ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED AFRICA SCHOLARS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note from the Editors ........................................... 1

I. South Africa

Students and Universities against the State .......... 1
Text of new Regulations against Universities ........ 5
Protest new Restrictions against Universities ...... 6
ASA Resolution on Restrictions ......................... 7
Detention of Eric Molobi .................................. 8
Statement of the ANC on Question of Negotiations .... 8
Statement of the ANC on the Release of Govan Mbeki 11
Statement of UDF on Democracy and Government .... 12
Disinvestment and South Africa ......................... 15
Statement by James Motlatsi, NUM ..................... 22
South African Churches and Unions call for Sanctions 24
Southern Africa Summer Program - Clark University 25
Symposium on Post-Apartheid South Africa ........ 26
New Resource on South Africa .............................. 27

II. Namibia

Labor Control and Worker Resistance .................... 27

III. Botswana

Pressure on Botswana from Bophuthatswana ........ 37

IV. Mozambique

The Contemporary Struggle in Mozambique ............ 44
Report on Homocide Massacre ............................ 50
Manjacaze: Massacre and Heroism ........................ 53
Film Review: Mozambique: The Struggle for Survival 55
Notes on Mozambique ........................................ 56

V. Announcements

Amnesty International publications on Africa ..... 57
New newsletter: "Human Rights in Kenya" ........ 57
Note from the Editors

This issue of the ACAS Bulletin was edited by Bill Derman and Christine Root. Thanks are due to Anne Schneller, Steve Burgess, and Dave Wiley for their help with typing and production.

ACAS depends upon the volunteer work of its members and friends. As the editorial team at Michigan State University completes its editorial assignment, ACAS wishes to express deep appreciation for their endeavor.

ACAS is pleased to announce 1988 plans for the Bulletin with a new editor, Warren 'Bud' Day of the School of Public Health, UCLA. As readers noted in the Fall 1987 issue, for which Bud was guest editor, home base will be the Southern Africa Resource Project of the University Religious Conference at UCLA, of which Bud is coordinator. Articles, op-ed pieces, news, announcements and other items of interest are invited from ACAS members and other readers. Please send them to Bud Day, ACAS BULLETIN, 3218 Cheviot Vista Place, #2, Los Angeles, CA 90034, or discuss your proposal by phone: (213) 204-5904.

The next issue of the ACAS Bulletin will include a major section focusing on "the liberation struggle in Western Sahara" prepared by ACAS members especially involved in that concern. All contributions for the next issue should reach the editor no later than February 1; deadlines for subsequent issues are April 15th and September 15th. Remember, it is YOUR ACAS BULLETIN.

Forging Alliances:

Students and Universities Against the State

by Bill Martin, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Illinois

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 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 under any breach of the regulations. To implement the new rules means would mean the elimination of almost all student activities on campus, 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 percent 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 what now appears to be a permanent state of emergency. 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 as NUSAS and 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 roles 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 the
National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the South African Students Congress (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 sea 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 universities. In taking this tack, the state builds upon a vicious campaign waged in both the conservative and liberal media calling for protection of academic freedom.

This kind of attack by the state was indeed well chosen, seeking to divide the university community at a very vulnerable point. The emergence 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 hardly calling for disruption of speeches, activists quite correctly pointed out that free speech could hardly 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 succeeding in dividing the university community, the state's new measures have 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" (an armored military vehicle).

What actions 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 setback by more precise formulations) is yet an open question. This
is, however, clearly a moment of historic opportunity for the universities, offering a clear alliance alongside the democratic movement.

The counterpoint to official university positions and statements is the unequivocal response of opposition organizations in defense 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 is, argued the NECC, increasingly dependent upon the only option that remains to ensure its hold on power, the deployment of violence. It is this, the attempt by the state to draw all opposition groups into the arena of violence, that provides the climate and rationale for the state's present demands that universities act as apartheid's policemen.

Strongly supportive of liberal universities' growing empathy with the struggle for educational transformation, and noting that 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 cognisance of this reality and to respond to it creatively, or to simply ossify in irrelevant traditions.

As the events of late October have indicated, it would indeed appear that a common front against the state has been forged.
"We call upon the international community to put pressure on the regime to abandon these unreasonable and provocative laws."
Eric Molobi, NECC National Coordinator

As part of the opposition to the state's new regulations, NUSAS, SANSCO and the NECC have urgently called upon the international community to protest directly to the apartheid regime and to press our own government and university administrations to take actions of support. Copies of messages and actions of solidarity should also be sent directly to NUSAS, SANSCO, and the NECC.

Send Your Protests To:

F. W. de Klerk
Minister of National Education
Union Buildings
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

Ambassador Piet Koornhof
South African Embassy
3051 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Secretary of State George Shultz
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Send copies of Your Protests To:

National Education Crisis Committee (NECC)
Darragh House - 2nd Floor
13 Wanderers Street
Johannesburg 2001
South Africa

National Union of South African Students (NUSAS)
South African National Students Congress (SANSCO)
South African Youth Congress (SAYCO)
mail to all these three c/o Wits SRC
University of the Witwatersrand
WITS 2050
South Africa
1. The council of the university (named in actual text) shall within the scope of the powers and duties conferred or imposed upon it by law with regard to the government and the general control of the affairs and functions of the university, take steps directed towards—

(a) the prevention of wrongful or unlawful interference with, intimidation of, or discrimination against students or staff members of the university or in the pursuit of their normal lawful activities as such students or staff members;

(b) the accomplishing of the disrupted and undisturbed continuance of the teaching and research activities and of all related supporting activities of the university in accordance with a predetermined academic calendar as determined by the responsible authority of the university;

(c) the deterring on the premises of the university of gatherings which are unlawful by virtue of the provisions of any law, the boycotting of classes or examinations or any other disruptive conduct;

(d) the prevention of staff members or students of the university or other persons from using—

(i) any supplies (including stationary);

(ii) any equipment (including vehicles, office equipment, printing presses, recording equipment, sound amplifying equipment or notice boards);

(iii) any buildings; or

(iv) any land improvements, other than buildings, of the university for any of the following purposes, namely:

(aa) the promotion of the aims or public image of any unlawful organization as defined in Section 1 of the Internal Security Act, 1982 (Act 74 of 1982);

(bb) the promotion, support or organizing of a boycott action against—

(aaa) any particular firm or against firms of any particular nature, class or kind;

(bb) any particular product or article or against products or articles of any particular nature, class or kind; or

(ccc) any particular educational institution or against educational institutions of any particular nature, class or kind;

(ee) the incitement or encouragement of members of the public to stay away from work or to strike in contravention of the provisions of any law;

(dd) the promotion, support or organizing of any campaign of civil disobedience in terms of which members of the public are incited or encouraged, or which is calculated to have the effect of inciting or encouraging members of the public to refuse to comply with or to contravene a provision of, or requirement under, any law;

(ee) the printing, publishing or dissemination of any public notice or publication in contravention of a notice issued under section 3 (1) of the Internal Security Act, 1982 (Act 74 of 1982); or

(ff) the commission of any act which endangers or which may endanger the safety of the public or the maintenance of public order;

(gg) ensuring that disciplinary steps be taken against any student or staff member who, to the satisfaction of the responsible disciplinary body, is found to have—

(i) been guilty of conduct constituting interference or discrimination or an attempt at interference or intimidation or discrimination as contemplated in paragraph (a);

(ii) been guilty of conduct which disrupted the teaching, research or related supporting activities contemplated in paragraph (b);

(iii) organized, promoted or taken part in any unlawful gathering, boycott or other disruptive conduct contemplated in paragraph (c); or

(iv) used any supplies, equipment, building or land improvement referred to in paragraph (d), (f) or (iv) inclusive, for any of the purposes set out in paragraph (d), (aa) to (ff), inclusive;

(hh) ensuring that disciplinary steps be taken against any student or staff member who is found, to the satisfaction of the responsible disciplinary body of the university, 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, which constitutes an act in respect of which the council is in terms of these conditions required to take preventive or disciplinary measures;

(ii) ensuring that disciplinary steps be taken against any student or staff member who, to the satisfaction of the responsible disciplinary body, is found to have at any place intimidat-
ASA Resolution - Denver 1987

At its annual meeting in Denver THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION passed the following resolution which ACAS members ought to see is implemented:

THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION,

NOTING with grave concern the promulgation on October 19, 1987, of regulations by the white minority regime in South Africa requiring universities to act as enforcement agencies, both on and off their campuses, for its so-called security legislation;

AWARE of the rejection of these regulation by South Africa universities and educational organizations;

FURTHER NOTING that these regulations would extend the apartheid regime's control of the university campuses;

CONCERNED that enforcement of these conditions will serve to alienate the universities of South Africa from the majority of the people of South Africa;

AWARE that these regulations are specifically intended to discourage the expression of support for democratic transformation by the South African academic community;

CONDEMNS these new regulations as a flagrant breach of internationally accepted standards of academic freedom;

REAFFIRMS its solidarity with the struggle of the academic community in South Africa to secure its existing right to freedom of inquiry;

DEMands that the Pretoria regime release all political detainees, particularly those members of the National Education Crisis Committee, the National Union of South African Students, and the South African National Students Congress detained for struggling for people's education in South Africa;

DIRECTS the Executive Board of the African Studies Association to investigate ways of ensuring ongoing material and moral assistance for the struggle for academic freedom in South Africa, particularly in cooperation with NECC, NUSAS and SANS CO, and to report in a timely manner to the membership in ASA NEWS on steps for securing such assistance;

FURTHER DIRECTS the ASA Board to devote the necessary resources to this; and

CALLS UPON the entire academic community in the United States to condemn this action by the Pretoria regime and to take concrete steps to assist the democratic movement for the transformation of education in South Africa.
Detention of Eric Molobi

Eric Molobi, executive committee member of the United Democratic Front and Coordinator of the National Education Crisis Committee was detained by the South African police in December 1981. Eric, who was a keynote speaker at the Michigan State University Conference on U.S. Educational Initiatives for South Africa and Namibia, has been one of the few remaining leaders not arrested or held in detention by the South Africa government. His detention makes evident again Pretoria's determination not to negotiate with genuine leaders of the South African people. We urge all ACAS members to write to Botha and the South African Embassy in Washington as well as organizing larger constituencies to protest Eric's detention and demand his freedom. In addition, an international campaign will begin for the release of five NECC members (including Vusi Khanyile and Eric). See the next ACAS BULLETIN for details.

Statement of the
National Executive Committee of the
African National Congress
on the Question of Negotiations
October 9, 1987

In the recent period, both the Pretoria regime and various Western powers have been raising the issue of a negotiated resolution of the South African question. Inspired by the deep-seated desire and unwavering commitment to end the apartheid system as soon as possible and with minimum loss of life and property, the National Executive Committee met and considered this matter with all due seriousness and attention.

We are convinced that the Botha regime has neither the desire nor the intention to engage in any meaningful negotiations. On the contrary, everything this regime does is directed at the destruction of the national liberation movement, the suppression of the democratic movement and the entrenchment and perpetuation of the apartheid system of white minority domination.

The racist regime has raised the issue of negotiations to achieve two major objectives. The first of these is defuse the struggle inside our country by holding out false hopes of a just political settlement which the Pretoria regime has every intention to block. Secondly, this regime hopes to defeat the continuing campaign for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions by sending out bogus signals that it is ready to talk seriously to the genuine representatives of our people (all emphasis are in the original, editors).

Fundamental to the understanding of the apartheid regime's concept of negotiations is the notion that it must impose its will on those it is talking to and force them to accept its dictates. In practice, the Botha regime is conducting a determined campaign of repression against the ANC
and the mass democratic movement. This includes the assassination of leaders, mass detentions, military occupation of townships and a programme of pacification carried out by the so-called Joint Management Centres (JMC's).

The racists are out to terrorise our people into submission, crush their democratic organisations and force us to surrender.

All these efforts will fail. Rather than create a climate conducive to genuine negotiations, they will only serve further to sharpen the confrontation within our country and bring to the fore the prospect of the bloodiest conflict that our continent has ever seen.

Our struggle will not end until South Africa is transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country. This is the only solution which would enable all our people, both black and white, to live as equals in conditions of peace and prosperity. The overwhelming majority of our people accept that the Freedom Charter provides a reasonable and viable framework for the construction of a new society.

We wish here to reiterate that the ANC has never been opposed to a negotiated settlement of the South African question. On various occasions in the past we have, in vain, called on the apartheid regime to talk to the genuine leaders of our people. Once more, we would like to affirm that the ANC and the masses of our people as a whole are ready and willing to enter into genuine negotiations provided the are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy. This, and only this, should be the objective of any negotiating process. Accordingly no meaningful negotiations can take place until all those concerned, and specifically the Pretoria regime, accept this perspective which we share with the whole of humanity.

We further wish to state again that the questions whether or not to negotiate, and on what conditions, should be put to our entire leadership, including those who are imprisoned and who should be released unconditionally. While considering these questions our leadership would have to be free to consult and discuss with the people without let or hindrance.

We reject unequivocally the cynical demand of the Pretoria regime that we should unilaterally abandon or suspend our armed struggle. The source of violence in our country is the apartheid system. It is that violence which must end. Any cessation of hostilities would have to be negotiated and entail agreed action by both sides as part of the process of the creation of a democratic South Africa.

Equally, we reject all efforts to dictate to us who our allies should or should not be, and how our membership should be composed. Specifically, we will not bow down to pressures intended to drive a wedge between the ANC and the South African Communist Party, a tried and tested ally in the struggle for a democratic South Africa. Neither shall we submit to attempts to divide and weaken our movement by carrying out a
witch hunt against various members on the basis of their ideological beliefs.

The conflict in our country is between the forces of national liberation and democracy on the one hand and those of racism and reaction on the other. Any negotiations would have to be conducted by these two forces as represented by their various organisational formations.

We reject without qualification the proposed National Statutory Council (NSC) which the Botha regime seeks to establish through legislation to be enacted by the apartheid parliament. This can never be a genuine and acceptable mechanism to negotiate a democratic constitution for our country.

In practice, the National Statutory Council can never be anything more than an advisory body which would put its views to the apartheid parliament and the regime itself, which retains the right to accept or reject those views. What the Botha regime proposes as a constitution-making forum - the National Statutory Council - is therefore nothing but a device intended to enmesh all who sit on it in a bogus process of meaningless talk which has nothing to do with any genuine attempt to design a democratic constitution for our country.

In addition, this National Statutory Council seeks to entrench and legitimize the very structures of apartheid that our struggle, in all its forms, seeks to abolish. The unrepresentative organs of the apartheid structure of repression, such as the racist tri-cameral parliament and the bantustans, cannot be used as instruments for the liquidation of the very same system they have been established to maintain.

An essential part of the apartheid system is the definition and division of our people according to racial and ethnic groups, dominated by the white minority. To end apartheid means, among other things, to define and treat all our people as equal citizens of our country, without regard to race, colour or ethnicity. To guarantee this, the ANC accepts that a new constitution for South Africa could include an entrenched Bill of Rights to safeguard the rights of the individual. We are, however, opposed to any attempt to perpetuate the apartheid system by advancing the concept of so-called group and minority rights.

Our region is fully conversant with the treacherous and deceitful nature of the apartheid regime. There are more than enough examples of agreements which this regime has shamelessly dishonoured. Taking this experience into account, we insist that before any negotiations take place, the apartheid regime would have to demonstrate its seriousness by implementing various measures to create a climate conducive to such negotiations.

These would include the unconditional release of all political prisoners, detainees, all captured freedom fighters and prisoners of war as well as the cessation of all political trials. The state of emergency would have to be lifted, the army and the police withdrawn from the
townships and confined to their barracks. Similarly, all repressive legislation and all laws empowering the regime to limit freedom of assembly, speech, the press and so on, would have to be repealed. Among these would be the Riotous Assemblies, the Native Administration, the General Laws Amendment, the Unlawful Organisations, the Internal Security and similar Acts and regulations.

We take this opportunity once more to reaffirm that the African National Congress is opposed to any secret negotiations. We firmly believe that the people themselves must participate in shaping their destiny and would therefore have to be involved in any process of negotiations. Being fully conscious of the way the Pretoria regime has, in the past, deliberately dragged out negotiations to buy time for itself, we maintain that any negotiations would have to take place within a definite time-frame to meet the urgent necessity to end the apartheid system and lift the yoke of tyranny from the masses of our people who have already suffered too long.

There is, as yet, no prospect for genuine negotiations because the Botha regime continues to believe that it can maintain the apartheid system through force and terror. We therefore have no choice but to intensify the mass political and armed struggle for the overthrow of the illegal apartheid regime and the transfer of power to the people.

We also call on all our people to reject and spurn Botha's so-called National Statutory Council and make certain that this apartheid council never sees the light of day.

We reiterate our appeal to the international community to join us in this noble struggle by imposing comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against racist South Africa to end the apartheid system and reduce the amount of blood that will otherwise have to be shed to achieve this goal.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Organisation of African Unity which, at its last Summit, adopted a Declaration on Southern Africa pledging Africa's support for the positions contained in the statement. We commend that Declaration to the rest of the world community as an important document laying the basis for concerted international action to banish apartheid racism, colonialism and war once and for all.

5th November 1987

The release of Comrade Govan Mbeki, Speaker of the ANC, today the 5th of November 1987 is an important event in long and bitter struggle of our people, a victory for the democratic forces throughout South Africa and the international community who have fought relentlessly for the unconditional release of our leaders and all political detainees in South Africa.
Comrade Mbeki emerged today after 23 years in the racist prisons unbowed and unbroken, a living legend in the minds of our people. We salute Mbeki and all political prisoners who have struggled even from within prison walls for this victory.

Even as we receive him with joy and renewed determination we remain acutely aware that his release in a real sense also means a change in prison address from the confines of Robben Island into the prison of South Africa.

His release will significantly enrich and augment the leadership of the democratic forces as a whole. And as the fight continues till all are released, we say: Let him speak to the people.
(From the ANC Information Department, Lusaka, November 5, 1987)

Democracy and Government
United Democratic Front

Note: The following paper was prepared by the United Democratic Front (UDF) executive for a meeting in Port Elizabeth on May 9, 1987 of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa. The Institute was set up by former Progressive Reform Party officials who resigned from the white-dominated parliament in 1985. The paper was presented by Andrew Borraine on behalf of the UDF, following the detention of the local UDF representative who was intended to read the paper. The UDF was asked to present a paper on "Democracy and Government; the UDF chose to re-name the paper "Towards a People's Democracy."

We in the UDF are engaged in a national democratic struggle. There are two aspects to take into account in this: national and democratic.

The struggle is national for two reasons: (1) We are involved in political struggle at national, as opposed to local, regional or tribal level. The struggle involves all aspects of the people -- workers, students, youth, women, etc. (2) We are seeking to create a new nation out of the historic divisions of apartheid.

Democratic also has two aspects: (1) A democratic South Africa is one of the goals of our struggle, in accordance with the statement in the Freedom Charter, "The people shall govern". (2) Democracy is the means by which we conduct the struggle. This relates to the character of our mass-based organization.

By developing an active mass-based organization and democratic actions within these, we are laying the basis for a democratic South Africa. Democratic means are as important as democratic goals.
Too often models are put forward which bear too little relation to what is now. The two must be related. A democratic South Africa will not be drawn up only after the struggle is won. Nor will it be developed through blueprints drawn up at conferences. A democratic South Africa can only arise through a process of involving the people -- a process that has already begun.

Let us begin by describing the present undemocratic system. Our opposition to the tricameral Parliament is well known. Given the fact of the last whites-only election and the National Party (NP) victory, it is important, however, to spell out our attitudes to Parliament as an institution of government and, especially, to explain why Parliament acts as a barrier to democracy.

Historically, Parliament and the structures derived from it -- the homelands and the BLAs -- have been seen as illegitimate. This has been so since 1910, when the first Constitution confirmed white domination and black exclusion. Subsequent events have confirmed this fundamental illegitimacy.

The ANC was formed in 1912 because of black exclusion from political power. Despite its peaceful protests, whites continued to consolidate their power. Until the 1950s, Mandela, Sisulu and others wrote to the Prime Minister calling for a National Convention. Their letters were not even answered. In 1961, the whites-only referendum on republican status was rejected, in the form of a three-day stayaway. Again, the calls made by Mandela for a National Convention were ignored and a decade of savage repression followed. Only thereafter did the ANC decide to resort to armed struggle.

The illegitimacy of Parliament has again been demonstrated in recent years. The UDF was formed in 1983 to oppose the tricameral Parliament. This was achieved through the boycott of the coloured and Indian elections. Despite clear rejection of these Houses, plus the BLAs, the state's response to resistance has been treason trials, emergency rule, the detention and death of activists.

Parliament is not only illegitimate, it can also not be taken seriously when it is evident that the NP itself left Parliament some years ago. The real struggle is between the extra-parliamentary government and the extra-parliamentary opposition. Parliament is no longer the de facto power in the country. Instead, it is ruled by the executive State President, the State Security Councils and the JMCs Joint Military Committees. Our lives are controlled by the SAP South African Police, SADF South African Defense Force and security police. In the townships, the factories and the schools, these act as a law unto themselves, waging a war against our activists.

These forces -- together with the vigilantes at their disposal -- are unelected and unaccountable and are the main hurdle to a democratic South Africa.
Parliament has been diminished as the site of power -- and any real challenge to white rule is met with the full weight of state repression. Parliament serves merely to lend an air of democratic respectability to a thoroughly undemocratic system.

Some believe that parliamentary democracy means the extension of the present system to those now excluded from it. But white parliamentary debate (which dominates the liberal press) is extremely narrow in its parameters -- and almost too narrow to be of any use. Those who engage in debate have no knowledge of South Africa's people (of the UDF, COSATU, SAYC and the ANC).

Worse still, Parliament tends to develop a consensus on several key issues without any serious questioning. Thus, for example, the ANC is branded as a violent and terrorist organization. Likewise, the legality of "hot pursuit" raids into neighboring states is never challenged. Nor are the actions of the SAP and the SADF within the country -- for fear of being "soft" on terrorism. The democratic right of socialists and communists to express their views are ignored, as are key aspects of workerist rights, especially redistribution.

Parliament is therefore to be rejected because, in sum, it is illegitimate, lacks real power and is too narrow in its focus of debate.

We accordingly oppose the present Parliament not only because we are excluded from it but also because the system itself is too narrow.

Many South Africans have been denied political representation and been oppressed and exploited. Hence, it is vital for us to be able to control every aspect of our lives. We do not mean that black faces must simply replace those of whites in Parliament. Instead, the working class must control -- in all key respects, from housing to education to transport to the production of food.

"The people shall govern" at all levels and in all spheres and will exercise effective control in all respects.

This concept is very different from that underlying most constitutional models (which are concerned with preventing group domination and the so-called "tyranny of the majority"). Such models reflect a belief in democracy as political parties all jostling for power.

It is of course vital that democracy allow debate. But this is not enough. It is also not enough for the people merely to be able to vote. They must also have direct control over how and where they eat, sleep, go to work, are educated, etc. These decisions must be made not by the government but by the people themselves. There must be mass participation and mass involvement of the people in doing the job themselves.

Some of these sentiments have been expressed by a Nicaraguan leader: effective democracy consists of adequate popular expression and
participation in a variety of social tasks. People must give opinions and be actively involved in government at all levels. They must not simply choose the "best" candidate to represent them for five years, like a new soap. They must be involved in a process.

The rudimentary organs of peoples' power have already begun to emerge in street committees, workers committees, defense committees, student SRCs, parent-teacher bodies, etc.

Disinvestment and South Africa

by Fred Curtis, Department of Economics, Drew University

"There has been more sell-out than a pull-out"

Jesse Jackson on General Motors disinvestment from South Africa

Until recently, transnational corporations (TNCs) have profited greatly from their investments in South Africa due to apartheid and the repression and exploitation of black South Africans. Now that apartheid is in the gravest extended crisis since the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the South African economy is in unending recession, U.S. TNCs are selling off or "disinvesting" their South African operations. This has long been a demand of the anti-apartheid movement and many have hailed such TNC disinvestment as a major, progressive step towards ending apartheid.

However, the TNC disinvestments undertaken to date have largely not been a major economic blow to apartheid. They have, instead, strengthened the profits of the disinvestment TNCs and, to a lesser extent, those of their former South African subsidiaries. The disinvestments have as yet had no major effect in eroding apartheid.

This does not mean that disinvestment is a poorly conceived strategy that should be abandoned. Quite the contrary. At the very least, corporate disinvestment is a sure sign that it is no longer possible for U.S. TNCs to conduct "business as usual" in South Africa, given the current crisis there and the divestment movement at home in the U.S. Instead, recognition of the contradictory effects of disinvestment means that much closer and critical attention must be paid to the specifics of TNC connections and disengagements from South Africa. It also has meant that the anti-apartheid movement has had to re-define its demands for disinvestment so that it does support liberation and class struggles and not merely provide another way for the TNCs to line their corporate coffers. (See the revised guidelines below.) To begin this re-evaluation of disinvestment, this article focusses on the landmark GM (and other recent) disinvestment from South Africa.

On October 20, 1986, General Motors Corporation announced that it would disinvest (sell) its South African operation, an operation employing 3,000 South Africans (60 percent of whom are black) and having assets of $180 million. By the end of 1986, Barclays Bank, Dunn and
Bradstreet, Eastman Kodak, Exxon, the Fluor Corporation, Honeywell, IBM and Revlon all made similar disinvestment announcements, followed by Allegheny International, McGraw-Hill and Xerox among others in 1987. These disinvestment decisions were part of a growing trend. In 1984, seven U.S. transnational corporations sold off their South African subsidiaries. Thirty-eight did so in 1985, and at least 45 have left in 1986 and 27 in the first seven months of 1987. This has resulted in a drastic 50 percent fall in U.S. direct foreign investments in South Africa, from a peak of $2.6 billion in 1981 to $1.3 billion in 1986. (Editors note: This apparent fall in the amount of U.S. direct investment in South Africa is partly due to the change in the rand/dollar exchange rate. Adjusting for this, U.S. investment in South Africa has been fairly stable, at a level of $2.4 billion in 1982 and $2.6 billion in 1986.)

Disinvestment is defined as the process of TNCs selling off their South African subsidiaries and thereby ending their direct foreign investment (ownership of productive assets) in South Africa. As a goal of the anti-apartheid movement, disinvestment is supported by the African National Congress, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the South African Council of Churches and the United Democratic Front, the Rev. Leon Sullivan and the Commonwealth countries (excepting the United Kingdom) among others. It is seen as reducing transnational corporate support of apartheid and South African capitalism in several ways. It eliminates U.S. TNC tax payments to the South African government and reduces inflows of foreign exchange, capital and technology, much of which (e.g., computers) directly benefits the strategic sector (military industrial complex) of the South African economy. It also provides political and symbolic support of those engaged in the liberation struggle as they have requested it.

Disinvestment from South Africa has resulted from three inter-related factors in the last four years. First, there is the worsening political situation in South Africa as seen in the killings, detentions without trial, and strikes. For example, in 1986, over 2,300 black South Africans were known to have been killed and over 25,000 detained without charge.

Second, there is the declining economic situation: the continued recession, the international financial crisis of South Africa, and the severe fiscal crisis of the state. This situation has resulted in declining average profit rates for U.S. TNC investments in South Africa. From a high of 31 percent in 1981, they fell to seven percent in 1982 and 1983, a loss of nine percent in 1984, and a positive profit rate of 4.5 percent in 1985 (the last increase due mainly to falling oil prices).

Third and finally, domestic (U.S.) anti-apartheid pressures have added to the worsening political and economic conditions in South Africa to convince many U.S. TNCs to get out. By mid-December, 1985, over 18 states and 60 cities had divested themselves of $18.5 billion of stock in South Africa-invested TNCs, while over 125 colleges and universities had divested themselves of an additional $3.9 billion of such stock. Further, over- riding President Reagan's veto, the U.S. Congress passed
the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 in October 1986. Provisions of this sanctions bill included bans on all new investment in South Africa, loans to the South African government and state institutions, export of nuclear-related equipment and technology to South Africa, and the import of South African agricultural products, food, uranium, coal, iron, steel, textiles, arms, ammunition, and military vehicles into the United States. Together, these three factors -- domestic U.S. anti-apartheid pressures and the worsening political and economic conditions in South Africa -- created significant pressure for U.S. TNC disinvestment from South Africa. Further pressure was also created by the recent conclusion of a Reagan-appointed panel that Reagan's policy of Constructive Engagement was a total failure.

The General Motors disinvestment is a case in point. GM's South African operation made no profits since 1981, faced expected unit sales in 1986 of 27,000 (down from 44,000 in 1984) and had a drop in market share from 10 percent in 1984 to seven percent in 1986. GM was faced with an increasingly militant and well-organized union labor force. Finally, GM faced continual and growing shareholder pressure for disinvestment; a resolution for disinvestment in 1986 getting an unusually high nine percent of the vote. For these reasons, as well as the rhetorical "disappointment in the pace of change in ending apartheid," GM decided to unload its South African operation.

The actual disinvestment agreement had several provisions. GM's South African operation was sold to a group of local white South African investors, managed by former GM South Africa executives, and headed by an American former GM executive. As part of the agreement, GM agreed to terminate a $90 million debt owed by the subsidiary to the parent corporation. The agreement also reportedly included a provision whereby GM can re-purchase its former subsidiary within the next five years. General Motors will continue to supply parts, components, and assembly kits to its former subsidiary and receive license fees for the use of its technology and trademark. In other words, GM's disinvestment means a change in ownership of the subsidiary, a change in the form of GM's involvement in South Africa, but no fundamental change in the operations of its former subsidiary.

Other recent disinvestments are similar in form to that of GM. Most disinvested U.S. subsidiaries were purchased by South African and not foreign capital. (This counters the anti-divestment argument that disinvestment would result in foreign replacing U.S. capital in South Africa.) Between January 1 and October 20, 1986, 14 U.S. subsidiaries were purchased by South African capital, three by U.S. capital, five by foreign capital and one was shut down. The disinvestments also usually maintained supply and other economic links between parent TNC and its former subsidiary. General Electric negotiated 42 separate distribution agreements for its products with its former subsidiary whose sales will remain 95 percent GE products. Coca-Cola will continue to sell Coke syrup concentrate to its former subsidiary. IBM will receive royalties on technology supplied, financial compensation for granting a monopoly franchise on its products, payments for contracts to supply IBM products,
services, spares and parts all to its former South African subsidiary. (These continued economic relations by disinvested U.S. TNCs result in part from U.S. sanctions legislation which does not prohibit such corporate economic connections with South Africa.)

Finally, to stifle criticism of their continued connection to South Africa, several TNCs (notably Coca-Cola and IBM) have also announced that they will continue their "social responsibility" programs. Such corporate philanthropy has sparked widespread opposition by workers and trade unions who see it as a sop to foreign critics and an excuse to refuse wage higher demands. As one union speaker put it, "When big business implements these things, they are often acting the same way the government does: undemocratically, unilaterally, and based on their own assumptions."

What are the effects of these recent U.S. TNC "disinvestments" from South Africa? They are not as clear or unambiguous as either the proponents or opponents of disinvestment would have it. The effects of such disinvestment can be divided into their impact on: (1) the South African state and apartheid, (2) the disinvesting TNCs themselves, (3) South African capital (the former subsidiaries), and (4) African workers and class struggles.

Given how it has been accomplished, TNC disinvestment has had little negative effect on the South African state or apartheid. Any drain of capital has been lessened by foreign exchange regulations which delay its repatriation and by the currently high price of gold. Any negative effects in terms of reduced access to technology, etc. have been reduced by the continued supplier relations between the TNCs and their former subsidiaries. The one clear negative effect of disinvestment is the clear statement it makes that the Botha reforms are inadequate and that the government cannot control popular resistance to apartheid.

Rather than any major negative pressure, the recent disinvestments may have reinforced apartheid in two ways. Disinvestment has ended requirements on the subsidiaries to pressure the government for the reform or abolition of apartheid, as required by the Sullivan Principles of corporate conduct. Thus, for example, it may now be easier for the former subsidiaries to limit wage increases, bust unions, etc. It also ended the prohibition on sales to the military and police. At least in the case of the GM disinvestment, the former GM operation will sell its products to the police and military, a major new market for the company. Thus, under current circumstances, disinvestment may provide easier access to sophisticated products and technologies (e.g., vehicles and computers) by the South African state, including its repressive apparatus.

Local South African capital (the former TNC operations) has benefited from the disinvestment in at least three ways. It has loosened restrictions on who these corporations can do business with, including the police and military and foreign customers (previously dealt with by the parent TNC), and thereby increased its potential markets. As mentioned, there are also fewer restrictions concerning hiring practices, desegregation of
facilities, etc. and less international scrutiny of its actions. Finally, in some cases, debt of the subsidiary has been forgiven or its assets have been sold to the new owners by the TNC at below market prices. These effects have all benefitted local capital.

However, there are also two potential negative effects for local capital. The local subsidiary now bears its own risk alone, without the greater resources of the parent TNC to fall back on. The subsidiary is also vulnerable to a cut-off from its monopoly supplier; with no direct investments in South Africa (assets to be lost), U.S. TNCs may be somewhat less rigid in their opposition to tougher and more thorough economic sanctions, including prohibitions on exports to South Africa. That is, increasing TNC disinvestment may weaken TNC opposition to the imposition of more stringent sanctions in the future.

As for the parent TNC, disinvestment means that it will not be directly extracting profit from South African workers but rather receiving a cut of the profit extracted from them by South African capital. This may clearly increase TNC profits. As Duncan Innes put it with respect to GM: "Under the circumstances, it makes a good deal of sense for General Motors in the U.S. to sell off unprofitable ventures like its South African subsidiary. In this way, it rids itself of having to pay costly overheads, wages, running costs, and a wide range of additional expenditures. Instead, it concentrates on raking in the profits from the supply of technologies, spare parts, etc."7

Finally, there are the effects of disinvestment on African workers, unions, and class struggles. In opposing disinvestment, TNCs have long employed the self-serving argument that disinvestment will increase black suffering by increasing African unemployment. However, the recent disinvestments have not resulted in any major increases in unemployment in the disinvested subsidiaries. As of August 17, 1986, of all the 8,679 South African employees whose employing firms were sold by U.S. TNCs in 1986, only 594 lost their jobs and this was arguably due more to the recession and poor sales than to the disinvestment itself. (Indeed, the management of the former GE subsidiary blamed the recession for its lay off of 200 employees.) Moreover, many U.S. TNCs made recession-related lay-offs prior to disinvestment. Early in 1986, IBM cut its work force by 18 percent, from 1900 to 1550; in the 15 months before its disinvestment decision, GM laid off 1,110 of its 4,156 employees, a 25 percent layoff.8

In the one case in 1986 where disinvestment has meant total economic disengagement from South Africa (including supply relationships), that of Eastman Kodak, the entire labor force of 466 was laid off. However, Kodak provided severance pay to all employees, up to one year's pay for employees with nine year's seniority; it also continued life insurance coverage and medical benefits for four months and provided all workers with job counselling. Thus, overall, disinvestment has little negative employment effects, especially when compared to African unemployment in South Africa of four to six million or 50 percent.

However, disinvestment may negatively effect some class struggles for
labor. In the case of the GM disinvestment in 1986, 1,800 workers staged a sit-in and strike over issues of severance pay, continued benefits, and worker representation on the board of the new company that purchased the subsidiary. GM eventually called in the security police to break the strike and fired 785 of the striking employees; the managing director was quoted at the time as saying, "We will make vehicles with or without the union." Further, increasing anti-union action may be expected as the former subsidiaries are no longer bound by the Sullivan Principles and other codes of corporate conduct, or under such close scrutiny of TNC shareholders. Yet, survey after survey shows African workers in favor of disinvestment. At its recent annual conference, the Congress of South African Trade Unions once again affirmed its stand in favor of TNC disinvestment.

Thus, the recent wave of U.S. TNC disinvestments from South Africa have had varied, contradictory and uneven effects on both anti-apartheid and class struggles. Some of these effects tend to erode apartheid and South African capitalism while others tend to reinforce them. These contradictory effects have resulted both from the specific ways the TNCs have "dis-invested" without disengaging and the particular circumstances in which they have done so, including the loose provisions of U.S. economic sanctions legislation.

This does not mean that disinvestment (and its associated tactic of divestment) is an incorrect strategy that should be scrapped. Rather, to date, disinvestment has been limited in its effectiveness, but this can be changed. To do so, the demand for corporate disinvestment must be redefined in two major ways.

First, the demand for disinvestment should include a requirement that the TNC negotiate with African workers and their unions and not only with white investors. Three South African unions (the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union, the Metal and Allied Workers' Union, and the Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union) have already drafted criteria for such negotiations on the basis of the GM case. These criteria include prior notice of disinvestment, disclosures of full disinvestment plans, provision of adequate data for workers to make their own decisions, and negotiation of the terms of the withdrawal with the workers. The drafted guidelines also specify minimal, non-negotiable conditions for TNC withdrawal, including provisions concerning benefits and severance pay and a no-retrenchment (layoff) clause. Demands for disinvestment should be demands for disinvestment according to such criteria and guidelines as developed by the affected workers and their unions.

Second, the demand for disinvestment should be broadened to a demand for complete TNC disengagement from South Africa -- as investor, supplier, licensor, etc., perhaps on the model of Eastman Kodak, as the revised guidelines presented below have done. After all, the purpose of disinvestment from the anti-apartheid position is to support liberation and class struggles in South Africa, not to increase TNC profits. To support this redefinition of disinvestment, the anti-apartheid movement
needs to continue to work for stronger legislated economic sanctions that would prohibit the continued supply of products, parts and technology by the disinvested TNCs to their former subsidiaries.

In addition, the current sanctions legislation needs to be amended and strengthened to prevent regressive "disinvestment", i.e., that which continues to support apartheid and South African capitalism. This would include export sanctions at the very least to the strategic sectors of the South African economy and a prohibition on all technology transfers. It could also include stronger provisions such as termination of all U.S. government contracts with TNCs having any direct investment or major supplier relationships with South Africa. This is particularly important in the face of a renewed and well-organized and -funded anti-sanctions campaign. Indeed, Ronald Reagan has refused to increase sanctions on South Africa as required by law, claiming that "they don't work."

Finally, we need to clearly acknowledge that all strategies have contradictory effects on class and liberation struggles. This is quite clear in the case of TNC disinvestment from South Africa. To ignore these contradictions is to give the TNCs, the South African state and all those who support apartheid more room in which to do so. No single strategy will ever unambiguously work to end apartheid. However, every strategy has the potential to do so. Disinvestment (and also divestment) is thus seen here as an integral part of a broad-based anti-apartheid, liberation struggle in South Africa, and should be supported as such.

Revised Guidelines

Since this paper was originally drafted, the major anti-apartheid organizations in the United States have refined their divestment guidelines. The American Committee on Africa, the American Friends Service Committee, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, TransAfrica, and the Washington Office on Africa adopted the following criteria:

We support an end to all corporate involvement in or with South Africa and Namibia. A corporation is doing business in or with the Republic of South Africa or Namibia if it, its parent, or its subsidiaries:

(1) have direct investments in South Africa or Namibia, or have entered into franchise, licensing, or management agreements with or for any entity in those countries;

(2) are financial institutions that have not prohibited new investment, loans, credits or related services, or the renewal of existing financial agreements, including those for the purpose of trade, with any entity in those countries; or

(3) have more than five percent of their common stock beneficially owned or controlled by a South African entity.

A company with operations in South Africa or Namibia for the sole purpose
Statement by James Motlatsi, President
The National Union of Mineworkers, South Africa

Editors' Note: The following was delivered as the keynote address to the conference on Sanctions against South Africa sponsored by the African Studies and Research Program and the Office of International Affairs at Howard University together with the Commission on U.S.-African Relations at the International Center for Development Policy on October 30-31, 1987.

Our strike is an event that will certainly stand out as a milestone in the history of the South African labor movement. It was the longest, costliest and the biggest of its kind in South Africa. It began with our union and the Chamber of Mines both declaring they would not move from their stated positions. This then set the stage for the labor showdown of the century between these two giants of labor and capital.

For three full weeks 340,000 miners in united, dignified and disciplined mass action demonstrated their rejection of slave labor conditions on the mines that have for 100 years been reinforced by apartheid laws. For ninety-five years we have been subjected to the most brutal form of repression in the work situation where we were denied the right to form trade unions, paid starvation wages, forced to work in an unsafe environment, separated from our families, and compelled to live in compounds similar to the Nazi-type concentration camps.

It is important before looking at what the strike meant to our union and members to analyze the reasons for the strike. The strike became inevitable when the mining bosses refused to increase workers' wages by a mere 30 percent which they could afford, given the massive profits they had earned. It should be noted that we, the black miners, are, apart from agricultural workers, the lowest paid industrial workers in South Africa, and yet, through our toil and labor we have earned more than 50 percent of South Africa's foreign exchange.

Strike action further became inevitable when the Chamber of Mines flatly refused to increase the number of holiday leave days for black miners who, because of the migrant labor system, only see their families and children for two weeks in a year. The Chamber's refusal to increase the holiday leave days was indicative of their determination to perpetuate the migrant labor system which the NUM congress declared as an evil system and a crime against humanity.

Faced with such intransigence it was clear that we could no longer avoid our destiny. On the 9th of August, 1987, we launched the biggest strike ever in South Africa, commencing with more than 340,000 brave miners. Both members and non-members downed tools and shut down 44 coal and gold mines. Only 260,000 of the strikers were recognized NUM
members, that is who we represent -- all miners!

In a very real sense, the strategy of our union movement grows out of a situation created and maintained by the apartheid regime. And it is the apartheid government and the South African business community who will have to make the key revolutionary decision on how much pressure they will take to make them change. Until that question is decided, the only alternative the trade unions and other democratic forces have is to shatter the harmony of state structures and business concerns from which we have been excluded by fraud, deceit and violence.

This is what is required to dismantle apartheid. The South African problem cannot be resolved without the total dismantling of apartheid and the handing over of state power to the legitimate leaders of our people -- Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo. South Africa has no future as long as apartheid is not dismantled.

We demand that the world not be deceived into believing that apartheid can be reformed. Apartheid is a cancer and the only way of dealing with cancer is to remove it or else it will kill millions of people! It is of course utopian to believe that the South African regime will abolish apartheid without massive pressure from all sides. We are fighting against difficult odds and thus cannot afford to confine ourselves to one weapon. In order to achieve victory, we have to put pressure inside South Africa and outside. Pressure must be maintained at the maximum level internationally as well.

What is required now is that the entire freedom loving world community should impose mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. Weak sanctions like those imposed by U.S. Congress last year lead to weak results. For maximum effect, what is required now is that the entire freedom loving world community should impose mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against South Africa.

As far back as 1959, Chief Albert Luthuli, the then President-General of the ANC, issued an appeal to the people of the world asking them to stop having trade links with South Africa. This form of pressure was recognized then as a peaceful method of ending apartheid. As testimony to this fact of waging a non-violent struggle, Luthuli received a Nobel Peace Prize.

Sanctions are still today the most peaceful method of helping to bring an end to apartheid. Only the world community can help us to avoid an escalating civil war in South Africa. Disappointingly the major leaders of western powers such as Great Britain, West Germany, and the U.S.A. still refuse to support our struggle against apartheid by arguing that sanctions would harm the black workers more than the apartheid regime. Ironically it would seem that Mr. Reagan believes that sanctions and trade boycotts work effectively when applied against Nicaragua, Cuba and Poland. Mr. Reagan seems to love South African workers more than Nicaraguan and Cuban workers. The truth of the matter is that Thatcher and Reagan love Botha and support apartheid. Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl are seen by
oppressed South Africans as the butchers of the 1980's because the money South Africa earns through trade with their countries enables the government to buy weapons for the army and police in order to kill hundreds of children and women in the townships. Margaret Thatcher's recent refusal at the Commonwealth summit to impose sanctions against South Africa has convincingly proved that she is a racist and a supporter of apartheid.

If all trade with South Africa were to come to an end, the government would be greatly weakened and our people's struggle would become that much less difficult. Of course, only South African people can finish the job. We alone can overthrow apartheid. We alone can build the free South Africa of the future. But our friends in other countries need to help us in every way possible.

Because our victory over apartheid is certain, we have started looking beyond apartheid into a post-apartheid South Africa. We are so certain of our victory that our people have started thinking, discussing and working towards a post-apartheid society. Our task, therefore, is to prepare, organize, mobilize, study, agitate and move forward to people's power in reality and not in slogans only. Your task is to intensify your tireless efforts in the anti-apartheid struggle, such as the embassy demonstrations, disinvestment campaigns and the boycotts of multinationals, like Royal Dutch Shell, with apartheid blood on their hands.

We call upon all those who support our struggle for freedom to join us as we prepare for a post-apartheid South Africa, and assist us to achieve our freedom.

The 1987 strike was a mere dress rehearsal. The experience gained in this battle against the commanding heights of the South African economy will be the greatest teacher for the future in our struggle against exploitation and oppression.

South African Churches and Unions Call For Comprehensive Sanctions

Telex from Frank Chikane, General Secretary, South African Council of Churches, Oct. 9, 1987

For us, sanctions must be understood comprehensively to include all non-military action by the world community of states that is intended to contribute to the immediate ending of apartheid. Sanctions will include economic, military, diplomatic, cultural and any other action that seek to exclude South Africa from the community of nations and is designed to increase the cost of maintaining apartheid especially to those who benefit most from it.

The general view of the unions is that while sanctions may be painful to the people initially, the choice is to suffer pain forever or to suffer
increased pain over a shorter period in order to extirpate the root causes of the suffering of the people. The Second National Congress of COSATU called for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions, monitored by the United Nations Security Council. COSATU pointed out that selective sanctions, as applied hitherto, are actually dangerous and counter-productive because they create serious regional unemployment, further monopolization of the South Africa economy and generally serve the interests of the transnational corporations and state. COSATU has called on the world community to accept the fact that the ending of apartheid means a change of government, for if they come to accept that reality they may be able to prescribe the correct combination of sanctions.

The South African churches have recognized the fact that the authentic voice of the oppressed people as expressed through their unions and political organizations has been a call for sanctions with a sting against the South African Government. In response to the problems that may be created by sanctions, the Methodist Church of South Africa has pointed out that the responsibility for any hardship that may arise lies with the South African Government and not with the people who are struggling to free themselves from the snare of apartheid. The Catholic Church in southern Africa has pointed out, in an explanatory paper, that the issue of who controls investments is indissolubly bound up with the question as to who controls society as a whole. Thus they argue, the question is not simply one of job loss from disinvestment or job creation with investment. Those who are concerned with job creation must also be concerned with the creation of a new economic structure in South Africa.

In conclusion, we wish to point out that the issue of sanctions against the apartheid regime must be seen in the context of the total struggle against apartheid. It will not be sanctions alone that will bring about an end to apartheid but the determined struggle of the people of South Africa. Their call to the international community is that if they cannot see their way clear to support their just struggle the least they can do is to stop supporting and propping up the apartheid regime. Sanctions are one way in which the international community can embark on a programme of "constructive disengagement" from the apartheid system and thereby leaving it open for the people to smash it, and extirpate it from the face of the earth.

The South African Council of Churches joins the majority of the people of South Africa in calling for immediate comprehensive and mandatory sanctions that are aimed at sapping the energy of the apartheid state. We believe that the imposition of such sanctions is the only way to effect change in South Africa with minimum violence.

A SOUTHERN AFRICA SUMMER PROGRAM
June 8 - July 12, 1988
Clark University
Worcester, MA 01610
Phone: 617-793-7201

Clark University offers a four week summer program of two
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I. PLANNING IMPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

will explore the way the institutions, shaped under colonial rule, and in some cases persisting after independence, perpetuate southern Africa's distorted resource patterns negatively affect employment, the environment and health, education and housing; and study other third world experiences to discover how to restructure those institutions in ways more likely to provide jobs and fulfill the basic needs of the region's inhabitants.

II. LAW, STATE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

will evaluate the possibilities and limits of the use of the state and law in southern Africa; and analyze the consequences of other third world countries' attempts to improve bureaucracy and development administration, planning public enterprise, decentralization, and popular participation.

PARTICIPANT RESEARCH: The participants will develop and present materials related to their research (whether for theses, articles, or books) to share and learn from each other's varied training and backgrounds.

CORE FACULTY: Ann Seidman, Clark University, Director; Subsiso Nkomo, Lincoln University; Renose Mokate, Lincoln University; Robert Seidman, Boston University Law School; Richard Ford, Clark University.

COSTS: Tuition and fees, $1,500; housing (with kitchens), $464; food costs, $420. UNETPSA will provide financial assistance for a limited number of qualified applicants. Interested graduate students should apply to the above address.

SYMPOSIUM: POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

at the University of Pittsburgh

SYMPOSIUM III: AFTER APARTHEID

March 17-19, 1988

CALL FOR PROPOSALS, PAPERS AND PANELS

Plans are now being made for the Third Symposium in the Series in Post-Apartheid South Africa and proposals are now being invited for Panels and Papers. The Symposium will focus on the following topics among others: A New Constitution; The Role of Women; Education and Health Care; Security and the Military; International Relations.

Participants in Symposium I included:
Dr. John Dommisse, Dr. Ben Magubane, Dr. Renosi Mokate, Dr. Sibasiso Nkomo, Dr. Ann Seidman, Professor Bob Seidman, Attorney Arthur Serota, Godfrey Sithole, and Jacqueline Williams.
Participants in Symposium II included:
Cameron Duodu, Dr. Vernon Domingo, Dr. David Hirschmann, Dr. Allan Isaacman, Johnathan Jansen, Aggrey Mbere, Dr. William Minter Dr. Ann Seidman, Professor Bob Seidman, Dr. James Turner and Dr. Michael Yates.

Topics Discussed thus far have included:
A New Constitution; Economic Issues; Social/Political Issues; South Africa and the USA; Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa; Political Action Against Apartheid; Shedding the White Man's Burden; Labor After Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Society.

FOR INFORMATION WRITE:
Post Apartheid South Africa: Symposium III
Department of Black Community Education Research and Development
University of Pittsburgh
230 S. Bouquet Street, 3T01 F.Q.
Pittsburgh, PA. 15260
412-648-7540

NEW RESOURCES


CUTTING "THE WIRE":
LABOR CONTROL AND WORKER RESISTANCE IN NAMIBIA
by Pippa Green

May Day 1987 marked a milestone in Namibian labor history. For the first time, more than 20,000 black workers laid down their tools to celebrate International Labor Day, in a move that signified the growing strength of the internal trade union movement. Over 10,000 workers gathered in Katatura, the African township outside Windhoek, the nation's capital. About 5,000 workers from the Tsumeb Corporation Ltd. (TCL) copper mine in Tsumeb turned their backs on an offer of triple pay to put their weight, publicly, behind six major demands to the South African government. Workers met at Swakopmund and there were gatherings at several other towns.

Throughout this territory on the southwestern coastline of Africa, illegally occupied by South Africa, workers cried out for a living wage,
an end to the system of single-quarter housing, the withdrawal of South African troops and the implementation of UN Resolution 435, the United Nations plan for elections, to hasten the country's independence.

The May Day meetings were the first public sign that the fledgling trade union movement had found its feet. After a decade of near quiescence on the part of workers' organizations, in the past two years three militant unions have been established under the wing of the SWAPO-affiliated National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). This resurgence has drawn active support from the South Africa trade union movement.

In 1984/85, the South African (black) National Union of Mineworkers was succeeding in organizing an industry well known for its repressive labor relations. The union made gains in the diamond mines of Namaqualand in the northwestern Cape, near the Namibian border. Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM) workers in Oranjemund asked the NUM to help them organize and fight for better wages and working conditions, but a decree by the MPC government made it illegal for unions outside the territory to operate in Namibia.

Nevertheless, organization on the mines could not be halted. Its first manifest sign was last year when 3,000 CDM workers boycotted the company's 50th anniversary celebrations. Workers committees, which had been operating in all the mines, came together to form the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN), with Ben Uulenga, SWAPO activist and ex-political prisoner, as general secretary. The union now claims a signed-up membership of 8,500 out of a total of about 14,000.

Two other unions, like MUN affiliated to the NUNW, have also been formed in the past year. The Namibia Food and Allied Union (NAFAU), operating principally in the traditionally militant fishing industry, was launched late last year, and within months of its formation, led a successful strike over wages among Luderitz rock lobster fishermen, as well as two other strikes. It soon claimed about 6,000 members in 27 companies, and has been growing. But the recent mass detention of striking NAFAU workers at the Luderitz compound earlier this month is evidence that the unions are still endangered by repression. The most recent NUNW affiliate is the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union, launched on May 24 1987. Based on the merger of 31 workers' committees, it is reported to have a potential membership of 10,000-15,000.

"The Wire System": Contract Labor in Namibia

Trade unions in Namibia are intensely political. The reason for this can be sought in the territory's long history of colonialism and the way in which political domination has shaped its economy.

Arguably, the single most important factor in Namibia's political economy -- one which has shaped the character of the national liberation movement, SWAPO, and has been both a heartfelt grievance of workers and the major obstacle to worker organization -- has been the system of migrant contract labor.
Since 1926 the contract labor system has channeled labor into the country's primary extractive export industries: mining, fishing, canning and ranching. About two-thirds of the entire labor force is made up of contract workers -- a higher proportion of migrant labor than anywhere else in the world. The proportion might have declined slightly in recent years, with the modification of pass laws which have strictly controlled the mobility of African workers. The UN Institute for Namibia has estimated that out of a total population of 1.6 million (of whom only 85,000 are classified "white" under South African-imposed race laws), about half a million are economically active. Of these, nearly half are engaged in subsistence agriculture. Researchers complain that accurate official and current statistics are difficult to come by but in 1977 the UN Institute estimated that out of 170,000 African workers employed outside of subsistence agriculture, 110,000 -- just under two-thirds -- were migrant workers.

The contract labor system is known among African workers as "odalate" -- a derivation of the Afrikaans work "draad" meaning "wire". Some commentators interpret this to refer to the tags which contract workers in single-sex compounds had to wear around their wrists for the duration of their employment contract; others say it is symbolic of the ties that bound a worker to his employer. Until the general strike of contract workers in 1971/2, a "contract" meant a labor contract of indenture, the breaking of which was a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment. Contracts were not entered into between individual workers and employers, but were centrally controlled and arranged in the reserves which had been proclaimed for indigenous people.

In 1920, three years after the League of Nations entrusted South Africa with a mandate to govern the territory, half of Namibia -- the "Police Zone" -- was designated for some 3,000 settler-owned ranches. One quarter was set aside for indigenous Namibians who then numbered about 200,000. These areas, first known as "reserves" allocated according to "tribe", were later renamed Bantustans. Various decrees, including one which made it illegal for former pastoralists to "wander abroad" if they were "idle or vagrant" were used to procure labor. In 1926, the central recruiting agency SWANLA was established by the mining houses and later taken over by the administration.

By far the majority of contract workers are from Ovamboland in northern Namibia, the most densely populated and poorest reserve. The proportion of economically active men migrating from Ovamboland increased from less than 4 percent prior to World War II to over 67 percent in 1969 -- an index of the increasing poverty of the area and one reason, suggest Robert Gordon, author of an important history on Namibian labor, why the administration could afford to liberalize the contract labor system in the wake of the 1972 hunger strike. Hunger, not criminal sanctions, now drove people to work.

SWANLA's task was not only to recruit and police the labor supply, but also to allocate it across the economy and so protect lower-paying
sectors, principally agriculture and domestic service.

Vinnia Ndadi, now an exiled SWAPO activist from northern Ovamboland, vividly described his first experience at a SWANLA recruiting station in 1946. Writing in 1974 he said: "Once accepted, I was examined and classified as a Grade C boy. Workers were -- and still are -- classified according to their health... That's the only important thing to a recruiting agent -- he doesn't want to buy a sick or weak person unable to perform the work he is contracted for... They graded the very strong and healthy ones "A boys", those with good health and not very strong as "B boys", and the youngest and weakest as "C boys"... After my physical examination I was tagged with a number and my "C" classification. I had to wear this tag on a string around my neck."

Ndadi gives a grim description of a SWANLA transit camp at Grootfontein where the men had to wait until their prospective employers sent their fares. "Finally", he continues, "they assigned you a job: 'Johannes! You are going to milk cows on "X" farm; Samuel! you'll work at the Tsumeb mines" and so on. You couldn't refuse.

Recruited workers were housed in vast single-quarter compounds. Women and children were not allowed to accompany them, nor even visit them, and contracts for workers from the northern reserves were often as long as 30 months.

As South Africa tightened its own pass legislation in 1945 and 1952, so it did in Namibia. Qualifications for permanent residence were made far more stringent, Africans who were not on a labor contract were not allowed to be in an urban area for more than 72 hours, and, in terms of administrative decrees, "virtually no women outside the Police Zone were permitted to obtain jobs in the towns or where their husbands worked."

For 28 years, until the general strike of 1971/72, SWANLA controlled all aspects of contract workers' lives. By then, contract workers totalled 43,000, or 83 percent of the black labor force. The vast majority of these were from Ovamboland.

The Compound System and the General Strike of 1971/72

If Jannie de Wet, the "Commissioner General for the Native People of South West Africa", ever regretted making the statement which precipitated the largest general strike in Namibia, he did not say so. Ovambo, de Wet had declared, were quite happy with the contract labor system. It was not a form of slavery because Ovambos signed contracts "voluntarily" without anyone forcing them to do so.

The statement, echoed by the Minister of Bantu Administration, confirmed workers' worst suspicions that "the Administration would not listed to reason." The strike, which began on December 13, 1971, was more than a spontaneous outburst of anger and desperation. Hinananje Nehova, a contract worker at the time and SWAPO member explained: "We used de Wet's statement to tell our fellow workers: 'See the South
Africans are saying that we are pleased with this system, so we should do something to show we don't really want it. If we break this system with a strike, we could have the freedom to choose our jobs and move freely around the country; to take our families with us and to visit our friends, wherever they are."

On December 13, 6,000 contract workers housed in the Katatura compound refused to work. The strike quickly spread to the fisheries in Walvis Bay, and the mines in Grootfontein, Rehoboth and Tsumeb. By the end of the month, there were reports that even farm laborers were walking off their jobs.

Two days after the Katatura workers had downed tools, their compound was surrounded by heavily armed police, who walked into workers' rooms, smashing their possessions and conducting searches. Workers who left to buy food were immediately arrested and forced to pay admission of guilt fines. Police reinforcements were flown into Walvis Bay from South Africa, strikers meetings were violently broken up, eight were shot dead, three wounded, 267 detained without trial and 12 were charged with inciting the strike. Though the Government divided Namibian workers into 11 ethnic groups, each with their own "Bantustan", not only Ovambos supported the strike, but also Namas, Damaras, Hereros and "coloureds", and workers living inside and outside the compounds. In all, between 13,500 and 20,000 workers supported the effort.

The strikers demanded the freedom to sell their labor on the dearest market, the abolition of the pass system, the right of workers to live with their families, equal pay for equal work, the abolition of job reservation, and, fundamentally, the abolition of the contract or "wire" system of indentured labor.

It was hardly surprising that the strike originated in the Katatura compound, the most notorious of the compounds which housed contract workers. The U.S. jurist, Judge William Booth, an observer at the subsequent trial of the 13 alleged strike leaders, found the buildings "barrack-like in construction, cut off by barricades of barbed wire, broken glass parapets and the stench of urine; conjugal living was not allowed; washing hung from lines strung across the courtyards while men washed in concrete troughs; the dormitories were grimy, the kitchen unsanitary -- flies had settled on food which was served through openings in a wire fence. the mealie porridge was slapped into bowls with a shovel containing a conglomeration of liquified vegetables..."

Compounds have been an important means of control over labor -- barbed wire and broken glass discourage "desertion", high windows make it difficult for "illegals" without passes to escape pre-dawn police raids, and controlled access can be used to hamper workers' organization. In the 1971/72 strike, compounds were sealed off, placing striking workers under an effective state of siege.

The strikers had decided to return to the reserves if their demands were not met and, in mid-January, at least 13,500 were transported back to Ovamboland. While the Administration failed to recruit sufficient replacements, it managed to stifle the resistance in Ovamboland, where
the Bantustan "government" called for large police and troop reinforcements. "What had started as a non-violent strike," notes David Soggot in his recent book, "led to the transfiguration of Ovamboland into an occupied zone." In February 1972 the Administration declared martial law in Ovamboland.

In spite of promises to the contrary, little changed in the contract labor system after the strike. Perhaps most important was that breaking a contract was no longer treated as a criminal offense. But other changes were widely criticized as being cosmetic. SWANLA's recruiting role was taken over by tribal authorities. "The pre- and post-strike migrant labor systems were different in technique, identical in impact: to prevent Namibian migrant workers benefiting from wage competition between employers to attract labour." The authorities used the Bantustan labor bureaux to "blacklist" anyone suspected of being an "agitator", strike leader or SWAPO member.

The workers had failed in their immediate goal, but the strike had helped to mobilize workers on a large scale and to put the national liberation movement on center stage. The principal strike breakers, after all, were not employers, but the security forces of an occupying force, which intervened decisively not at the workplace, but in the Bantustan labor reserves. The quest for a basic right in many other industrialized societies -- the right to sell labor on a free market -- was inextricably bound up with the quest for freedom from colonial rule.

Adjusting the Wire

Faced with mounting external and internal pressures, the South African-appointed Administrator General repealed some of the most hated sections of the pass laws in 1977. Africans were no longer required to carry passes and could remain in an urban area for more than 72 hours without a permit. However, employment was still controlled and Africans were compelled to seek jobs with official permission, while employers and workers had to register contracts. A critical shortage of African housing in urban areas has also been used, as it has in South Africa, to further control influx. Today, many workers still live reluctantly in single-sex compounds, risking police raids if the "harbor" their families.

For fishery workers in Walvis Bay, 1977 brought even less relief. That year, South Africa incorporated the Namibian port town into the Cape Province and administered it as part of South Africa. Pass laws which pertained to Africans in South Africa were applied. Workers without passes were liable to arrest and deportation to Bantustans.

The 1980s saw the reemergence of tighter controls over employment allocation. At the beginning of the decade, employment was made contingent on possession of an identity document, which also facilitated recruitment of conscripts to the SWA Territory Force (SWATF). Failure to produce the document could incur a R500 fine or six months in jail.
Today most black workers are still subject to severe economic hardship and suffer discriminatory housing, unemployment and health conditions. Single-sex compounds are still used to suppress organization. Recently SWAPO reported that the police had surrounded a compound in Luderitz housing fishery workers and detained "four truckloads" of striking workers, all members of the NUNW-affiliated Namibia Food and Allied Union.

This decade has seen frequent raids on squatter camps, which migrant workers have established outside of the compounds in order to live with their families and on compounds themselves, to evict and deport women and children to the Bantustans. The demand for the right to a family life, expressed so graphically in 1971/72, has still not been won.

**Namibia's Colonial Economy**

The young trade union movement faces pressing economic problems. Namibia's colonized economy is extremely dependent, importing 85 percent of all its consumer goods, and strongly skewed towards the extractive, export sector — mining, fishing and, before the drought, karakul breeding. Mining, which contributes 26 percent of the gross domestic product, is entirely foreign-owned and controlled. Three transnational corporations control 95 percent of Namibia's mines. They are Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM) owned by South Africa's deBeers, the Rossing Uranium Mine, owned by the British company Rio Tinto Zinc, and the Tsumeb Corporation Ltd. (TCL), in which the British company Consolidated Goldfields and the U.S. company Newmont Mining have major interests.

Fishing employs three-fifths of the economically active population, but contributes only one-sixth of the GDP, while white commercial agriculture is mainly geared towards production and export of karakul wool and beef. Unlike South Africa, where there exists a large and influential manufacturing sector, secondary industry in Namibia is negligible. In 1984, manufacturing contributed only about 5 percent of the GDP and employed about one-sixteenth of the economically active population. The underdevelopment of the manufacturing sector is perhaps one reason for the relatively tardy development of trade unions in the territory.

Namibia is one of the richest African regions in mineral resources. It also harbors one of the poorest populations. A 1986 British Oxfam survey found that Gross National Product per capita was $1,259 — but only 22 percent of that went to the black population who comprise 84.5 percent of the total population. In the northern Namibian Bantustans — principally Ovamboland — 99 percent of black wage earners lived below the subsistence level, while black babies were seven times more likely to die before the age of one than were white babies. A 1987 survey found that some urban households in Namibia "survive" on incomes as low as R30-R50 a month. (See end of article for US$/Rand exchange rate. In terms of buying power, the rand is almost equivalent to the dollar.) While whites earn an average annual income of R20,000, black annual
income is nearer R1,000.

Wages, especially on ranchers' farms and in domestic service, are notoriously low. There are no comprehensive wage statistics available so figures tend to be gleaned from journalistic and academic surveys. In 1986, domestic servants in Katatura were found to earn an average of R60 a month, while in the peri-urban areas, wages were even lower -- between R50 and R70 a month. In the early 1980s, minimum cash wages for farm workers were around R16 a month, the lowest recorded wage being R4. Historically the mines have paid the highest wages and mining jobs have thus been the most sought after by contract workers. In 1985, Rossing Mine said its minimum wage was R356 a month (about $178 at current exchange rates), and CDM said it paid R310.

Average wages in the Walvis Bay fishing industry in 1984 were between 50 and 65 cents an hour -- less than half the subsistence hourly rate of R1.80 calculated by the University of Port Elizabeth in South Africa. In early 1987, Post Office and municipal workers struck claiming they were paid R80 and R96 per month, respectively.

Workers have also experienced severe inflation. Namibia has suffered an inflation rate of 15 percent a year, and food prices have risen so dramatically that local newspapers showed in 1984 that the cost of living in urban areas in Namibia was much higher than in any urban area in South Africa. It is higher still in the northern Namibian Bantustans.

The drought of 1981, a fall in the world market prices of copper and diamonds, and the vulnerable nature of the distorted export economy have resulted in large numbers of workers being laid off. Last year, unemployment was estimated as high as 55 percent in some areas, with a general level among all race groups at around 30 percent. This is the economic environment in which the new unions operate.

Trade Unionism in Namibia

The unions have also had to deal with harsh political conditions. Until 1978, African workers were prohibited from joining registered trade unions. Nor were African workers allowed to utilize the tedious procedures in the industrial relations machinery to legally strike. There is nevertheless a history of worker resistance in Namibia, ranging from acts of individual rebellion -- like "desertion" and sabotage -- to strikes and stoppages.

The first recorded strike in Namibian history was in 1893 at the Gross Atavi mine near Tsumeb. Between 1916 and the 1971/72 general strike, there were at least 24 recorded strikes on the mines, in the fisheries and even on a farm. The actual figure is probably higher, as there is evidence to suggest 43 collective actions between 1950 and 1971. In the early 1920s the South African-based Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) organized fishery workers at Luderitz, but the union was short-lived. More serious attempts were made by the
Western Cape-based Food and Canning Workers Union in 1949. The deportation from Namibia of union organizers and sustained police harassment put an end to the union's activities in 1953. Practically the only union for black white-collar workers that operated with any success was the Teachers Association founded in Ovamboland in 1971.

While trade unions had been suppressed, workers found an important channel to voice their major grievance -- the contract labor system -- through the national liberation movement, SWAPO. SWAPO, not a trade union but a political party, does not intervene in the day-to-day bread and butter issues of workers' lives. But migrant workers played a central role in its founding and activities and it is this close relationship, nurtured over the years, that helps explain the political nature of the new generation of Namibian unions.

The general strike highlighted the concrete connections between political and economic demands. Contract workers in Ovamboland were active in a boycott in 1973 of the elections for the Ovamboland Bantustan government, while between 1973 and 1975 there were at least 70 strikes in all sectors of the economy. As hopes for independence grew, and as economic conditions deteriorated, conflict between workers and the authorities became more intense.

In 1978, thousands of contract workers in Windhoek stopped work to protest against the shooting of 26 workers by Bantustan auxiliary police, forcing the authorities to withdraw the auxiliaries from Katatura township. Six major strikes were reported between 1979 and 1983 involving workers on the diamond, copper, tin and uranium mines and in the fisheries. Most involved pay and working conditions, but at CDM, in 1983, a confrontation loomed between workers and management after the security police arrested one workers and confiscated SWAPO insignia in the compound. Management was forced to distance itself from the police and promised to intervene to retrieve both the worker and the confiscated material.

In 1978, in the wake of some labor reforms in South Africa, African trade unions were allowed to register in Namibia. But a clause prohibiting affiliation of unions to political parties excluded a national union formed some eight years earlier. The National Union of Namibian Workers was formed by SWAPO in 1970, but operated quietly until the labor reforms were announced. To prevent previously all-white unions co-opting African worker organizations, the NUNW "seized the initiative" and began operating openly.

The NUNW's attempt to establish structures at factory level coincided with the South African regime's plan to hold "internal elections" in Namibia. Workers were warned they would be charged if they struck illegally, and several NUNW organizers were detained under security legislation. In 1980, both the SWAPO and NUNW headquarters in Windhoek were closed by the police, and all NUNW's assets were confiscated or frozen. The union was once again driven underground and this time, also into exile.
The recent resurgence of trade union activity in Namibia can be partially attributed to some of the resounding gains made by workers across the border in South Africa, where the black trade union movement had become an established part of the political scene. The upsurge has also led to concerted attempts by mine managements and the authorities to stifle or co-opt independent worker organization. Rossing, for instance, established a company employee representative council. The Administrator General stated in 1983 that no industrial agreement would be enforceable if unions were not registered. The previously all-white South West Africa Mineworkers Union based in the Tsumeb copper mine managed to recruit 300 of the 5,000 black workers in an organizing drive, while there have been attempts to set up two anti-SWAPO labor bodies, at least one with money from the AFL-CIO's African-American Labor Center (AALC).

The NUNW has gained international recognition, at the expense of SWACOL (the federation to which the SWA Mineworkers Union is affiliated). NUNW has now been recognized by, among others, the International Labor Organization, the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, the Commonwealth Trades Union Council, and by several national trade union bodies. International trade union secretariats, associated with the IGPTU, have also begun supporting the NUNW affiliates, the MUN and NAFAU.

The development of Namibia's trade union movement reflects its environment. Unions have emerged out of a national -- and politically active -- federation. In a society where the political issue of the day is an end to contract labor and national independence from colonial domination, the unions have had to confront political questions directly. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that while unions are an integral part of the national liberation movement, they nevertheless have specific and independent tasks to perform. The union movement is at once a focus for internal political organization, and a serious attempt to deal with some of the stark economic inequalities in the territory.

Note: This article may not be reproduced without the permission of the author. A version of this paper is to be published by the Africa Fund. The paper was originally prepared for the National Conference on Namibia, convened by the American Committee on Africa, in conjunction with the United Nations Council for Namibia, July 1987. Pippa Green is a freelance journalist, correspondent for The Weekly Mail, former Research officer, the South African Labour Bulletin (1985), and labor journalist in Cape Town, South Africa (1982-86).


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In late December 1986, one of the most bizarre incidents in the troubled history of Botswana-South African relations began. The Tswana Bantustan of Bophuthatswana imposed visa requirements on Botswana citizens wanting to visit the homeland, threatening to halt all rail traffic to and from Botswana. Botswana's firm but non-confrontational handling of the issue led to the eventual lifting of the visa requirements eight months later, yet the incident shows a new and dangerous tactic by the South African authorities to squeeze the frontline states.

The South African Bantustan of Bophuthatswana, which shares extensive borders with Botswana, has mounted an all-out campaign to squeeze Botswana economically in what observers believe is a desperate attempt by the Bantustan to force the Botswana Government to recognize it.

Setting the Stage for Crisis

The seriousness of the Bophuthatswana threat to the economy of Botswana is highlighted by the fact that almost all Botswana's imports and exports transit the homeland. The last major southern route between Botswana and South Africa which does not pass through the homeland (from Gaborone through Tlokweng border gate) is set to fall into the hands of the Bophuthatswana authorities with the upcoming sale of farmland to the Mangope regime. Many Batswana have family members in the homeland, and many cross to or through the area to seek work in South Africa.

Some have viewed the blockade specifically as an indirect move by Pretoria to place economic pressure on the frontline states in the post-sanctions era, and see Bophuthatswana as merely a pawn in the game. Still others have focused on the actions of Mangope who, they argue, wants to gain political recognition from Botswana. While the strength of the former argument is tempting, it underestimates the desire by the Bantustan authorities for political legitimacy. I argue here that Bophuthatswana was indeed heeding the call of its 'master's voice', as Jon Qwelane so eloquently put it, yet assert that it was a very willing partner because of the legitimacy crisis facing the dubious 'Republic' at a time when it is celebrating its tenth anniversary of 'independence'.
The crisis began in late December 1986, when one of the independent newspapers in Botswana, Mmegi wa Dikgang, got wind of a move by the Bophuthatswana authorities to punish Botswana for its 'uncooperative' attitude. Referring to an editorial in The Mail, a paper out of Mafeking, Bophuthatswana, which threatened that Botswana should "mend your ways, or the hour of doom is at hand", Mmegi began to uncover what appears to be the most serious threat to the economy of Botswana yet encountered. The problem originated when Botswana authorities refused a request by the Bophuthatswana authorities to establish immigration offices in the southern Botswana town of Lobatse. Acceptance would have meant at least a partial recognition of the Bantustan, a move which Bophuthatswana would have used to tremendous propaganda effect. Because of the unconditional refusal of Botswana authorities to allow the establishment of such an office, Mangope responded that, as of February 1, 1987, no trains from Botswana Railways (which was set to come into existence in January 1987 following the takeover of the Botswana section from the National Railways of Zimbabwe) would be allowed to cross through the homeland unless the drivers were in possession of visas. He further added that, with effect from January 9, all Batswana wishing to enter the homeland would be required to submit a visa application 30 days in advance.

Resolving the Crisis

It was obvious from the beginning that Bophuthatswana expected Botswana to react sharply to the visa issue, giving the homeland the publicity it wanted, and eventually allowing the immigration offices to be established. Indeed, much was made of a high-level Botswana government delegation to Mmabatho, which was covered by 'Bop' television. Mangope wanted to show that his 'Republic' was strong enough to bring one of the frontline states to its knees, and was therefore worthy of recognition. The actual response of the Botswana authorities took the Bophuthatswana and South Africa authorities completely off guard, and led to Bophuthatswana withdrawing their demands within eight months.

Botswana's response was to argue that the restrictions on the free flow of goods and people between Botswana and South Africa was a breach of the Southern African Customs Union. They also insisted that they would only talk to South African authorities, and only indirectly with Mmabatho. South Africa was taken aback by the Botswana arguments, primarily because the restrictions were a violation of the customs union accords. While South Africa was regrouping to determine its response to Botswana in light of this unexpected challenge, Botswana played the issue low key. Rather than adopting a high profile response, as Botswana had previously done with regard to South African threats to attack, Gaborone instead undertook to circumvent the impending blockade by undertaking a number of actions. Botswana delayed the transfer of the railway from the National Railways of Zimbabwe to Botswana Railways indefinitely. They also demanded that trains between South Africa and Botswana be handed over at Ramatlabama (on the border), rather than Mafeking, and argued that any talks should include representatives of
the South African Transport Services (SATS). Botswana also started work on railway turnaround facilities at Rakhuna, a few kilometers north of Ramatlabama.

At this point Botswana was firmly in command of the agenda. Mangope reacted to Botswana's moves by asserting that Botswana had in fact taken over the railway, and that it was the "legal and de jure authority". He therefore insisted that trains from Botswana could not enter the homeland. Further, he argued that Ramatlabama was inside Bophutatswana, and that therefore railway drivers would still need visas. Throughout January tension mounted, as the February 1 deadline approached. Botswana, still playing the issue quietly, decided not to allow engineers from Botswana Railways to travel further than Lobatse, where Zimbabwean engineers would take over. This arrangement continued for about a week, following which Mangope took a second step against Zimbabwean railway crews, stating that they would also need to acquire transit visas. By February 9 confusion over the movement of trains was evident, with Botswana and Zimbabwean authorities adopting a 'wait and see' approach. It was only the intervention of the South African Transport Services (SATS), which was clearly concerned about the loss of revenue from Botswana, Zambian and Zimbabwean traffic which transits Botswana, which temporarily defused the crisis. It offered to take Botswana trains over at Ramatlabana. To avert an all-out border closure, South African (and SATS) and Botswana authorities met in Gaborone for talks on February 13. The talks made little progress, however. On the 14th, Bophutatswana unilaterally halted National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) trains at Ramatlabama, demanding that NRZ engineers obtain advance visas before entering the turnaround facility. SATS immediately intervened, stating that it would cooperate with Botswana authorities by picking up trains at the Rakhuna turnaround facility nearing completion inside Botswana. By mid-February, this arrangement was underway. The situation was set to continue until July, when other arrangements would have to be made. According to a spokesperson for the Botswana Ministry of Works and Communications, rail traffic had resumed and was reported to be operating normally. For its part, Botswana continued intensive work on the Rakhuna facilities and made plans for laying a track directly to the border with South Africa, linking with the Zeerust line and thereby bypassing Bophutatswana altogether.

At this point it became clear to the Bophutatswana authorities that their position was becoming entirely untenable. Obviously angered by being side-stepped by Botswana and SATS, Mangope warned that SATS trains would not be allowed to operate in the Bantustan in six months' time (approximately July 1). The absurdity of the situation, coupled with the increasingly obvious fact that Botswana had outmaneuvered Bophutatswana and Pretoria, finally made it apparent that Botswana had won. By the end of February, Bophutatswana was beginning to show signs of backing down.

Why Did South Africa and Bophutatswana Back Down?
There has been some speculation that the crisis was artificially manufactured by South Africa to warn the frontline states of the potential costs of western sanctions. Mangope was simply a willing pawn, desperately seeking some form of legitimacy for an illegitimate regime. This may well explain why the South African state did not come down hard on the SATS, which was more concerned about continuing rail traffic than getting involved in an international incident. It also explains why South Africa backed down on its support for the Bophuthatswana move (despite the impetus for the move being in Pretoria). Mangope's desperation is particularly illustrated by his threat to stop all SATS trains from entering the homeland. Having lost the backing of Pretoria, however, Bophuthatswana authorities degenerated into making absurd threats.

Aside from the loss of South African backing, however, there were other reasons for Mangope's backtracking. In Mmabatho and Zeerust, many retail stores recorded their worst sales levels in many years. Both centers were heavily dependent on shoppers from Botswana, as well as from Zimbabwe and Zambia, and as a result of the visa issue were in serious danger of going under. The business class was reported to be putting tremendous pressure on Mangope to lift the visa demand. Chiefs (dikgosi) in the homeland were reported to have made representations to the government, stating that the visa issue had resulted in tremendous disruption of family life and cross-border relationships. The untenability of the Bophuthatswana position was, therefore, further strained by the disapproval of powerful factions in the homeland itself. By early March, Bophuthatswana authorities were apparently starting to back down on the issue of recognition. The homeland's Secretary for External Affairs stated that Bophuthatswana was "certainly not politically naive as to attempt to coerce Botswana into political recognising her," (a statement which was, of course, entirely untrue).

After February, Bophuthatswana chose to respond to the issue by simply ignoring it. While still requiring visas from Batswana, they did not challenge the Botswana-SATS arrangement of switching crews in Botswana. From April until late July, Bophuthatswana authorities were silent. It became apparent that Bophuthatswana was searching for a face-saving way of getting out of the mess. Botswana adopted a patient attitude, while continuing work on the Rakhuna facility.

Unfortunately, opportunistic statements made by an otherwise responsible opposition leader, Dr. K. Koma of the Botswana National Front, gave the Bophuthatswana authorities just such a way out. Dr. Koma directed a letter to Mangope in which he referred to him as "His Excellency, the President", and went on to request that Bophuthatswana consider the hardships placed on Batswana "on both sides of the border" (as he put it) by the visa issue. The letter, in content and form, led Mmegi wa Dikgang to ask why Dr. Koma had "addressed the leader of a South African Bantustan in a manner appropriate to a Head of a Sovereign State". There was speculation, probably justified, that Koma was intending to use the visa issue as a campaign ploy for the upcoming by-elections in Ngwaketse South, bordering South Africa. The area had
suffered the brunt of the border closure. Whatever the reasons, the letter provided Bophuthatswana with just the opportunity they had been waiting for. The letter from Dr. Koma was widely publicized by the Bophuthatswana authorities, including over the television station. Bophuthatswana responded to the 'plea from Batswana' and on July 30 lifted the visa requirement.

**Concluding Remarks**

It had been rumored that Bophuthatswana had informally approached Botswana authorities with an offer to lift the visa issue if only the railway arrangement could return to what it had been. The request was turned down by Botswana, with President Masire arguing that it would be absurd to abandon the Rakhuna railway loop after millions of Pula had been invested. It is readily apparent, therefore, that Botswana will not again be caught off-guard. In the future, South Africa will have more difficulty using the homeland as a source of pressure on Botswana. Rather, it will have to resort to direct actions, actions which often have a higher international 'cost'. For Lesotho, however, and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe, the homelands of Bophuthatswana and Transkei, and Venda, respectively, could be used in such a manner in the future.

What is most interesting about the Botswana-Bophuthatswana crisis is the handling of the affair by Botswana. Few clear-cut foreign policy successes exist for any country, especially in a turbulent region such as southern Africa. Botswana has in the past come under private criticism for what has been seen as its 'too soft' stand on South Africa, although its room for maneuver is recognized as quite limited. In the case of the visa issue, however, few can claim that the outcome was anything but a success for Botswana. As Mmegi wa Dikgang declared: "Effectively the position now being adopted by Bophuthatswana represents a victory for Botswana's quiet diplomacy."

**Footnotes**


2. "Future Pressure from Mmabatho?: Farms Takeover May Close Zeerust Road Corridor", Mmegi wa Dikgang, January 10, 1987, p.1. According to a report in the Star of Johannesburg (January 27, 1987, p.9), "It has been reported in Gaborone that farmers who own land in that corridor have been made substantial offers for their land which would then be handed over to Bophuthatswana." Lucas Mangope is the head of Bophuthatswana.

3. Citizens of Botswana are Batswana (plural), Motswana (singular).

4. See, for example, "Bop Heeds the Call of its Master's Voice", Sunday


6. "Bop Needs the Call..." op. cit.


21. SA and Bop Backtrack?", op. cit.

22. "Dr. Koma Should Step Back from the Brink", Mmegi wa Dikgang,


1. This article was originally written in November 1986 and revised one year later. A fuller discussion of the class-related divestment struggles and the possibilities of socialism in South Africa can be found in Fred Curtis, "Race and Class in South Africa: Class Structure in the Current Conjuncture," Rethinking Marxism, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 1988). For a similar discussion of the relation of divestment and disinvestment to class, see Fred Curtis, "Divestment, Disinvestment and South Africa," Working Paper, Association of Economic and Social Analysis (Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003), 1986.
The Contemporary Struggle in Mozambique, with some comments on Angola

Talk by William Minter at Michigan State University, October 15, 1987

Note: This is a lightly edited version of an informal talk based upon Minter's trip to Mozambique and Angola in July 1987.

I would like to share some observations and some questions. There is much we do not know about what is going on in Mozambique and Angola, and a short trip gives only partial impressions. However, there are some things that are clear and I would like to share a few of those with you.

Even for people who are familiar with Africa it is often difficult to get a mental image of the size. We may talk about an event happening, say in Homoine in Inhambane province, and something happening somewhere else in Mozambique, forgetting how far apart they are, not only in terms of physical distance, but also of how long it may take for information to get from one place to another. As we analyze the wars that South Africa is waging against Angola and Mozambique, it is important to go back to the map and make mental comparisons.

Mozambique is about twice the size of California, or, larger than Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa put together. Angola is one-and-a-half times the size of Mozambique. Mozambique, however, has only the population of Michigan and Wisconsin combined, spread over all this territory. The population density in Angola is half of that. When one talks about who controls territory in the wars, it is often important to remember that the territory may have no road and you may walk for days and not see a village. Not even government officials in the country have the capacity to know what is going on in all parts of the country. The massacres that we hear about are only a small proportion of what is going on. Checking out one incident is a question of investment of scarce resources. Do you allocate petrol for a car to go to one place to check out what happened last week when ten people were killed, or for a car to go somewhere else to give some advice to a seed multiplication scheme? You can't do both, because you don't have enough petrol for both. Do you take a foreign journalist here, or do you take an agricultural technician there? Do you assign your few English-speakers to this foreign delegation or send them to the Commonwealth conference? You have to make choices.

I was in Mozambique for two weeks this summer and in Angola for a week. I was in Mozambique the day of the massacre in Homoine where more than 400 people in a small town were killed by an MNR band. The band of killers was probably 300 armed men. It is thought that most of them had been infiltrated recently from South African from the MNR training base in northern Transvaal. Mark van Koevering, the Mennonite agricultural worker from Michigan who observed the scene while hiding in a hotel room noted that they had new uniforms and new boots, which is one of the ways he said he could tell they weren't government soldiers.

Many of the MNR terrorists don't have new uniforms or new boots, but the method is the same. There is a systematic policy of terror. It is not just that in a war there are atrocities on both sides, when badly trained troops are in combat and are trying to control a situation that they can't control. What is different about Renamo and UNITA is that the terror tactics are systematic, logical, and imposed by outside orders.
Again and again one hears that they come to a village, they identify the people linked with the government — nurses, teachers, party officials. Those are to be killed. Young men, 14 or 15 years old, are taken to be trained. Some others are killed; others are taken alive as carriers. Some are mutilated and left as examples. The pattern is too consistent to be an accident.

You can go to different places in Mozambique and you collect similar stories. In Chokwe, which is the major agricultural area for southern Mozambique, which is relatively secure and where production is increasing, I talked to a group of about 100 recent "dislocados" — people who had been dislocated or fled to the relatively secure areas. I was told that in this small town, Chokwe, the capital of the district, with a normal population of 3000, since January roughly 800 dislocados had arrived and were living in Chokwe itself.

The stories they told me were very summary. (I learned from other people who have interviewed victims of attacks that very often this is the case. People who have just arrived don't say very much; if you talk with someone six months after an attack you can often get a more detailed account.) These people would say, "We heard that the bandits had attacked a village down the road and we thought maybe we should get out. They came and took several of my family members and killed others. They took all our cattle. Some of us escaped and we walked four days and we arrived here." Asking more questions elicited only slightly more detail.

As many as two million people in Mozambique are dislocated because of such acts. They flee to urban areas, such as Beira. People estimated that the population of Beira had doubled from its 200,000 of the 1980 census from people fleeing the war zone. You have refugees in all the neighboring countries, as people try to get somewhere where they feel it is relatively safe. You also have a flow in the opposite direction, because people want to go home as well. So if they think it has gotten relatively secure they try to go back, to start planting crops again, to see if there is anything left.

The result: 4.5 million people are on the edge of famine. A large-scale invasion of MNR from Malawi in 1986 virtually destroyed the economy of the Zambezi valley. A sugar estate that had been functioning for roughly 100 years was burned to the ground. Towns were totally burned. Of the some 1,500 rural health posts constructed since independence in 1975, an estimated 500 have been destroyed in the last two years.

I talked to the provincial director of education in Beira, Sofala province, who said hundreds of teachers in his rural schools had lost all of their possessions, not once but twice. For example, a primary school teacher who perhaps had been teaching three or four years and had been able to accumulate some furniture, a few household items, some chickens. Then there is a raid and everything is destroyed, everything personal as well as all of the school equipment. Then the teacher would go back after a year, perhaps, when he or she thinks it is safe to reopen that post, and the same thing happens again.

Economically, Mozambique is trying to survive and recover from such destruction. Mozambique got extraordinarily good terms from its international creditors earlier this year on rescheduling its debts. The principal payment on most debts was put off for a twenty year period. However, the interest alone that Mozambique is due to pay this year on the
foreign debt is greater than the total exports, which is only some 85 million dollars.

It is hard to exaggerate how bad the situation is. But the extraordinary thing, I find, is how much Mozambicans do have the sense of keeping on, given the objective conditions. I found again and again, that no matter what happened, how horrible it was, you started over, you kept on, you tried to figure out what you could do under the circumstances with what you had.

Comparing 1984 and 1987, there were even a number of clear improvements. I didn't visit Zambezia in either year or my judgement might have been different. (I am convinced one's judgements on these kinds of things really differ district to district, not just area to area in the country.) But in Maputo, the market was full of vegetables and products. In 1984 it had been empty. Part of this is the price liberalization, part is investment going into the green zones surrounding the city. Also, the huge state farm complex at Chokwe has been reorganized and provides a large amount of food. What was once a huge state farm that was impossible to manage is now a still overall state-directed enterprise with five interdependent sectors -- the state sector, cooperative sector, private sector, family sector (small producers), and the mixed sector (a joint Mozambique state/Lonrho company). There are problems with this arrangement, since there is more money coming in for the private sector since U.S. money can only come into that. The Scandinavians provide support for the cooperative sector, but there is little or no money coming in for the state sector. But clearly production is up.

Tomatoes were everywhere and people were glad about that. People in the city did say, "There is lots of food in the market, there are lots of things in the shops, but the prices! They are impossible." And they are. But people talked of high prices not in the sense that this totally contradicts the achievement of having tomatoes in the marketplace but that it is another problem to solve.

I attended a rally in Beira on the same Saturday as the Homoine massacre. The purpose of the government-sponsored rally was to repudiate the idea of any talks with Renamo. Such talks had been obliquely suggested earlier this year by the Catholic bishops in an open pastoral letter, but the idea had been strongly repudiated by many Catholics, by the Protestant churches, by virtually everybody. Some Renamo supporters claim that Beira is a hotbed of support for them because they say the Shona-speaking people in the center of the country are discriminated against. The truth of this is that some of the people who founded Renamo were from Beira and the early fighting was in areas adjacent to Zimbabwe where they were recruited from.

This rally was reportedly the largest in Beira since independence. I estimated that roughly 60,000 people attended. It took more than two-and-a-half hours for people to file into the plaza chanting slogans.

Since the crowd was almost entirely adult and there was a two-to-one or maybe three-to-one ratio of men to women in the crowd, probably a good proportion of the adult male population of Beira was present. It was not a very animated crowd, but the sentiment was clear. The themes of the provincial governor and other speakers was "how can people say that one should support or talk with the bandits or that they are a political reality when they destroy the people's wealth?" It was clear that this
theme resonated with the crowd. If someone wants to prove they are interested in the people, this is not their tactic.

At the rally, virtually the whole provincial government was seated on folding chairs on a small stand in front of the plaza. If the crowd were hostile to the government, it could have rushed the podium and wiped out everybody. I don't think I counted more than perhaps thirty to forty armed soldiers. By far the largest number was the hundred-member marching band that played steadily for hours as people trooped into the plaza.

Both in 1984 and 1987 several Frelimo leaders commented that given all the difficulties in the country, and the admitted mistakes and weaknesses of the government and the party, if there were a rural movement that had a real program and that were trusted, it could gain a great deal of support. There is a lot of disaffection and disappointment; the promises of independence have not been realized. But because of its origin and its tactics, Renamo cannot win that kind of support. By maximizing its military and terroristic impact, it has lost a potential political impact. It can destroy, but it cannot create an alternative.

One may ask if they have so little support, how can they do so much damage? Here I go back to the map. In an area twice the size of California, the total number of armed defensive forces, even including Zimbabwean and Tanzanian forces, is maybe at maximum 60 or 70 thousand, fewer than the number of police in California. The enemy specifically attacks undefended civilian targets and has supplies flown in by air, so to some extent has superior mobility. You can protect some portions of the country, but you cannot be everywhere at once. Even if the Mozambican army had good communications, good transport, good training -- none of which it has -- it would be impossible.

Consider a U.S. parallel. Imagine how in a big city ghetto area you could deal with muggers if the muggers had more powerful weaponry than the police, were regularly supplied from outside, had orders to kill (not just the occasional mugger who happened to be of that inclination) and, in addition, nobody had locks on their doors. That is the situation in Mozambique. The Homoine massacre is a precise illustration. Inhambane province, where the massacre took place, a year ago was considered one of the most secure in the country. One of the best military commanders had been there and had set up a good system of militia. However, the attention of the Mozambican army in late 1986-87 had to be primarily the Zambezi valley. South Africa then sent an estimated 1,000 new MNR into southern Mozambique, supplied by air and by sea, some coming physically over the border on foot from South Africa. A complete defense is impossible as long as the origin of the problem in South Africa is not dealt with.

This is one reason why Mozambique refuses to negotiate with Renamo. They negotiated with South Africa and reached an agreement, but South Africa didn't keep its agreement. Even if Mozambique found some leader among Renamo to negotiate with, South Africa could just find others. How do they find the people to fill Renamo's ranks? About 15 - 20,000 people in a desperately poor country of 14 million is not a huge number of armed people to find. A good portion of the recruits to MNR are definitely people who are kidnapped and forced through military training. Another recruitment pool is from Mozambican workers in South Africa, including not only the miners but even more the illegal Mozambican workers, which may number in the hundreds of thousands, among the poorest of the poor in South Africa. Some are forcibly recruited, others simply offered "a job"
and sent to the training camps in the northern Transvaal. There is a core of MNR who are either political or who are holdovers from the security apparatus set up by the Portuguese during the colonial war and by the Rhodesians, but the cannon fodder are recruited by force or material incentives among the most desperate, and local people forced by terror into cooperating.

To add a few remarks about Angola. There are a lot of similarities as well as some differences between Mozambique and Angola. The obvious difference is that Angola has far greater resources to defend itself against the attacks. It has oil so it has some foreign exchange and it has Cuban troops. Angola, unlike Mozambique, does have resources and personnel in those two sectors, and they are needed because Angola is confronted with by two kinds of war.

One is very similar to the war that Renamo is waging. Testimony by people, including some who are supposed to be ethnically supportive of UNITA, report the same kind of terror tactics, mass killings, and forced recruitment as in Mozambique. There is an additional variation in Angola of laying mines not only on roads but in peasants' fields so as to discourage food production. While UNITA and Savimbi may well have some support still on an ethnic basis, based on the feeling that Ovimbundu are less privileged in Angola, a lot of that has been eroded. The stereotype of a simple ethnic division between Savimbi and the Angolan government is clearly inadequate.

And it is very clear that in addition to the guerrilla-style war, there is also a conventional war, in which UNITA fights side-by-side with conventional South African troops. This war is being fought in the remote southeastern Angola which has a very low population density. The few people who live there are not Ovimbundu or from any of the ethnic groups that are considered to be UNITA's base of support.

A good portion of the fighting is done by South African troops. But the world gets an extraordinarily distorted picture of Angola because whatever else Savimbi is, he is an extraordinarily clever publicist. In recent research I found news clips of Savimbi as the genuine fighter for Angolan freedom on NBC TV in 1971; I don't think any of the other movements were given that kind of coverage at that time. This is the very time for which I have documents that clearly prove that Savimbi had a signed agreement with the Portuguese military. He was not fighting for Angolan independence at all; he was collaborating with the Portuguese against the MPLA from 1971 through 1974.

Even Peter Younghusband, writing in the pro-South African Washington Times (October 6), has admitted large-scale South African involvement in the most recent fighting. "UNITA is getting massive South African air and artillery support. It appears that the O5 gun in particular which came from Space Research Corporation (a Canadian/Vermont company) is having a particular effect."

Q: Does UNITA have administrative control of some parts of Angola, and, if they do, what is the nature of that control?
A: The best estimate is that UNITA does control a good proportion of Cuando Cubongo province just north of Namibia and the Caprivi strip. The fighting now along the Lomba River is a little more than 50 miles into Angola. UNITA probably controls that zone totally — they have a capital (Jamba), all kinds of social services, they have trade (they export ivory
and other things through South Africa and South African trading companies. They have regular flights from South Africa with a high priority on bringing in journalists to visit Jamba.

This essentially dates from 1981 or 1982, when South Africa mounted new massive conventional occupation of much of southern Angola. South Africa would clear an area and then set up UNITA behind them. So you have to say this is "UNITA/South African occupied." Beyond that area, it is very unclear who controls territory. The government is essentially in control and operating a government apparatus. But even under Portuguese colonialism, a good portion of Angola and Mozambique were never effectively occupied. And now in much of both Angola and Mozambique there is little effective state presence of any kind. People are trying to survive, being attacked by UNITA or Renamo or in some cases by counter-insurgency forces. The governments are clearly trying to provide social services. UNITA's and Renamo's major effort is to stop the government's provision of social services and the economic infrastructure.

Q: What are South Africa's objectives in these wars?
A: I think there are several. In the very narrow sense the justification they give is blocking the total onslaught -- blocking any aid to ANC guerilla activities inside of South Africa. To some extent that may be the motive but I really think that is relatively minor because the neighboring states actually never did give much practical aid; it was just a question of whether it was more or less difficult for people to pass through those countries.

And if that was the objective, then South Africa should have kept the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique, because Mozambique did put very strict limits on any ANC military operation. But South Africa did not keep the agreement, which indicates there are other objectives. One, South Africa wants to make it absolutely clear that independent black nonracial societies are failures, particularly those with more radical orientations. As with US attacks on Vietnam and US attacks on Nicaragua, they want to make sure there is no good example of socialism or black rule, that it brings destruction and poverty. It is an object lesson for black South Africans. It is also a morale-builder for the regime: "We can't deal with 'the terrs' inside, but we'll strike back at them. For every one attack in which they kill one or two people, we will kill hundreds." As South African General Viljoen remarked several years ago, "Cross-border raids are much better than area defense inside the country. You get a higher kill ratio." There are smarter military people who say, "It doesn't matter how many people you kill in Mozambique or Angola; that's not going to create security in Soweto." But the Viljoen mentality is clearly in the ascendancy now.

Q: What is your view on control in South Africa by the military or the politicians?
A: I agree with the view that there are differences of opinion within the South African government about these issues, but the differences don't fall on any simple military/civilian dividing line. And the differences of opinion are within limits and the people who lose the battle go along with the people who win. And I don't know exactly who has argued what at any one time. I do expect that Pik Botha may not have made all the decisions, but after they were made he defended them. Full evidence is still lacking, but I am almost certain that somebody in South Africa was involved in setting the false beacon that lured Machel's plane. I don't think we will know about that unless somebody has a crisis of conscience.
makes a deathbed confession or something like that. By the nature of that kind of operation you aren't going to tell very many people about it. And even if it is decided at a higher level, it's not going to be decided in writing. It is going to be similar to Eisenhower deciding to assassinate Lumumba, in such ambiguous terms that he could later claim deniability.

Despite the differences there is general agreement from the different factions of South African establishment that they are going to hammer the neighboring countries. The disagreement seems to be in terms of how much, the timing.

Report on the Homoine Massacre
from Mark van Koevering

Note: The following is an excerpt from an open letter written on August 13, 1987 by Mark van Koevering, a Mennonite agronomist who was working at Homoine at the time of the Massacre. The letter is supplemented by a few additional comments (shown in brackets) made by van Koevering at a seminar in November 1987 at Michigan State University.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Greetings from the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM). It is with great sorrow that I write to you. As you know, there was a terrible massacre in the Mozambican town of Homoine, in Inhambane Province, July 18, 1987, in which 424 people were killed and 298 captured by the bandits who call themselves Renamo or the MNR (Mozambique National Resistance). I am an American agronomist working for CCM in Homoine, and I was in that town the day of the massacre. By the grace of God I escaped unharmed. I want to tell you about the tragedy occurring in Mozambique every day.

Homoine, a small district capital of about 10,000 people, is a rich agricultural area and home of several development projects sponsored by foreign donors. Because Homoine was thought to be a safe sanctuary, its population had nearly doubled recently due to a heavy influx of refugees from areas affected by the war. Most of these families lived in the thatched-hut bairros that surround the inner city. It was through one of these bairros that the bandits entered Homoine on Saturday morning at 5:45.

I was living on the top floor of Homoine's only hotel, in a suite overlooking the two main streets of the city. I was writing letters when I heard the first shots. I ran to my window, pulled back the curtains and peered through the hazy dawn sky. The roar of gunfire greeted me and I stood mesmerized by the intense sound and the sight of tracer bullets screaming overhead. In a moment, people began fleeing through the streets. I first saw refugee families running from their small houses, carrying whatever belongings they could gather. They are experienced in this sad game. Running with them were the remnants of the militia that had been posted outside the city for defense. Many of these young men carried the rifle of a friend who had already fallen. By 6 a.m. the town's defenses were completely overwhelmed.