

pressures as -an end in themselves, but as a necessary means to the real objective, that is, negotiations to dismantle the apartheid system and for the emergence of a democratic united and non-racial state in South Africa. We are fully alive to the burdens of the poor but the urgent need is to remove the humiliations and suffering created by apartheid.

To this end:

- The British government should, together with the Commonwealth, the European Community and the United Nations, bring every legitimate pressure to bear on the South African government to begin meaningful negotiations for an end to apartheid. We ask all Catholics in England and Wales to think carefully about their indirect involvement in South Africa's economic system, either as investors or as consumers. It is possible for everyone, in the simple choices of daily life, even choices about the fruit they eat, to give witness at a personal level to their solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa.

- Southern Africa Coalition

The Southern Africa Coalition, supported by, a broad range of organisations and individuals including Catholic bishops, is a short-term initiative leading up to a lobby of Parliament on February 27th, 1990. It aims at a change in British policy which would strengthen the legal con-

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The call for economic sanctions against Apartheid South Africa
tols on trade and financial links
so as to increase the pressure on
South Africa towards the abolition of apartheid. >

The Bishops's Conference of
England and Wales commends

the Coalition and its aims to Catholics for their consideration as an appropriate organisation for popular concerted action to promote the necessary and urgent abolition of apartheid by peaceful means.

Prayer for peaceful progress

Our first and fundamental duty is to pray for peaceful progress towards a just state of affairs in South Africa. The upsurge of popular peaceful protest in the Republic and the call for justice

are encouraging signs of the force of moral power. Christian

leaders who have strongly back-

ed them deserve and need international support in the defence of the victims of apartheid and

in non-violent struggle for the

dignity of all. Legal and structural changes, if they are to be meaningful, require Christian teaching and example, constructive efforts to promote justice, charity, and renewed social and

community life. We pray that

the faith, hope, and love of Christians in South Africa may be sustained, and that they and the world may see the emergence of a country truly reflecting the love, justice, freedom, and peace which is God's will.

ELECTORIAL SYSTEMS WHICH WAY
+ FOR DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA?

By P.M. Mtshaulana

In this article | discuss two major electoral systems. | hope to stimulate discussion to enrich the discussion around the Constitutional Guidelines.

In our daily political lives we always say that one of the main changes that has to take place in South African political life is the transformation

of the parliament from one of a minority into a

people's parliament. In the Freedom Charter this sentiment is expressed in the clause "The people shall govern." It is an expression that reveals the present anomaly that only 15% of the popula-

tion-has a right to vote and to partake in all activities relating to governing and policy-making in the country. Naturally the clause itself does not express all the values underlying it. One must

first read the whole clause to understand what

is meant by the phrase. For the purposes of this article I will take only that part of the clause which declares that every man or woman shall have the right to vote and to be voted for, into all representative bodies without distinction of colour or race. Here again we see an attempt to

. focus attention on the anomaly referred to above

without saying how the voting itself will take place; nor is there an indication whether there will be any exceptions to this, the general rule. Some months ago the ANC announced to the world its Constitutional Guidelines and this was followed recently by another document which has become known as the OAU Harare Declaration which also speaks of one person one vote under a common voters roll.

All the statements seem to focus on emphasising what should not be: there should be no separate parliaments, no separate voters roll, and so on. That aspect should continue, because without emphasising, especially to the world, what apartheid is, the struggle would not be where it is today. It is also important that we share views on how we envisage the future South Africa.

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Naturally, the most revealing factor showing that the country is run undemocratically is that the majority does not have the right to vote. This is the first evil that has to be remedied, but the struggle is not only about remedying the evils of apartheid but about building a democratic future for the people. In our committees, both inside and outside the country, we are used to electing our representatives using the system of elections we are used to, namely that the one who receives most of the votes wins. This has made us assume that when we talk of elections it is clear what we mean. However, the problem, seemingly so simple, of electing one person out of more than two of three candidates, is mathematically insoluble.

"For example, if an assembly has to elect its president out of three candidates A, B and C, it is possible that the assembly as a whole would

prefer A to B, B to C and C to A. This is one

of the reasons why this simple problem is mathematically insoluble. ;

Our Constitutional Guidelines approach the question of electing representatives as follows:
"In the exercise of their sovereignty, the people

shall have the right to vote under a system of universal suffrage based on the principle of one person, one vote. Every voter shall have the right to stand for elections and be elected to all legislative bodies.â\200\235

South Africa uses the simple majority system combined with districts. That means that if a constituency has 100 voters and 34 voters vote for A and 33 vote B and 33 vote C â\200\224 then A is elected although he has the support of just a third of the voters plus one. He is rejected by 66% of the voters. This hypothetical example of what can happen within one district can, if repeated in more districts, result in victory of a party which has the least number of voters country-wide. A good example of this situation are the election results in 1948 and 1953 in South Africa.

With 41% of the votes Malan got 56.5% of

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the seats, whereas the UP coalition got 43% of the seats with 51% of the votes in the 1948 elections. It could be said that in 1953 the situation

was aggravated by the incorporation of Namibia

which, while having 24 000 voters, got six representatives. At that time in South Africa the normal size of a constituency ranged from 9 000 in the rural areas to 12 000 in the urban areas.

Why was it possible that a party with fewer votes got the majority of seats?

Various authors attribute this to various factors. Wiechers in his book acknowledges that it is not a pure one man one vote system but he attributes this to Section 51 of the South African Constitution that allows overloading of constituencies in the different provinces. In his argument he implies that if the system was organised on one basis without a division of the country into provinces then this problem would not exist. The Sunday Star of April 23rd 1989 also refers to the Nats as not respecting the principle of one man one vote when it comes to Whites in so far as some votes will be worth nearly 15 times more than others. The Star attributes this directly to the government's ill intentions.

It might well be that both factors play a role in deforming the will of the electors but they cannot be the decisive factors for the victory of the minority over the majority.

Proportional Representation

This is an electoral system in which each party receives a share of the seats which it can claim on account of the number of votes it has received from the nation. The result is that the representative organ or parliament becomes a reflection of the political thinking of the whole country. The system is based on the existence of a proportional relation between the total number of votes cast and the number of seats obtained by each party. :

The country is not divided into districts or constituencies and every voter wherever he/she is, is free to vote for the party and candidate of their choice. For candidates to be elected, it is not necessary that they obtain a majority of votes in one district, but that they must attract so many

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voters in the whole country that they receive a quota of the votes that entitles them to be elected. This quota is arrived at by dividing the total number of votes by the total number of seats in parliament as follows: total number of votes plus

one, divided by total number of seats plus one.

Election Results

These depend on whether you are using the person or list system. Under the person system the candidates are listed alphabetically, irrespective of political affiliation. The voter votes by putting a cross next to the name she/he prefers. The

voter can also put preferences in order, thus put-

ting one for his first preference, two for second and so on. In allocating the seats the candidate who has the most votes (first preferences) thus gets a seat if he/she gets the quota and so on.

The advantage of this system is that the voter can determine precisely to whom the vote must go

(the voter has an influence in the transference of the vote). The disadvantage is that in South Africa the electorate is largely illiterate and this system is not recommendable at present. The list system is easier because the voter votes for the list, thus putting a cross next to the list he/she prefers, is sufficient. The lists themselves are

* prepared by the political parties and also the

order of following of the candidates. The disadvantage is that the voter has no influence on who must go to parliament but only which party is chosen.

An in-between system is that of lists made by the parties, but the voter can still put a cross next to the candidate he/she chooses. Thus a voter votes for the list and at the same time for the person. Under this system people who cannot read can simply vote for the list but those who are not satisfied with the order of the candidates can still vote for a candidate who is at the bottom of the list. If this candidate gets the quota then he/she is automatically elected. If the voters all vote for the list then the allocation of the seats goes according to the wishes of the party.

Under proportional representation it is possible for parties to join their lists for the purposes

of the elections without having to merge together.

Comparisons

Under the system of proportional representation there is a logical relation between the total votes cast and the distribution of seats. However, the simple majority system (districts) does not have this relation. The relation exists only within a district and there only to the extent that he who gets the majority of votes wins the seat. But a seat can be won by a margin of 100% in the case of an uncontested seat to seven votes (or 39 as was the case between Worrall and Heunis). This

discrepancy can lead to the minority winning the majority of seats at national level.

Then we have the curious situation that one person one vote leads to minority rule or, put

â€” in other words, one person one vote is no guarantee for majority rule.

How is this possible? In our previous examples we saw that the party with fewest votes won the majority of seats. An examination of this situation shows that this occurs because this party won seats with very small margins while it lost the other seat with a large margin.

Since one majority, no matter how large or small, returns one candidate, a party whose votes are so distributed as to give small majorities in many places will win more seats than a larger party whose votes are concentrated in a few places. This is naturally a good recipe for the cry "we were robbed" for the ordinary citizen who has seen how big their rallies were and will not understand how his party, being big, has lost the elections. The result can be a loss of confidence in the democratic process.

Under the system of simple majority a small swing-over of voters in a following election can bring about dramatic changes in parliament. If, for example, the ruling party in an election gets a combined majority of 235 votes in six constituencies, then a swing-over of only 118 voters in the following elections could bring about a change of government and a loss of six seats for the governing party. Now, under a proportional representation system, 118 votes can at most give a party one seat.

Position of minorities

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Under the simple majority system small parties and groups scattered all over the country have less possibility of being represented (proportionally that is). I exclude the rare cases where independents win seats in particular constituencies. Under proportional representation, on the other hand, the incidental fact of geographic location of the voters is replaced by the political ideological relation. A voter is free to vote for whoever and wherever he wishes within the country. In this way minorities are no longer dependent (in order to get a seat) on whether, where they are situated, they are in the majority or not. Obtaining a seat depends on the objective fact of whether they are big enough to satisfy the quota. The fact that under this system it is possible to combine lists between different par-

ties means that small parties in order to strengthen their representation can also combine their lists in order to avoid losing remaining votes to bigger parties.

In this regard I want to make a remark about the ongoing discussion on group rights. No one says what these involve: do they mean the right of workers as a group to organise themselves? Or do they mean the right of the Whites as a group to have constitutionally protected rights to govern? Naturally linguistic groups will have a constitutionally guaranteed right to protect their language and culture. But the constitution cannot contain any right which has the effect of maintaining inequality between individuals or groups. The essence of apartheid is this inequality.

The advantage of proportional representation above all other systems is that it is democratic. If the party happens to have support from one group (whether it is workers or peasants or Whites) that party gets representation proportional to its strength. This electoral system creates the possibilities for proportional representation of minorities without being a barrier to the development of national unity. There is no legal barrier barring combination of lists between De Klerk and, say, Inkatha, if these parties feel themselves ready to work together. On the other hand, no White person is barred from joining a party simply because its majority members are Black. ;

Simple Majority

The simple majority system is based on the assumption of the existence of a community of interests within the constituencies. A country like ours which is embattled for so long cannot expect from its citizens that after two days they will have forgiven and forgotten. It will take years before the suspicions that exist between the people are eliminated. This therefore means that in some, if not all constituencies, this important element and basis of the simple majority system will be missing (namely the existence of a community of interests). >

The biggest advantage of the simple majority system, it is said, is that it guarantees a strong government. By this is meant that because in most cases the ruling party has the majority of ~ seats, it can always push its will through parliament (sometimes in total disregard of the wishes of the minority which can be representing the majority of the people).

Conclusion

Now, the electoral system must not be so â\200\234democraticâ\200\235 that it renders the assembly a toothless mass that cannot act. An electoral system must produce an organ able to govern and if democracy is at stake it must be able to act decisively in defence of that democracy. Under the simple majority system decisions so easily taken by the majority of today can likewise be easily removed by the majority of tomorrow. This is not good for continuity. Now, under proportional representation continuity is guaranteed by the fact that if there are three parties left, right and centre (if we exclude the extremists on both sides) then government always has to be formed around one of these parties. There is some guarantee of continuity. In the long run proportional representation brings about economic stability because changes in government are unlikely to bring about dramatic poviey changes.

- An anti-election protest against the white-dominated tri-cameral parliamentary elections.

BOOK REVIEW

The Struggle: A History of the African National
; In South African historiography

there have always been two

, traditions, namely, that of the
. ruling circles and that of the

people. The formation of the
ANC in 1912 meant, among
other things, the creation of an
independent African political
voice and opinion in their own
right which were to have an in-
delible impact and now exercise
an influence on all major
developments in South Africa,
including the writing of history.

Recently, in the light of
South Africa's "reform policy" and the

"new constitution", quite a
number of books, articles, un-
published papers and
monographs have been written
on the ANC and its history.
Unlike those which appeared
earlier the tone of these recent
publications is "conciliatory."
The ANC is no longer por-
trayed as a moribund organisa-
tion whose back has been
broken by the all-powerful
racist state machinery.

There are reasons for this
shift in approach. The crude
racist regime's falsification of
South African history and the
goals of the national liberation
movement, which constitutes an
integral part of the regime's
strategy of justifying the status
quo and also aims at proving
that the Blacks have neither
right nor historical justification

~ Congress, London 1989 by Heidi Holland (Grafton
~ Books p/b. £4.50)

for their claim and demand for
land and national self-
determination, has to be
modified to adapt to the chang-
ing situation in Southern Africa.
One of the techniques used in
official history is the
selective historical approach
which automatically leads to a
missing or excluded past,
a process which inevitably
becomes part of a deliberate
pattern known as the "hidden
history", e.g. Black students in
South Africa are forced to read
Boyce's history text-book
which makes no mention of the
ANC. There are inherent pro-

blems in this shift in approach.
Bozzoli makes the comment
that it is hard for the ideologues
used to the language and attitude of the intellectual rapist
to transfer their skills to the task
of sedition². This is the dilemma facing establishment and
school text-book historians in
South Africa in the wake of De
Klerk's reforms.²³⁵

Heidi Holland does not
belong to this school of thought.
Born in South Africa and having
worked for 18 years as a
journalist in Zimbabwe, she has
a grasp of the things she is
writing about. Her book is based
on factual information,
research and interviews with
ANC leaders. Though the book
covers ground which has been

well-trodden by other authors,
it is in parts fresh, stimulating
and vigorous. The book has its
strengths and weaknesses. Her
hesitation to make her own

judgements leads her to prefer

to quote extensively from interviews
with those she thinks better
qualified to judge. This is
perhaps difficult to avoid in a
popular history but it does lead
to story-telling and the material
gathered becomes anecdotal
rather than analytical and in the
process important episodes in
the narrative pass without
comment. :

There are a few spelling
mistakes (of names of people)
and minor factual errors, but
some of them are actually not
that minor. These problems
could have been ironed out
through strict copy-editing.
Some of her assessments are
totally unacceptable. - She
writes:

"Exactly a month after the
arrests at Lilliesleaf Farm,
police were dismayed to
learn that two of their
sabotage suspects, Arthur
Goldreich and Harold
Wolpe, accompanied by two
Indian prisoners, had bribed
a 19-year-old prison
warden and escaped from
cells at Marshall Square
police station²³⁵ (p.155).

These "two Indian prisoners" were neither nameless nor faceless. They were Charlie Jassat and Mosie Moola, two senior officials of the ANC. They were far from accompanying Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe. The significance of this event,

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