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- ingly and not contradicto-
. rily, it has opted to
. participate â\200\234positivelyâ\200\235 in

Wâ\204¢ HE referendum â\200\224 as politi-
cians tirelessly remind us â\200\224
did not end at 9pm on No-

~ yember 2. -

The impact of that two-thirds-major-

. ity decision by white South Africans to

give P W Botha-style reform a chance
spelt two things. One was to open the
way for fundamental political reform, if

â\200\230that, indeed, was what the Government
wanted.

The second was that the official Opposi-
tion was placed in a highly invidious posi-
tion. The consequences live with the party
and the political process every day.

More than halfway through the last all-
white session of Parliament and on the
threshold of the new system, the question
increasingly asked is: Quo wadis the
Opposition?

or between the thunder of Nkomati ora-
tory and the roar of government-style re-
form rhetoric, the voice of progressive par-
liamentary opposition in the country is
struggling to make itself heard. And that
holds both short and longer term dangers to
the PFP.

Opposition politics are almost by defini-
tion reactive. Without power and the lubri-
' of patronage, there is little an opposi-

party can hope to offer the country
except vision, principle and the image, if not
the reality, of a credible alternative.

The Progressive Federal Party is no dif-
ferent. It has generally stood by principle

. throughout its life, and the harsh realities of

South African white politics have ensured that it has also to some extent suffered because of it.

Take the referendum. The proposed constitution was in essence a violation of every party principle â\200\224 it entailed entrenched segregation, excluded blacks and was not the product of consensus.

Principle dictated inexorable opposition to the structures. Pragmatism suggested acknowledgment of the possibly reformist processes which could emerge from it.

In the end purity won and the party called for unambiguous No vote in the referendum

â\200\224 fully aware that it was likely to be a loserâ\200\231s stand. : :

The damage to the party in the wake of the defeat has been fairly considerable â\200\224 not necessarily in terms of loss of support from followers (Pinetown tends to disprove suggestions of mass defections) but in terms of role, definition and profile.

Because, having lost the referendum battle, the

from the subsequent â\200\234reformâ\200\235 war. Not surprising

the new constitutional set-up. :

But there lies the rub. Until! the new tricameral system is actually in place and functioning, the opposition parties â\200\224 not

PFP has sought to ensure it would not be excluded . POTTINGER

car

other opposition parties in cities) could well have

AP \O\RL\â\200\231__\ _S- Â¢

PW

olds

s?

â\200\230Dot an encouraging

least of all the opposition | tpe new set-up â\200\224 indeed . members in the Cabinet, tho
ught for the PFP.

in the dominant white ; the.term â\200\234oppositionâ\200\235 it- -

.-self becomes ambiguous Â¢

[i in a system where the ma- | relevance of the white op- |

or will be allowed to play ' jority parties in the other position will diminish as

in the processes of the â\200\230two chambers (parties -

: , Which will no doubt de- .th

Even less do thefâ\200\231 know | clare the strongest oppo- t0.the coloured and Indian

ate t0 sition to Government poli- ' chambers. That in itselfis |

chamber â\200\224 have no clear

idea of what role they can

new parliament.

hg_â\200\230w rthgy will re

One thing, however, is

now beyond dispute. The

{

date the PFPâ\200\231s utterances

_on the subject are thus

doomed to veer from ex-

pressions of pious hope to.

ones of urgent inquiry.

i

- But there is a second

_afid more profound reason

why the PFP has found

itself caught in the cracks;

the skill with which the

Government has capita-

lised domestically on the

aura of its â\200\234reformâ\200\235 in-

itiative and the substance

of its regional peace

drive. ;

Confronting a govern-

ment holding all the

cards, the PFP is calling

cautiously. And the Gov-

ernment, significantly, is

bidding conservatively.

The game plan could not

have been better illustra- -

ted than in the Prime
Minister's vote last week.

The PFP stopped just
short of being fulsome in
' praise of the successes the
Prime Minister had
achieved thus far in re-
gional initiatives and in
breaking domestic log-
jams. But, it warned, the
real test of government
sincerity was still unad-

dressed a resolution of
) the black-white problem.
U E Government response
: | was diffuse. On one hand
| it reserved special venom
: | for the far right in the

discovered that the per-
| ception of, success is as

: a until implementation

the locus of the fight shifts |

form i(jf a the Conservative
Party, and on the other it
refused to be drawn on
controversial issues on
which the official Opposi-
tion could batten a oil al-
legations excepted.

In what could be a pat-
tern for the future it was
an effective denial of tar-
get for PFP snipers. And
it had the PFP a desper-
ate for a issues a by which
to define its own opposi-
tion status a foundering
in a wave of vaguely de-
fined government good in-
tentions.

The PFP has long since

irresistible in the public
eye as its reality. When
the Government thus

| mixes substantive gain
| with the promise of fur-

ther advance it has a win-
m'ng hand. '

-Having been trounced |
in the referendum and |

still limping from its
â\200\234negativistâ\200\235 and â\200\234boy-
cottâ\200\235 images, the party is
understandably - cautious
about taking stands which
could be construed as at-
tempts to strangle the re-
form baby at birth; hence

?ï¬\201cjf: B

WHRT eAn van o wHen P Howss '

Sunbdny

PQâ\200\230C}Q

. the silence on coloured

~and Indian referendums
and the dearth of criti-
cism this session on the
structures of the proposed
new constitution.

â\200\234ncertmn of its future

role in the structure of
garlianient and eclipsed
by the momentum of poli-
â\200\234tical change (real, immi-

41

â\200\234wme g

nent and putative), the

6 May

30({3

PFP thus projects bland-
ness and reflects ambiva-
lence. For the Opposition
it is a time of hiatus poli--
tics which is taking a
wearying toll on party
confidence and image.
But there is a third set
of factors â\200\224 one that lie
deep within the PFP and
relates to its own house-

kegying.
hite South Africans â\200\224
no less than black ones â\200\224

~tend to follow power. An

I 98y

_ project both an image of
potential power and one

of concurrent unity. The

- PFP too often fails here.

"'COnfusion at local

level about party policy,
internal squabbles on

what emphasis should be

placed on issues such as

defence and security, and
stormy-petrel politicking

all cast an image of dis-

opposition party has to

unity. e

The problem is com-
unded by other factors;

ack of eredible alterna-

tive leadership, concen-
tration of leadership in
, lack of

the Western Caj)
profile on the Witwaters-
rand, insensitivity at

times to the latent conser-
vatism of their white con-
stituents (Randburg is an

example) when advancing

y policy. -

And, above all, the fail-
ure of the party to project

| itself truly as a broader-
| based party. i

, The anticipated swing
~of enlightened Afrikaner
support to the PFP that
accompanied the election
of Dr-F van Zyl Slabbert
as leader of the party four
â\200\230years ago has failed to

. materialise on any signifi-
~ cant scale.

Meanwhile, govern-
ment initiatives have cut
the ground from under the
PFPâ\200\231s feet by wooing
back many who now be-
lieve genuine reform can
best be served from with-
in a transforming
National Pa'rt[v. :
. The chal enlÂSes of
change â\200\224 as the PFP can
attest â\200\224 are never great-
_er than at the moment of
â\200\230change.

WHAT enn van Ko wHed Pu HocssÂ® fne <PROS 7

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Â» THE relationship between %

" the African National Con-

African Communist Party
(SACP) is one which has en-
gaged the attention of many
,observers of South African
exile politics.

To what extent is this relation-
ship a marriage of convenience
between parties which share a
common hostility to apartheid?

Does the SACP have a hidden
agenda in its relationship with the
ANC? Is the ANC such a dominant
partner that it is able to dictate its
terms of alliance with the SACP?

The answers to these questions
determine a wide range of posi-
tions taken towards South African
political movements in exile.

Western states are apprehen-
sive of any exile political move-
ment in alliance with commu-
nism, and Eastern-bloc countries
are assured if exile movements
ally themselves with communist
parties.

The South African Government
uses the communist presence as a
device for generating internal
support and for soliciting external
assistance.

It is well known that the Gov-
ernment believes that the ANC is
little more than a pawn of Mos-
cow, but liberal opponents of the
government in South Africa dis-
miss this view because they do not
like to be associated with virtual-
}Y any of the Governmentâ\200\231s be-
efs.

Western sympathisers with the
ANC, who are themselves non-
commuaist, argue that the ANC is
a coalition of different political
viewpoints and there is insuffi-
cient evidence to assert that the
communists have more than mar-
ginal influence upon it.

Nobody luestions that the
SACP and the ANC enjoy close
links: but how close are they real-
ly? Is there any evidence to be-
lieve that the communists control
the ANC? And what is likely to be

the future of this relationship?

Evidence for communist involvement in the ANC is of two sorts: the stated programmes of the SACP, and the cross-cutting membership between the ANC and SACP at its leadership levels.

In its 1962 Programme the SACP made no secret of its intention to enter into an alliance with all those struggling to overthrow the system of racist capitalism; it accepted the goals of the Freedom Charter as the immediate aims of the liberation struggle; and it saw itself as the vanguard of the working class.

- Problems from
- Moscow link

The way was now open for it to enter into an alliance with South African liberation movements which enjoyed a much greater level of popular support.

This was a necessary step for the SACP. It had never enjoyed progress (ANC) and the South

significant support in South Africa (blacks tended to be suspicious of the downplaying of race | in favour of class analysis); and after its banning in 1950, it had ceased to be a political movement | of any note in South Africa.

By ANDREW PRIOR

Senior lecturer in political studies, University of Cape Town

In 1968, the ANC removed an obstacle to collaboration with the communists by allowing whites to join its Revolutionary Council

which had the authority to direct
Umkhonto (the ANC military

arm). i :

Joe Slovo, a South African exile
communist, and Yusuf Dadoo
(then chairman of the SACP)
emerged as two dominant figures
in the council. ;

These closer or organisational
links between the ANC and SACP
have had their benefits for the
ANC. J

They have given the ANC ac-
cess to diplomatic and military
support from eastern-bloc coun-.

tries 224 military assistance being
particularly welcome as western
230 countries have willingly supplied
diplomatic and humanitarian aid,
but have refused to give military
lies.

% Il 231ne links have also had their
costs. The ANC has had to take a

strong pro-Soviet line in interna-

tional affairs, as witness its sup-

rt for the
ghanistan in 1981. 3

Soviet invasion of |
zechoslovakia in 1968 and of Af- |

And, as a result, the ANC has
been viewed with suspicion by
many anti-communist pressure
groups in the West.

" It is this link with Moscow~that
is likely to cause problems for the
ANC as it attempts to establish its
bona fides with the West.

The official Soviet media rarely
refers to the ANC without stating
its links with the SACP, and it is
this alliance which is a pre-condi-
tion of Soviet support.

Communist
involvement

The Soviets are not only inter-
ested in seeing majority rule
come to South Africa (a view
which they share with many non-
communists in the West), but they

want to ensure that the revolu--

tionary struggle is led by a Marxist vanguard as happened in Angola and Mozambique. ;

This is in keeping with Moscow's general condition of support for any nationalist liberation movement: that it must be in alliance with the communists, or

- |KC | Ok

â\200\224

~ uyorkers partiesâ\200\235, sympathetic to Russia and antipathetic to Peking.Â© X

~ Inevitably, ANC policy. hasâ\204¢"

tended to become more socialistic in character and its rhetoric shows signs of a strong communist involvement,

It now openly accepts a class analysis of South Africa and subordinates â\200\230racialâ\200\235 issues to â\200\234classâ\200\235 issues. However, it continues to accept the mildly socialist goals formulated in the Freedom Charter, and the multiparty com-

titive democratic system which it presupposes.

[

Strains on
unity likely

There have also been costs for the communists in their alliance with the ANC. They are now open to the accusation that they are diluting their socialist goals for South Africa â\200\224 a charge made during the late 70s by white ANC members who were subsequently expelled from the ANC.

~_But the communists are probably correct in believing that these costs are outweighed by the advantages: the ANC (unlike the SACP) enjoys a high degree of popularity with South African blacks, and has strong popular support.

this certainly cannot be said for the SACP. Indeed, if the SACP did not have a link with the ANC it

would be a totally ineffective political movement.

There can be little doubt that the mutual involvement of the ANC and SACP is, and has been, extensive. The SACP plays an important part in determining ANC policy and strategy, and the present advantages to both the ANC and SACP outweigh their disadvantages.

. lution (the goal of the Freedom

" munists.

caâ\200\231s future developing throu:ï¬\201h

.South African Government

links with eastern-bloc countries and the Soviet Union are likely to put severe strains on the unity of the opposition in exile as closer support links are forged with anti-communist western nations.

The communists have had a hidden agenda in their relationship with the ANC.

They have continually asserted that their strategic aim is to destroy the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa, and to replace it with a socialist system. This they believe can only happen if political power is placed in the hands of the working class.

The national democratic revo-

However, increasingly close â\200\231

Charter) is only the first step towards the communist goal. The alliance with the ANC is a necessary initial step towards this goal which is openly stated by the com-

The communists see South Afri-

successive phrases. The first is the liberation struggle of the SACP/ANC alliance ugh Umkhonto.

The second is the national democratic era of the implementation of the principles of the: Freedom Charter as a result ofâ\200\231 the successful overthrow of the

through the military power of Umkhonto in alliance with the black working class.

