and

the army—but granting complete “independence” to the homelands. Its base is principally among rural and working-class Afrikaners.

Herstigste Nasionale Party — (the “Refounded [true] Nationalist party”) the fundamentalist wing of Afrikaner nationalism. Formed in the early 1970s when “petty apartheid” (segregation of public facilities) began to be eroded. In the October 31, 1985 by-elections, it gained its first representative to parliament in the white Afrikaner working-class constituency of Sasolburg. Between them, these two conservative Afrikaner parties probably represent a fifth of the white electorate.

Progressive Federal Party (PFP) — leading white liberal opposition party in parliament. While vigorously opposed to the pass laws and “forced removals,” the party has never endorsed the principle of one-person, one-vote in a unitary state. Though it only garners 20 percent of the white vote, this represents 60 percent of all white English-speaking voters. Some PFP leaders would probably play a critical role in any negotiated settlement. Financially backed by the corporate community's liberal wing, which opposes the increasing statism and “irrationality” of the apartheid system. Some of its most outspoken leaders, notably Helen Suzman and Molly Blackburn, are admired by many black South Africans. But, so far, the PFP as a whole is far away from supporting the type of society envisioned in the ANC Freedom Charter.

The Black Sash, the white women's organization aiding victims of the pass laws, draws much of its support from PFP activists. □

conomic sector and a commitment to preserving individual and group rights.

Oliver Tambo has stated in numerous interviews that the ANC receives all its arms and military training from the Eastern bloc; but he continually adds that most of its budget (estimated at \$30 million) comes from the Scandinavian countries, with other significant contributions from Nigeria, Holland, and even Saudi Arabia (not noted as a pro-Soviet bastion). In an interview with *Time* magazine he stated, "We would like to get Western weapons as a gesture of support from the West."

Though the South African government prevents us from knowing Nelson Mandela's current outlook, the politics of his famous treason trial speech of April 20, 1964 can be best described as expressing a non-Marxian, libertarian African socialism. This may sound eclectic, but Mandela makes clear that his political convictions draw on various intellectual and moral traditions. "Some form of socialism must enable our people to catch up with the advanced countries of this world and to overcome their legacy of extreme poverty. But this does not mean we are Marxists." As a "parliament of all African people" and not a political party, the ANC should be open to all persons, including Communists, who are "united by the common goal of national liberation." But Mandela makes clear that while the CP's short-term goals coincide with those

of the ANC, the long-term goals are very different. Just as Communists supported liberation movements in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Algeria without those postindependence regimes becoming Communist, says Mandela, the same is likely to happen in South Africa.

Mandela then proceeds to outline why he is not a Marxist. It is worth quoting this section at length, because our foreign-policy establishment may once again swing staunchly behind the present South African regime as a means of staving off "Communist domination in strategically critical Southern Africa":

From my reading of Marxist literature and from conversations with Marxists, I have gained the impression that Communists regard the parliamentary system of the West as undemocratic and reactionary. But, on the contrary, I am an admirer of such a system.

The Magna Charta, the Petition of Rights, and the Bill of Rights are documents which are held in veneration by democrats throughout the world.

I have great respect for British political institutions, and for the country's system of justice. I regard the British parliament as the most democratic institution in the world and the independence and impartiality of its judiciary never failed to arouse my admiration.

The American Congress, that country's doctrine of separation of powers, as well as the independence of its judiciary, arouse in me similar sentiments.

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Given the composition of today's ANC—with its strong influx of exiled veterans of the Black Consciousness movement; close and growing informal ties to the UDF whose constituent organizations run the gamut of South African democratic politics; and relations with an emerging independent trade union movement that the ANC now acknowledges as a critical force in the movement for liberation and whose leadership is frequently radical, syndicalist, socialist, and anti-Stalinist—it is no surprise that such democrats as Bishop Tutu,

Nadine Gordimer, and the leaders of the Socialist International support the ANC and its pivotal role in the liberation movement. The UDF and the burgeoning independent trade unions too, of course, are vibrant, emerging forces in the South African black resistance.

Given the South African government's recent news blackout and unabated oppression, it is critical that overseas activists pressure their governments to break the economic and strategic ties that keep apartheid in power. □

David Bromwich

Nicaragua, Civil Liberties & U.S. Policy

In mid-October the Nicaraguan government announced a suspension of civil liberties, including the rights to free expression, free assembly, and privacy in the use of postal services. With these measures has come a new stringency in the censorship of the press. As democrats we are obliged to condemn the government's action: we believe that such measures can only be justified, by a legitimate government, under a threat to the very survival of the country itself in time of war. This justification was not, however, invoked by President Ortega. His pretext instead was the discovery of a bomb plot that suggested a larger but as yet unconfirmable design of urban terrorism against the government. By Ortega's own account, his defensive war against the Contras is proceeding successfully in any case. Had the government responded to the threat by strengthening the police, without greatly impairing the liberties of the people, it would have commanded respect.

This much ought to be said by any non-Communist who sympathizes with the dreadful crisis in which U.S. foreign policy has placed Nicaragua. And this much is not cant. But politics is a world of

causes and consequences, and not only of good and evil actions to be judged. The latest tactic of the Nicaraguan government was a predictable response—a response, indeed, predicted in these pages—to the strategy of harassment and terror that America has pursued in Nicaragua. As the Reagan Administrations' instruments of policy grow more brutal and its statements of policy more treacherous, the Nicaraguan government answers in kind. What inducement have we ever given them to practice what we preach? Let them offer to negotiate through the Contadora process, and we declare our contempt for the Contadora process. Let them appeal to international law in the World Court, and at once we refuse to recognize the court's jurisdiction. Let them stagger from the effects of a trade embargo, and we are morally piqued (“shocked, shocked”) that they now receive more trade from the Soviet Union.

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Since 1982 Ronald Reagan has been rewriting the story of Nicaragua, to his own specifications. Finally, and under immense pressure, that country is beginning to play the role in which he cast it from