

THE HEW FACE OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION;

A BRIEFING PAPER

Since the demise of Vorster's premiership, the air has been thick with rumours and speculations about the possibilities of some dramatic breakthrough in South Africa. Every manner of political pundit, from the savants to the charlatans, has seen fit to add his/her two cents worth to the endless reams of paper that have been devoted to this enterprise*

The South African newspaper-reading public and that of the western world have been inundated with learned and half-baked commentaries, singing the praises of Lotha the "courageous reformer", who has dared to tamper with the most sacred taboos of Afrikaanerdom, in his search for a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems*

What is surprising about these predictions and speculations is the regularity with which they are refurbished and rehashed in different forms* And, on each occasion they are paraded before the public as refreshingly new. In fact this has occurred so frequently over the past eight years that one has continuously to remind oneself that the latest prediction is in fact old hat, only slightly retouched to take account of more recent developments.

We do not intend to give the impression that there are no changes afoot in South Africa, nor do we argue that the balance of political forces, inside the country and in the region, remains static. Indeed, the very outpouring of speculative writings and premature predictions is a sign of the extreme fluidity of the situation. That South Africa and the entire region are in motion is undoubtedly true. Where we differ with the would-be-political-clairvoyants is in identifying the source of this motion*

There are, broadly speaking, three schools of political thought that have pronounced on "reform" in South Africa, These could be classed as

the liberals (English and Afrikaaner'verligte*) on the right; and two divergent trends on the left - one of which dismisses these changes as cosmetic while the other traces them to profound structural and ideological pressures within the South African capitalist system.

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The spectrum of liberal analysis, on the right] is in fact quite broad, ranging from the undisguised argument of economic self-interest advanced by spokesmen of big business, to the more sophisticated word spinings of various political scientists. Despite their differing emphasis, these various shades of liberal opinion find a common denominator in the central theme that the system of apartheid, as it operates at present, is untenable and should be scrapped, sooner

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rather than later. However, this system, as conceived and discussed by these liberal commentators, is abstracted from its material foundations, and they treat it as if it exists as a 'pure' phenomenon - the ideology and practice of the National Party. Traditionally South African liberal scholarship has regarded apartheid as some form of political savage survival, foisted upon the otherwise rational capitalist system by the backward frontier mentality of past generations of white South African politicians. Consistent with this view, the English liberal analysts claim that the capitalist system, left to its own devices would through its imperative to generate the maximum profit, have swept away racial prejudice and the other irrationalities of racism long ago. The task facing South Africa and its people today, so they argue, is to create the space for capitalism to assert its essential rationality, which will in due course, bring about a non-racial society governed by the pursuit of individual profit. Moreover, the liberals aim, such a course synchronises well with the economic self-interest of the majority of Whites, who though they are apprehensive

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about change, will be more amenable to it. once they recognise its unmistakeable economic benefits. South Africans, they say, should know from their own experience that state interference with and mani-

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pulation of the market forces can only have disastrous consequences*

Such interference is in point of fact the record of the racists. Unfettered laissez faire capitalism, with an absolute minimum of state intervention, is the ideal. So runs the English liberal argument. (Cf; Michael O'Dowd; Workshop on Socio-Economic and Constitutional Alternatives for South Africa, Aug. 1978-; Harry Oppenheimer; 'Prospects for Change in Southern Africa' Oct 1977; 'Towards Equal Opportunity in South Africa' March 1979) »

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Parenthetically, it is ironic that this line of argument finds a sympathetic echo in the writings of one commentator on the left, Phineas

Malinga, a contributor to the 3African Communist' 1st Quarter 1983* Malinga, essentially agrees with the liberals* reasoning since he too contends that racism/apartheid has acted as a fetter on economic growth

and was imposed by backward farmers, pursuing some anti-modern pipe

- dream, Malinga however parts company with the liberals because of his support of the national liberation movement* We would argue that his support is grafted onto fundamentally flawed analytical roots* It does not flow logically from his line of reasoning* This is a political trend within our movement which unfortunately has not been subjected to rigorous' criticism and hence continues to survive*

The contribution of the verligte Afrikaaner analysts has not been as sanguine about the supposed virtues of the capitalist system* Rather than seeking a solution solely through the untrammelled effect of economic forces, they have devoted most of their effort to the political sphere* This consists mainly of political model-building, derived from the experience of various European states* These models, these academics allege, are 'better'; suited to the solution of South Africa's problems because they accommodate both a concern for individual rights and safeguard the rights of ethnic, cultural and racial communities.

Most, if not all, of these theorists reject the unitary state as a model, because, so they claim, it can only result in the total subordination of the rights of 'the minorities to the overwhelming numerical preponderance of the Africans.,, Some have even argued that it could result in domination by specific ethnic communities amongst the Africans*

Consociationism, confederalism and federalism are the devices being proffered by the liberal wing of the Afrikaaner academia* Within the constraints of such a pluralist* model, some are quite prepared to accept the principle of one person, one vote. These views have been taken up, with differing degrees of enthusiasm, by other political currents outside 'verligte' Afrikaanerdom - the PPP, the leaders of the Coloured Labour Party, Gatsha Buthelezi and other Bantustan leaders*

Though the English and Afrikaaner liberals approach the subject of change from differing perspectives, we may note a fundamental area of agreement between them. Both evince a concern to carry over into the future crucial areas of White privilege and control. That they focus on the economic (in the case of the English) and on the political (in the case of the Afrikaaners) is probably explained by the relative weight of these two segments of the White community in each of these spheres. Recognition of the convergence of these apparently contradictory perspectives also explains the acceptance of "verligte" prescriptions by the political representatives of English liberalism - the PFP.

Given the political premises from which they move, the liberals (both English and Afrikaaner) criticise Botha for not moving fast enough for his own good. They explain the tardiness of the regime in terms of strictures placed on Botha by his unenlightened political constituency and a certain unwillingness on his part to grasp the nettle of consistent reform for fear of provoking a backlash* This assessment is not purely negative. It is in itself a prescription for action which proposes that on the one hand Botha must allay the fears of potential backsliders by explaining how reform coincides with their self-interest, while on the other hand taking more determined action so as to pre-empt revolution from below. Pressures for this latter course, they argue, will be most effective from those quarters who stand to benefit directly from the rationalisation of the capitalist system, the leaders of big business and commerce. Hence the Urban Foundation and related bodies. External pressure can be effective if it has a demonstrative impact through "constructive engagement" (which, lest we forget, is a concept coined not by Chester Crocker or Reagan, but by the liberal economist Merle Lipton. Cfs

'African Affairs January 1979? 'South African Labour Bulletin, October 1979

Commentators on the left, within an outside the national liberation movement, generally accept that the Botha regime is embarked upon a programme to change the face of racial domination in South Africa,

The disagreements that there are centre on both the extent and the significance of these changes. There are at the onÂ© extreme, those wh
o contend that the changes envisaged are a thinly-veiled exercise in mass deception (cosmetic changes). At the opposite extreme there are others who argue that these changes mark actual shifts and realignments

within the ruling capitalist class, i/e would associate ourselves with a view that lies somewhere between these two extremes and takes account of both the elements of deception and the. material, forces militating for change.

The arguments of the cosmetic change school are a useful corrective of the illusions being sown by the liberals, but we feel they bend the stick too far in the opposite direction. This is particularly the case with Slovo (in his 'Ruth First Memorial LectureÂ», Maputo, August 1984* Cf: Sechaba, February 1985) in which he suggests that little or nothing has changed in terms of the life chances of all Africans, across the board. His approach takes no account of the growing opportunities (which had either never existed before or had been abolished by the regime) for capital accumulation afforded African businessmen since the 99 year lease hold rights provisions, the lifting of restrictions on partnerships and manufacturing activities in the urban areas. To be sure, these measures affect only a tiny minority of the urban African population. But the political and social weight of this segment must not and cannot be assessed purely on the basis of its numbers.

Their opposite numbers contend that the measures already undertaken by Botha and all the talk about reform reflect the shifting locus of power within the economy. They point to the evident rise and domination of the economy by powerful monopolites and conglomerates; the transition from labour intensive to more capital intensive systems of production; the failure of various aspects of the regime's internal policies, which have precipitated a crisis that necessitates the creation of a new dominant bloc, led by the monopolists.

Those factors, they argue, combined with the impact of the liberation struggle, especially the mass upsurge that characterises the late 1970's and the 1980s, have forced the ruling class to seek new options.

The question, these commentators say, is not whether or not the reforms being undertaken are deceptive or real, but rather why they are being introduced at all. Implicit in the manner they pose the question: is the suggestion that some deeper underlying causes must

be sought to explain the actions of the regime (For the views summarised here of: 1Sechaba1, May and June 1983. "The Rise of the Military in South Africa" by A.W, Parts I and II; 'Marxism Today', January 1983* "Apartheid's Deepening Crisis". By Harold Wolpe.)

In a review, published in Sechaba, May 1983, I argued that there is a degree of economism in the line of reasoning of these commentators, in that they assume a direct causal link between the trends they identify in the economic sphere and the developments in the political.

It was then and continues to be my considered opinion that "reform", talk of reform and all the reformist political model-building we are witnessing, are eleventh hour counter-insurgency ploys, designed to snatch White domination (as distinct from apartheid) from the jaws of defeats

This survey is intended as a briefing,* in the first instance for our NEC, on the various political models being proffered by the liberal and verligte political scientists linked to the regime or other fractions of the South African ruling class. We shall be examining the notions of 'consociationalism*', 'confederalism*', 'federalism', and 'pluralist democracy*' as propounded by these ideologists. We shall specifically examine the proposals put forward in the Buthelezi Commission, because it was the most comprehensive plan of this nature to be placed before the South African public. But before we do this we want to locate these ideas within the context of a general theory of reform to which the think tanks that have given them birth subscribe. Through these means we hope to demonstrate: (i) the essentially counter-revolutionary character of the models that have been placed before us while

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(ii) briefing -the members of the NEC about the core ideas

underpinning these models; and

(iii) proposing strategic options, within the framework of our general strategy', to counter these manoeuvres.

The Theories of Counter-Revolutionary Reform

The most explicit exposition of the theory that informs the strategic thinking of the South African ruling class came from a strange quarter; the ivied walls of Harvard University in the USA. The author is one Samuel P. Huntington, a professor of Political Science who achieved international notoriety at the height of the Vietnam War, when he and a number of his colleagues at Harvard, MIT, Michigan State and other prestigious universities designed the counter-insurgency strategy of Johnson Administration. This was a period during which the think tank, inspired by Kennedy's vision of the 'new frontier', came into vogue. When US social scientists began to conceive of themselves as 'social engineers', who could manipulate human beings and entire societies in very much the same manner as their counterparts in the natural sciences manipulated chemicals and other inanimate matter* Huntington himself has an impeccable US ruling class

pedigree, dating back to the American Revolution of 1776, and has a long record of service in the cause of that class.

In a lecture to strategists at RAU published as an article in 'Politikon' - South African Journal of Political Science, based at the University of Pretoria, Huntington draws an analogy between present

day South Africa and a number of Latin American countries. He proceeds

to recommend the strategy of Bismarck, the "white revolutionary" as appropriate for South Africa. The role played by Bismarck in the unification of Germany through "the revolution from above" is well known and need not detain us. There is however one seminal point which needs to be made in this connection. The success of Bismarckian strategy owed much to the epoch in which it was employed. During the 1860s capitalism in Germany was a progressive historical force, on the ascendant* Though confronted by an emergent working class,

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..â€œâ€œâ€œ this class was as yet too weak and politically immature to pose an effective challenge, Bismarck succeeded in making the feudalist/

capitalist compact work because he could mobilise the support of the petty bourgeoisie on the platform of social order and defence of property at a time when the working class was not yet a serious contender for power. We shall return later to examine how well Huntingdon's analogy fits present day South Africa.

Huntingdon's basic argument is that revolutionary violence does not have to be successful to yield results. Provided it creates sufficient tensions to cause divisions among the ruling class, it can seriously compromise the dominant class's capacity to crush it. He continues,

"â€œâ€œâ€œ fundamental change in South Africa appears to be waiting for its Lenin." He hastens to warn that this statement should not be read as approbation, but rather as an urging that as 'intense attention' be paid in current South Africa to the strategy and tactics of reform as that 'which Lenin devoted to the strategy and tactics of revolution**

The reform process, according to Huntingdon, will be affected by six factors, which he enumerates as;

Political leadership,
strategy and tactics,
timing,

power and its use,

issue selection and sequence,

divide and reform,

(a) Political leadership:

Huntingdon conceives of reform as a three cornered fight, in which the reformer/s face both the advocates of the status quo and the revolutionaries. In order to succeed the reformer/s must divide and confuse his opponents. He must assume a "moderate" posture, apparently rejecting both extremes*

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(b) Strategy and Tactics:

The most promising approach is a combination of Fabian strategy (slow incremental changes) with Blitzkrieg tactics (executed with a lightning speed).

(c) Timing:

counter elites (like the national liberation movement), he argues, make their maximum demands when they are at their weakest and when they are at their strongest. The optimum moment, therefore, to engage them in constructive negotiations is during the interim growth phase. Such engagement will have the effect of offering the inducements of acquiring power, but at a moment when they too realize they cannot enjoy it on their own terms. Reform, therefore, should be introduced from positions of relative strength, when the incumbent government can still dictate the terms.

(d) Power:

"it is not inconceivable that narrowing the scope of political participation may be indispensable to eventually broadening that participation. The route from limited uni-racial democracy to a broader multi-racial democracy could run through some form of autocracy."

(This is why some of us felt the movement's approach with regard to the slogans to place before the White community during the anti-Tri-Racial parliament campaign was misplaced.

Read in this context, there is no contradiction between the growing power of the executive at the expense of the White parliament for Whites if they accept Botha's reform package.

In short, for White reform to live White democracy must die)

Repression and reform proceed hand in hand, because effective repression enhances the appeal of reform to radicals by raising the costs of engaging in revolutionary activity; at the same time it re-assures the far right that the government is in control of the situation. "The government that is too weak to monopolize counter-revolutionary repression is also too weak to inaugurate counter-revolutionary reform."

(e) Issue Selection and Sequence;

This is essentially a matter of tactics.

Selecting those issues which place the reformer/s in the best position to throw their opponents on the left and on the right in disarray, and resolving these issues with a speed and in a sequence that does not allow them time to marshal effective opposition,

(f) "Divide and Reform":

To be successful a reformer/s must enlist some measure of support from the disadvantaged (in our caso, the Blacks) therefore fragmentation and leadership rivalries initially are to its advantage. Later on, it is equally conceivable that a reformer government will require a strong and legitimate Black leadership to negotiate with, A leadership that will be able to induce its followers to accept and support meaningful agreements.

This exposition by Huntingdon gives us some idea of how the long range strategists and ideologists of the ruling class conceptualize what they are doing. We may agree or disagree about the extent to which

it conforms to Botha's strategy, but we can all agree that the tactics

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outlined here have a familiar ring,

We propose that both the regime's manouvros and the proposals we are about to examine should be placed against the backdrop of Huntingdon's ideas. On one thing we must absolutely agree, and on this Huntingdon is quite clear, the purpose of reform is to pre-empt revolutionary change - its essence is counter-revolution!

Samuel P. Huntingdon, like most ideologists of the ruling class, never actually wishes to examine the merits or demerits of the alternatives posed by those who wish to make revolutionary changes. He adopts the pose of a disinterested outsider, who views the entire pappayama with keen, objective eyes, unclouded by the mists of partisanship, Reactionaries, conservatives, reformers and revolutionaries, in the eyes of this 'objective' scholar, all are merely elites, each seeking to re-order or order society according to its own design.

Huntingdon's inability (or unwillingness) to deal seriously with the real problems and the forces militating for social change is not merely a function of his bad faith (though he has an abundance of this too). It is rather his prior commitment to the existing social order that prevents him from examining its assumptions and addressing the criticisms voiced by its opponents. As he says, he is quite explicitly for reform of the system, and is opposed to revolution. It thus follows that there are certain core institutions of the old order he wishes to preserve. The hollowness of his 'objectivity' and his claims to 'value free science' are exposed at precisely this point. They conceal partisanship for particular interests and a commitment to certain values. When examining the claims of ruling class theorists, therefore, we must at each point delve beneath the appearance of their objectivity to uncover their real motives.

The Theorists of Pluralism.

Pluralism has come into vogue in bourgeois political philosophy and theory as an additional means of explaining the persistence of all manner of conflicts, that plague capitalist societies. It is in a way a departure from classical liberal democratic theory which was centred on the individual in that it seeks to elevate larger social units to the same or even higher status within its theory. The argument of the pluralists is that classical liberal theory was incomplete in that it concentrated on the individual. Over and above the individual, the pluralists say, individuals coalesce into groups in pursuit of their common interests, and since these groups are the social units that give sustenance to the individual and often provide the immediate sub-soil for his existence, they should be given recognition, on a par with or above the individual.

The federal structure of the United States has often been

quoted as an example of the genius of pluralism at work. American political scientists claim that the federal structure "promotes both effectiveness and liberty in which separate polities are united within an overarching framework in such a way".

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„that all maintain their fundamental integrity." If the separate

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states are regarded as representative of local interests, the US can be seen as a pluralist model. Historically, the federal system was devised to accommodate and recognize the peculiar features of the fourteen colonies that revolted against British domination.

owning and others not. Federalism sought to place each of the states, on an equal footing.

Theoretically, each state has the right to secede from the Union. In practice however, where there is a conflict between state and federal law, the federal law is supreme. Despite this, each state enjoys a large degree of autonomy over a number of areas. The most conservative and reactionary states traditionally have been the fiercest advocates of state rights vis-à-vis the federal authorities, as a means of preserving backward and reactionary institutions. Thus, for example, during the 1950s the states of the Deep South invoked the doctrine of state's rights to preserve overt racism in their legislature, judiciary, administration and all areas of public life. In the 1970s and '80s the same arguments have been employed to uphold fundamentalist.

Christian teachings in opposition to Darwinian theory, to suppress the rights of women, etc. Because all states are equal, no one state has the right to impose its views on another. The pockets of backwardness thus always have a refuge from whence they can wage their struggle to hold back the march of history. Federalism can thus be employed to exercise a

veto on necessary reforms and progressive measures.

The proponents of pluralism contend that their models recognise the inevitability of conflicting claims on the body politic by the various clusters of power and communities that make up society. If all power were vested in the central authority, this would tend to emasculate the weaker units and collectivities who cannot muster power at the centre; on the other hand, a large degree of autonomy at local levels will enable these weaker units to make their voices heard. This line of argument is taken a stage further by one particular school that of "consociationalism", who claim that other models result in minorities being...

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balance the numerical preponderance of the' majority with the entrenched rights of minorities, i

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Both federalism and consociationism have begun to assume importance in South African politics. The ruling National Party claims to be experimenting with a consociational model with its 'tri-canial' parliament, Buthelezi's Inkatha has adopted it through sponsorship of the Buthelezi* Commission, and the opposition PPP advocates federalism in preference to the unitary state. Me now proceed to examine both federalism and consociationism as propounded by its chief advocates, We shall not be addressing ourselves to the *tri-racial* parliament except in drawing comparisons with other models. We shall address the plan being proffered outside the regime by ostensibly oppositional elements.

The Progressive Federal Party (PFP),

Early in 1975Â» the 'young Turks' in the United Party broke with it and constituted themselves as the Reform Party in February 1975* Â®he

split precipitated the collapse of the UP, which disintegrated into a number of smaller parties. Pressure from big business, especially Oppenheimer's Anglo-African Corporation (AAC) resulted in the formation

of a ginger group, led by Kowie Marais, to unite the opposition parties. In July 1975 the Reform Party merged with the progressive Party to form the Progressive Reform Party- In September 1977 the members of the United Party Rump, gathered around Kowie Marais, joined the PRF to become the Progressive Federal Party (PFP),

The transition from Progressive Party to Progressive Federal Party marked more than just a gathering-in of the parliamentary opposition to the Nats. It entailed both a shift in the longstanding policies of the White parliamentary opposition and a change in the political chemistry of White politics.

From 1973 - 1977 Gordon H. Waddel, Oppenheimer's former son-in-law, had been treasurer of the Progressive Party. He is largely credited with placing the party on a firm financial footing. One may note also during these years a continuous interchange of personnel between the directorate of AAC and the top layers of the Progressive Party. These include Waddel himself; Dr. Zac De Beer; Alex Borrairie; Douglas Hoffe, Bobby Godsell and others. The party had been linked to Oppenheimer since its inception in 1959; during the 1970s it became the party of English speaking monopoly capitalism - with its base in AAC, but increasingly also in other large corporations. Thus, for example,

Waddel could claim by 1977 that 40% of the party's funds come from major donors (read: big business). The changing fortunes of the party are reflected also in the tensions that overtook the UP and the . . .

defections from it to the Progs.

The explanation of the tensions in the UP can be found in the events of the preceding years. After a decade of almost total quiescence, in 1973 the system of repressive labour control began to break down.

In that year 70,000 African workers went on strike; the next year,

1974, 38,961 workers went on strike; in 1975 the figure was 12,451?

1976 saw the Soweto uprisings. Monopoly capital, by now emerging as the dominant force in the South African economy, faced a dilemma.

At a time when it stood poised to make a number of structural changes, go in for a period of massive retooling and extend its tentacles into its 'natural' African market, it was faced with a serious challenge

at home and the collapse of the unholy alliance of racist states in Southern Africa. Until then, most elements in the capitalist political parties had been content to support the ruling Nats, though making the occasional critical noises. Their attitude then was grounded in material advantages and it was to change when these seemed to come under threat. The policies pursued by the Nats had provided the optimum conditions for the growth of the monopolies. Massive political repression had virtually destroyed the Black trade unions and liberation

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movement. Economic policy had favoured the large aggregates of capital over the small businessman. Domestic tranquillity had, . . .

created an investment haven for the foreign investor. The mid-seventies marked a dramatic change in all that and it became obvious to the more far-sighted amongst the monopolists that things could never return to the conditions of the mid-sixties. New policies were needed and the English-speaking fraction of monopoly capital sought these in the Progs.

The defections from the rump of the UP represented real shifts of alignment within the capitalist class. At the same time the Progs were called upon to pay a price for the adherence of these new recruits. This came in the shape of the Slabbert Commission, to draw up new constitutional proposals for the PFP's platform. The Commission commenced work in 1977 and its report was adopted in November 1978. This was the

first attempt to reformulate the PFP's policy since the Molteno Commission of the 1960s-. The Slabbert Report departed from the premises of the Molteno Report in a number of crucial areas and spoke unabiguously of the protection of capitalist interests unadorned by phrases such as 'western civilization' that appear in the earlier version. It explicitly dropped the notion of the unitary state and adopted federalism., " «» .

The changes in the PFP's political programme coincide with other developments. Since its inception as the Progressive Party, the PPP had sought to mediate between the -White establishment and the Black community. During the early 1960s a number of Coloured political figures

had affiliated to it. They included Rev. Alan Hendrickse, David Curry and Sonny Leon, all of whom became prominent leaders of the Labour
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Party after the Prohibition of Political Interference Act was passed. During the 1970s, the Progs under Colin Eglin had made it a practice to consult with Bantustan leaders and invite these to their party congresses. Their most avid interlocutor amongst the Bantustan leaders proved to be Gatsha Buthelezi. In August 1978 Eglin, Swart, Buthelezi and Dr. Bhengu met and issued a joint statement to the effect that

enough common ground existed between Inkatha,.....

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...*and the PPP to provide the basis for negotiating a new constitutional framework for South Africa. The two parties to the statement,..., agreed to continue their dialogue through a formalised liaison committee comprising members drawn from each organisation. These developments mark the drawing closer of the Inkatha leadership and the PFP) not only in matters of tactical negotiations, but also in prescriptions to resolve the problems confronting South Africa.

The Buthelezi Commission

Federalism was first mooted as a possible means of resolving the problems of South Africa by Gatsha in 1974 on the occasion of an address to the South African Institute of Race Relations, amongst other ideas floated by Gatsha on this occasion was that:

"Change should revolve on allowing each and every group to maintain its identity through new constitutional and political arrangements."

He goes further along this line of reasoning to posit that there might emerge;

"Three types of states..., in a federal republic or commonwealth:

- i) States in which the interests of an African ethnic group are paramount;
- ii) States in which the interests of White people are paramount;
- iii) Special or federal areas which are multi-ethnic in character in which no particular group interests are designated."

(All quotations taken from 'Hoernle Memorial Lecture* January 1974* Delivered at the University of Cape Town by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi.)

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The ideas in this address were allowed to lie fallow for the next four to five years, only to be taken up with greater vigour in the late 1970s. One of the factors motivating.....

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..Gatsha to revive his federalist notions was the publication of the Lombard Report, prepared by Ur. J.A. Lombard under the auspices of

the Natal Sugar Association. Lombard had been commissioned by the Sugar growers to look into 'Alternatives to the Consolidation of Kwazulu (Natal)' by an anxious body of plantation owners,

some of whom feared they may lose their lands to the bantustan. Lombard

published his report in 1980. That same year, in October 1980, Gatsha commissioned his own report by setting up the Buthelezi Commission to investigate a regional constitutional dispensation for the Natal region, including KwaZulu. He invited representatives of big business (AAC,

SA Federated Chamber of Industry, the Institute of Bankers, SA. Canegrowers Association, etc.), professional bodies, Bantustan institutions (the KwaZulu Development Corporation and Inkatha were both prominent), internationally known academics with experience of South Africa and especially Natal (these included Heribert Adam, Lawrence Schlemmer, Arendt Lijphart, Herman Giliomee) and political parties (the PFP, the New Republic Party both participated, the National Party turned down the invitation. He also invited the ANC.

The academics were the central figures in the conduct of both the spade work for the commission and in giving it its theoretical underpinnings. Lawrence Schlemmer of the University of Natal carried out and supervised the greater part of the empirical research, Heribert Adam and Arendt Lijphart provided the political theory. Adam taught in Natal for a number of years before migrating to Canada. He has authored a number of influential books on South Africa, including "South Africa; Sociological Perspectives" (1970) 1. "Modernizing Racial Domination" (1973) 2. "Ethnic Power Mobilized" (with Herman; Giliomee, 1979) 3. Arendt Lijphart

is a professor of Political Science at the University of

California. (San Diego) and was formerly at Leiden in the Netherlands.

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He is amongst the chief theorists of 'consociationism', a topic on which he delivered a paper at a conference sponsored by the South African Institute of International Affairs, held at Rustenberg during

1978.

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The thrust of Mam and Lijphart's argument may be summarised as*

(a) The exclusion of the Black majority from the body politic deprives the South African regime of legitimacy and is the source of instability which could raise the price of continued racial domination to unacceptable levels;

(b) However, because of the level of White control over the economy, technology, the political apparatus and means of violence, revolutionary overthrow of the regime is an unrealistic project;

(c) A stalemate is the best the liberation movement can achieve, if it won't accept that, the level of White resistance will be such that all it will inherit would be a pile of ashes;

(d) The second best option is therefore the only rational choice, this amounts to power-sharing in a mutually negotiated consociational arrangement.

We pass over in silence the assumptions underlying this argument for the time being but shall return to them later, both authors have not shifted their ground since and Lijphart has repeated his argument in a number of different ways over the past five years.

Consociationalism is one of a number of pluralist models which is currently being touted as a solution or constitutional model for South Africa, As defined by Lijphart: " the opposite of consociational democracy is majoritarian democracy." ... "Federalism can be viewed as a consociational device, and consociation can be interpreted as a special form of federalism,"

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Lijphart goes on to define consociation in terms of four principles;

(i) government by a grand coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of a plural society;

(ii) mutual or minority veto; designed to protect the vital interests of minorities!

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(iii) proportionality as the principle for political representation,

civil service appointments; allocation of public funds; ' *

(iv) a high degree of autonomy for each segment in the running of its own affairs: according to Lijphart, "(i). t complements the grand coalition principle - on all issues of common interest, the decisions

are made jointly by the segments' leaders, but on all other issues decision-making is left to each segment**"

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The similarities between the above and the terms of reference of the Botha Tri-racial constitution are striking#

As if to demonstrate the veracity of Lijphart's contention that federalism is a form of consociation, in 1979* van Zyl Slabbert and David Welsh put forward a federalist plan for South Africa based on the Slabbert Commission Report. The key recommendations of their proposals were:

A federal government with non-racial representation of all politically salient groups in a federal executive;
universal suffrage on the basis of proportional representation;
a minority veto;

a bill of rights to guarantee the rights of individuals;
the desegregation of all civil service, police and

military appointments to be replaced by a system of proportional distribution of key posts.

The Slabbert/Welsh proposals differed from those of Botha's new constitution only in that they included Africans, but the underlying principles are in many respects the same. These proposals form the core

of the PFP's thinking on constitutional matters. What is of interest to underline here is that the PFP embraced the principle of universal suffrage when it dropped its earlier insistence on a qualified franchise (in reality, the old Cape "Liberal" franchise),

Heribert Mam, the other theorist of the Buthe/Lezi Commission, has argued that the 'second best' option will present itself at a time when the Whites are seeking compromise. The sine qua non, for such a situation, he argues, is the break-up of the Afrikaaner bloc. Only when the solidarity of the 'volk' has been fissured, and each of its strata is looking out for its own best interest will it be realistic to expect them to seek,,,,,,.

..... a compromise. He thus views Black political struggle as effective only if it assists the process of disintegration of Afrikaaner unity.

To his reckoning, the recommendations of the Buthelezi Commission, which he assisted in framing, will become relevant at the that moment. What then are these recommendations?

The Commission confined itself to the Natal region, which was its original brief, but its recommendations must be read as relating to the country as a whole. It based its findings on empirical research, much of it opinion polls and attitudinal surveys, which the authors claim give an accurate reflection of the political opinions of a representative sample of South Africans. Its recommendations in the political sphere were:

- (i) a geographically based federal system which would avail the whites of the opportunity to defend their 'minority rights' and it specifically designated a consociational model as having this merit,
- (ii) a regional structure of KwaZulu-Natal government under a consociational agreement which would comprise of:
 - a) M Executive - made up of equal numbers of Africans and Whites plus Coloureds and Indians;
 - b) A Legislature - elected from all the groups on the basis of universal suffrage, with proportional representation, subject to a guaranteed minimum representation for each group;
 - c) A Bill of Rights to safeguard individual rights;
 - d) A minority veto - to protect the rights of minorities;
 - e) Review of all laws by the Judiciary - to test the validity of laws through court proceedings;
 - f) The removal of all racial controls of labour, the acquisition of land and other immovable property, entry into commerce or industry

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The commission also recommended the equalisation of all educational opportunities while retaining the right of communities or groups to establish and maintain their own schools.

There are once again striking resemblances between these and the proposals of Slabbert and Welsh. Again they are attributable

to their single source of inspiration.

The commission justified its recommendations in terms of what its opinion polls and attitudinal surveys revealed. The principal ones it claimed were:

that of the Whites rejected universal suffrage and the comparable figure amongst Indians and Coloureds was 60/t>;

a majority of Whites favoured the extension of the franchise of Coloureds and Indians;

White fears of African majority rule were a constraint on reform which most Whites otherwise favoured.

Mamphela forward a number of proposals which he said would be necessary to ensure the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

These were:

Freedom of political association across colour lines (i.e. abolition of the Prohibition of Political Interference Act);

an Amnesty for all political prisoners and exiles on the condition that they denounce violence and extra-constitutional methods;

proportional revenue-sharing, and affirmative action programmes to offset the disparities between groups.

Comment and Critique.

We have thus far refrained from commenting on the actual content of the proposals made and proffered by the PFP and the Buthelezi Commission. In this section we shall dissect these and point up their counter-revolutionary essence. We shall also be making some suggestions about how our movement should respond.

As said at the beginning of this paper, the constitutional model-building must be seen in the context of general crisis of the racist regime and the system of White domination in South Africa occasioned by the ANC-led liberation struggle. As such all the exercises of this nature have a single objective, Because the models being proffered come from different quarters, representing specific interests within the ruling monopoly capitalist class, they lay emphasis on different aspects and approach the solutions from differing perspectives. There is nonetheless a unifying theme that links them all - the preservation of White privilege and the dilution of the revolutionary programme of the people. All the schemes that have been placed before our country from a reformist perspective thus form parts of a single continuum, which unites Gatscha on its 'left' with Botha on its right#

We noted parenthetically in relation to the PPP that it dropped the qualified franchise in 1970* By taking up the federal model it could achieve the same objective, which is to weight the political process in favour of the White minority. Thus though the appearance is that the PPP has taken a step forward, the reality is that it is marking time. This is the pattern right through this spectrum, except for the obvious ones like Botha's which excludes the Africans,

Coming specifically to the Buthelezi Commission, it must be seen in the context of the association between Gatscha, the Inkatha leadership and the forces within the monopoly capitalist class represented by the PPP. It is no coincidence that it comes after the Lombard Report.

Through both these, fractions of monopoly capital who wished to broaden the constitutional debate initiated by Botha with his 'new dispensation' hoped to make their own input. What both Botha's 'new dispensation' and these others have in common is the attempt to recruit elements of the Black elite to an essentially counter-revolutionary enterprise#

.....

In this respect the *new dispensation*, the Slabbert-Welsh proposals, the Buthelezi Commission and similar schemes, represent a vital area of ideological convergence amongst disparate elements, linked to the monopoly capitalist class - either directly through economic interest, or intellectually by a commitment to the same objectives. The role that Gatsha and the Inkatha leadership have assumed in recent years is thus the practical political expression of a deeply rooted counter-revolutionary perspective and not merely the acting out of Gatsha's individual megalomania.

To be viable, the solutions proffered by the Buthelezi Commission would require a political vacuum in which the ANC is not an effective counter-pole to Inkatha - either having been weakened by repression or gone into decline as a result of its errors. Because as long as the possibility of defeating the regime is held out as a realistic objective to the Blacks, the temptation to seek a mealy-mouthed compromise is that much reduced. If we take the recommendations of the Buthelezi Commission as the goals towards which Gatsha is striving, our respective courses must inevitably collide. "Gatsha has recently repeatedly assumed a posture of hostility towards the MC and harps on the theme of reassuring the Whites of their future". This is the meaning of the minority

veto. Neither is he ashamed of stating quite unequivocally, that as far as he is concerned change is a hostage to White racist prejudices - this is the meaning of the finding that White fears of majority rule inhibit their support for reform. At the end of the day, what Gatsha proposes (if the recommendations reflect his political options) is a deal at the top, between an African leadership and the White monopolists, at the expense of the Black masses. Every constitutional, model that abandons the unitary state, in preference for federal or consociational models has this as its principal objective.

Where then does this place our movement and its programme? What has become obvious is that we can no longer afford to mince words about the real meaning of the first clause of the Freedom Charter. Up to now we have couched our references to it in terms of universal suffrage - i.e. one person, one vote. This is no longer sufficient.....

.....since, as we can see, some elements in the enemy camp also accept this and we must differentiate ourselves from them. Universal suffrage must be linked to the demand; for a unitary state. We would also submit that it is transparent political-double-talk to try to evade the implication that this will mean a state and a government dominated by the

African people. At any rate, whether we admit it or not, the enemy is

in a position to do so.

Africa is a state and government) in a country where the African

people constitute 73% of the total population. Any suggestions that there should be parity between this 73% and the 27 minorities (15% white; 9% Indian;

respectively) amounts to racial discrimination at the expense of the Africans. This must be unequivocally stated and understood within

the context of the situation. At the same time, we must stress that the first clause is inextricably linked to the second clause which outlaws minority nationalism. The second clause guarantees the rights of minorities, not through inequality and racial veto rights but through the observance of democratic value

the Preamble for an Effective Counter-Strategy.

The ruling class and the regime have not been complacent about the crisis facing the system. They have already set in motion a number of political feelers whose ultimate purpose is as yet unclear. That such exercises coincided with the first major breach of the solidarity of the Frontline States is no accident when read in conjunction with Huntington's theses (above)

One can never rule out the possibility that all these are part of an elaborate and well-planned psychological warfare strategy, designed to identify possible weak points in our organisational solidarity. Yet the frequency with which they have descended upon us in the past eighteen months betrays the anxieties within the ruling class

camp to find some solution. The veritable orchestrated campaign of editorials in the South African press since March 1984

***Â«with a totally new conception* Whatever form it takes it will explicitly declare apartheid, racism, fascism and Nazism illegal and punishable offences.

We shall also have to explicitly pronounce- ourselves on the question of political pluralism (i.e, a multiplicity of political parties and political space for the loyal opposition)* There is a sad misconception which has taken root amongst us, that radical social transformation is only possible under one party rule. This notion must be dispelled and laid to rest once and for all. It is neither intrinsic to revolutionary change that one party dominate the political process nor is it in fact the case in most socialist countries* In the countries where this is the case, particular historical circumstances created that situation and not the imperatives of revolution* Subject to the provisions of the maintenance of democratic values and suppression of the crime of apartheid, there is no reason, in principle, why we should oppose a multi-party system* We would submit that as long as the ANC and its allies are capable of demonstrating through political argument, debate and open contention that we have both the correct policies and the practical ability to address the burning social and political problems facing the people, we have nothing to fear from such a system*

The immediate political advantages of adopting such a Bill of Rights will be that it puts the ball in the courts of our opponents amongst the ruling class - on its right-, centre and left* The Inkatha leadership and other pro-ruling class forces who oppose us will also be compelled to define their position in relation to it* If we adopt and

publicise the document at the appropriate moment, it will become the focal point of political discourse inside the country. No one, even our worst enemies will be able to ignore it, and as such it will be an intervention that puts all other options in the shade. The question of timing will be .all important (provided the idea is acceptable) so as to project the AJC even more firmly as the only viable alternative to continued racist domination. Such a document would have the effect of

â€¢â€¢â€¢â€¢â€¢â€¢â€¢pre-empting the middle ground and can effectively counter the

plans of the ruling class to recruit allies and helpers from amongst us,

Z, Pallo Jordan
Lusaka* July 1905*