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CHAPTER 10:

CTif^i POLITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ORGANIZATIONS

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*~*Soiith African Labour Party

- Reform Party

South African Blac^ A3.1iance

~ The Media (Press and South African Broadcasting Coloration)

- South African Institute of Race Relations

- South African Council of Churches

- Bibliographical Note.

N I.JOVSMmiT (I)
INKATHA 71? NKUJHLEKP T? STZTjT3 - NATIONAL CITI/rURAL LIBER
ATION I.JOVSMmiT (I)

The ruling party in the Kwazulu bantustan and dominant grouping in the South African Black Alliance (SABA - see entry p 000). Inkatha is the personal political vehicle for its leader Chief Gatsh Buthelezi, Chief Minister of Kwazulu,

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e*sd//ii^ pret^nt ictus to the role of national representative of African (and occasionally, other nationally oppressed groups) through his form of politics of "collaborative opposition" within the central South African State.

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These organisations membership claims range between ^004j060 and 'J^Q.COO. It claims to represent all social strata within and outside Kwazulu. However, despite this assertion of a mass base in the urban areas and claim to a developed organisation structure and support from Africans of all "tribes", Inkatha remains a strongly tribalist organisation based on an overwhelmingly Zulu membership and constitutionally linked to the ruling structures in the-KwaZulu bantustan. 4s-^*^Â® gesS&S^ . Moreover, its membership is largely drawn from the rural areas of this bantustan. Despite the Ongoing application of various forms of compulsion within KwaZulu to generate compliance with its line, the organisation draws a disproportionate amount of its support from the older generation in KwaZulu.

Inkatha represents those sections of the KwaZulu petty bourgeoisie whose interests are tied up with the apparatus of the bantustan "state", but whose wider political aspirations can never be fulfilled in this the most fragmented of the bantustans. Hence Buthelezi seeks to mould an alliance with "moderate" elements of the urban petty bourgeoisie, based on a populist ideology which stresses the unity of all oppressed class forces and national groups.

This involves apparently contradictory politics. On the one hand is Buthelezi's

fierce rhetorical rejection of apartheid ~ which he conceives simply as a system

of racial oppression and exploitation, and not in class terms nor as a capitalist

system of exploitation and oppression. For a long period in the 1970s Buthelezi

attempted to appropriate the symbols and slogans of the ANC and present himself

as the legitimate heir of its tradition of mass resistance in the 1950s. Since

his final repudiation by the ANC in 1980 he has distanced himself from it

"violent option".; On the other hand however, Buthelezi and Inkatha, are active

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participants in the crucial institution of the Apartheid state - the bantustans -

and have been condemned as collaborators by, inter alia, the Black Consciousness Movement®

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This contradictory politics is linlcoa with Buthelezi's so-called "multistrategy of Liberation" which rejects majority rule and armed struggle as involving unobtainable solutions at an unacceptable costs. After a great deal of preverication, Inkatha and ite leader have declared themselves in favour of come form of

â€¢ 'power ~shring" which vould grant African representation in the centra l state.

ESnbodi< ost - in the 1982 Report of the Buthelezi Commission, suoh a *

"consoci- tional solution" is to be achieved through internal negotiation wi th

t'na p .boning them constantly with the mobilisation of Inkatha^

alleged rv.KÂ» 'base). This is in reality a strategy for the cooption of Inka tha

leaders in the - ensuing structure of power in a way which does little to th reaten

the real, bases of that power. However, this strategy has yielded preciou s few

needs a dear political victory to strengthen his waning credibility amongst the

oppressed, In pursuit of this, Inkatha'and its leader have flatly rejected th e

"new constituional dispensation" proposed by the regime""("see p 000) . I nstead,

Buthelezi sticks to the Report of the Buthelezi Commission as the blueprin t for

the future. In January 1983 he sharply attacked Inkatha's^fallij in SABI, th e

' Labour Party (see p 000) for agreeing to participate in this apartheid sc heme.

' Historical Origins, formation and aims

The origins of Inkatha date back to the 1920s when the Zulu monarch, Ki ng

â– Solomon, formed Inkatha, Ya Ka Zu ju (Zulu national movement) in an attempt to

generate mass suport for the monarchy faced with the disintegration of pr ecapit-

alist social relations. It was revived by Buthelezi in 1975 and its name mod if-

ied to Inkatha. ye I'Tkululeko Ye Sizwe. This Â«wa.s a period in which th e apartheid

state sought to bttxld around the current Zulu king, King--Goodwill - himse lf

Buthelezi's nephew - a series a political alliances against Buthelezi and p os~'

sibly to oust him as Chief Minister of the bantustan (see p 000) * Inkatha

was formed by Buthelezi partly to give himself an organised political base with in the bantustan to resist these manoeuvres, and partly to provide a political platform in the wider South African state.

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An understanding of the politics of Inkatha needs to be rooted in an analysis of

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the political strategy adopted by Buthelezi in the 1970s. Gatsha Buthelezi is a prominent member of the Zulu aristocracy as a descendant through his mother of

2 Zulu kings, chief of a powerful clan and descendant through his father of a line of advisors to the Zulu King. After he assumed his chieftainship in 1953 he

strongly and successfully resisted the imposition of the 1951 Bantu Authorities

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and the ANO in the 1950s,

-t in Zululand,

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In 1970 he finally accepted his own participation in the Bantustan scheme and was made Chairman of the new Zulu Territorial Authority, and Chief Executive Councillor (Later Chief Minister) of the KwaZulu "government" in 1972* However unlike the others he proved no simple puppet. He used his position to voice vociferous opposition to Apartheid, declaring his personal preference for a system of universal franchise, in a unitary state, and totally rejecting the fragmentation of South Africa. When challenged on his role as ruler of a bantustan he responded that: "In the absence of any other power base, Africans had to use the system to fight it." In the political vacuum of the early 1970s his outspokenness won much attention, and embarrassed the regime, leading to various unsuccessful attempts to mobilise a "kin's party" against him. However, these attempts, and the growing support, for the militant and strongly anti-Buthelezi Black Consciousness Movement by the mid 1970s, convinced Buthelezi of its need for an

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organised political base for his brand of politics* Hence the revival of Inkatha in 1975.

This so-called National Cultural Liberation Movement declared its aims to be: to liberate Africans from cultural domination by whites; to eradicate racialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism; to abolish all forms of racial discrimination and segregation; and to uphold the "inalienable rights" of Zulus to self determination and national independence* The latter was not seen to conflict with its objective of working for the summoning of a National Convention of leaders of all racial groups to develop a framework for power sharing and progression to majority rule. .

Social base and political operation in KwaZulu

Despite Inkatha's claim to be a national movement open to all Africans rather than

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than a sectional party, it is tribally based. Over 90% of its members are Zulus

and its leadership is constitutionally reserved exclusively for Zulus, its patron

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is the Zulu king, and all Zulus are automatically members. Its ruling National

Council, designated by the Inkatha Constitution as "the supreme body of the Zulu nation", is comprised of the entire membership of the KwaZulu Legislative Assem-

bly, plus the organisation's Central Committee. The latter is largely comprised

of members of the KwaZulu "Cabinet". The Inkatha Constitution decrees that at the

President of Inkatha must be the Chief Minister of KwaZulu - an office restricted

to hereditary Zulu chiefs. This heavily tribalist structure of Inkatha has led

to allegations that it is a vehicle of "Zulu imperialism" - the Zulus being the

largest of the 10 so-called ethnic nationalities identified in apartheid theory

and comprising on their own a larger population than South Africa's white
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Inkatha has spent much effort on building an urban base for itself. Yet its
urban

support remains relatively weak, confined to the city of Durban and to small

numbers / FANCW

pockets on the Witwatersrand. In 1973 almost 80% of its branches were
located

in the rural areas of KwaZulu and Natal is a tributary and regionally based

organisation, Inkatha draws a disproportionate amount of support from
the older

generation. Especially women in KwaZulu. Women reportedly run the organ-

isation on a day to day basis. This reflects the social composition of the bant-

ustan population, with large number of men absent on migratory labour and women

subject to the coercive powers of the Bantu Authorities system. A number
of

reports indicate that KwaZulu bantustan chiefs compel the populations under their

jurisdiction to pay annual subscriptions to Inkatha. Likewise there are reports

that people who wish to marry are asked by the Chiefs why they are not
members.

Although a small number of chiefs oppose Buthelezi, the chieftancy seems to have

been the moving force behind the expansion of Inkatha since 1975.

This strongly coercive aspect of Inkatha within KwaZulu has a number of
aspects,

The 1975 session of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly which revived Inkatha

declared itself against the "importation" of political parties into KwaZulu. In

effect a one party regime has been imposed on the Bantustan. The few non-Inkatha

candidates who had the temerity to stand in the 1978 bantustan elections were

roundly condemned as traitors to the "Zulu nation". Only one of them was
elected.

The Inkatha line is officially imposed on the entire bantustan. An "Inkatha
syllabus"

is taught in its schools and teachers in particular (many of whom were

associated with the strongly anti-Buthelezi Black Consciousness Movement) are

subject to very strong pressure to conform.

The KwaZulu Legislative Assembly decreed in 1973 that a Civil Servant's standing within Inkata would be a key factor in decisions about promotion. Likewise local businessmen keen to gather the economic eruptions apartheid offers to the bantustan petty bourgeoisie, need to remain in good standing with the organisation and the chiefs who run it. Through this practice of heavy handed persuasion and coercion,

Buthelezi has clearly succeeded in the first of his aims in the revival of Saniest Inkatha. "the bantustan has been politically sewn up behind him and no opposition to his autocratic rule is brooked.

Inkatha and the politics of resistance

Buthelezi's second aim for Inkatha is to provide an organised basis for his political aspirations in the wider South African state. Since at least 1976, Buthelezi has firmly rejected any idea of "independence" for KwaZulu. He lays strong claim to his citizenship in the wider South Africa. As the most fragmented - of the bantustans, KwaZulu offers its local petty bourgeoisie even fewer economic

opportunities than those in more consolidated "homelands" such as the Transkei.

and even vuvu. Inkatha's politics reflect this fact that the political

and economic aspirations of the KwaZulu petty bourgeoisie can never be contained within its dispersed fragments. Hence the organisation has sought to weld together an alliance with the urban petty bourgeoisie and to present itself as the legitimate spokesman for this class force on a national basis. Its populist platform and Buthelezi's occasionally militant rhetoric, moreover seek to present both Inkatha and its leader as the legitimate voice of the entire nationally oppressed population. Through Inkatha's dominant role in the South African Black Alliance of which Buthelezi is chairman (see entry pCWO), the Chief has assumed for himself the role of the chosen leader of all South African's black communities.

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This claim is however strongly contested. The Black Consciousness movement has long condemned Buthelezi as a traitor and puppet. Students at Kwazulu's "own" university have stoned his car and boycotted his speeches. When Buthelezi attended the funeral of the PAC founder Robert Marigalis Sobukwe in 1978, his life was threatened by the crowd enraged by his presence, and he was forced to leave under humiliating circumstances. When one youth cast a handful of silver at him

m, he commented: "They spot in Christ's face, now they are doing it to me". His attempt to appropriate the ANC mantle internally, collapsed in 1980 when the liberation movement finally condemned him and his politics. Opinion Surveys conducted by In-

katha's own Buthelez Commission show stronger and growing support for the ANC in all areas except KwaZulu. A poll conducted by the Johannesburg Star newspaper in late 1981 showed far stronger support for the ANC than Inkatha in all urban areas,

even in the so-called "Zulu" city of Durban.

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The economic "strategy" of Inkatha reflects its petty bourgeois base. It rejects "unfettered capitalism" which is seen to have built the South African economy at

too great a cost. Inkatha formerly advocated "African Communalism" as a "form of

socialism" which encourages private enterprise whilst "protecting the people as a whole" through state-owned organisations with a controlling interest in all enterprises. This allegedly "inhibits the/of capitalism to divide the people into rich and poor". This "African Communalism" has been implemented in KwaZulu through

the concept of the /Apartheid state-owned KwaZulu Development Corporation (Kwazulu Development Corporation) and the concept of "tripartite companies". This admits white investment into KwaZulu in partnership with the KDC with blacks as shareholders. Little different from Apartheid economic strategy in the other bantustans, this "African communalism" has as in fact drawn Inkatha closer to large capitalist undertakings and on occasion incurred the wrath of small KwaZulu traders organise in the Inyanda (local Chambers of Commerce) Buthelesi was ready to grant the Inyanda joint participation with a white firm in a wholesale venture trade. still their criticism of a decision to admit the Checkers supermarket chain into KwaZulu. Recently, even rhetorical references to "African Communalism", have been abandoned. The 1982 Buthelesi Commission prescribes "a mixed market economy-" as offering "the best opportunities for economic growth and the proper development of a society combining the best features of an economy of opportunity with those of an economy of equity" (see below).

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Furthermore, Buthelesi is fiercely opposed to campaigns to get foreign capital to disinvest from South Africa. He has regularly appeared in advertisements in national newspapers paid for by the Apartheid state appealing for increased foreign investment in South Africa.

The phases of "collaborative opposition"

i) 1972 - 1975 _

The politics of Inkatha and its leader have been through a number of phases.

In the years prior to the 1976 Soweto uprising, Buthelesi presented himself as an

earnest "Bridge builder" between internal and external opponents of Apartheid.

He travelled to a number of African states, and held discussions with Presidents

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Kaunda and Nyerere who were both reportedly impressed. In 1975 he appealed to the OAU to give Prime Minister Vorster's "detente" policies a chance (see p. 107).

In this period, before Inkatha and his internal political base had been organised, Buthelezi's politics were conducted largely through public statements and a public relations campaign. He gained much international prominence, but was roundly condemned by the increasingly influential black consciousness movement as a puppet. This was one of the key reasons leading to the revival of Inkatha.

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ii) 1976 - 1980

The Soweto uprisings in June 1976 marked a new phase in these politics of "collaborative opposition". Buthelezi strongly condemned the police violence but also rapidly associated himself with police attempts to stem the revolt

by promoting divisions within the black community. He called on "responsible elements" to set up vigilance groups to protect property against militants. In

- August 1976 it was widely alleged that Inkatha has assisted the police in
 .inci-
 ting Zulu migrant vrorkers who rampaged through Soweto in an attempt t
 o break
 a stay-at-home strike called by student leaders. This led to increasing bitt
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 ness between the Black Consciousness Movement and Inkatha, Followin
 g the banning
 of the black consciousness organisations in late 1977, Inkatha sought to fi
 ll the
 political vacuum by forging new political alliances with other political organ
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 sations, The result was the formation in January 1973 of the South Africa
 n Black
 Alliance (see entry p (TOO) of Inkatha, the (Coloured) Labour Party and
 the (Indian)
 Reform Party entries pp Under Buthelezi's Chairmanship the Al-
 liance aimed to forge black unity and prepare the way for a national conv
 ention.

Its impact however has been weak.

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During this period Buthelezi likewise consolidated his international linkag
 es,
 particularly in West Germany and the US. His invitation to a "prayer break
 fast",
 with US President Jimmy Carter, gained much publicity. More importantly,
 this
 was the period in which Buthelezi worked hard to assume the mantle as th
 e inter-
 nal wing of the banned ANC in order^ to legitimate his position

(in increasingly open conflits with other petty bourgeois internal groups m
 ost no-
 tably the Soweto "Comwmitte of- ID" (see entry p COO). However he ove
 rstepped
 himself in 1979 when he publicised his discussions in London with the A
 NC leader-
 ship. The ANC intended that these talks remain confidential and strongly
 repudia-
 ted Buthelezii attempt to increase his own political credibility through wha
 t the
 ANC regard as a strictly informal contact. This led to a final breach in 198
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 undermining Buthelezi's past-1976 strategy to present Inkatha as a third
 force
 between white and black nationalists.

This final break with the ANC led to a political crisis for Inkatha. It has al
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addressed two audiences, the oppressed population on the one hand, and the power structures of the /Apartheid state on the other. Its political strategy aimed to mobilise support from the former through a populist platform of the rhetoric of "liberation" as a device to win concessions from the latter. Thus Buthelezi's attempt to assume the ANC mantle between 1976 and 1980 was accompanied by a strong move to the right. His sharp conflict with the Soweto Committee of 10, his total rejection by the Black Consciousness Movement and humiliating expulsion from the Sobukwini funeral, taken in the context of the growing effectiveness of ANC military operations and political organisation, all served to further isolate Inkatha and Buthelezi, driving them closer to the /Apartheid regime. He opened a "dialogue" and formal consultations with the ruling Nationalist Party and the powerful Afrikaner Broederbond (see entry p (TOO)). The announcement of the proposed "Constitution of Southern African States" by Premier Botha in 1979 was lauded by Buthelezi as an example of the NP "abandoning apartheid" and-jne expressed his willin-

ness to serve on the proposed "council of states".'

By mid 1979 internal divisions had emerged in Inkatha as various local leaders sharply condemned Buthelezi's increasing cooperation with state plans to increase slightly the powers of black local authorities as a complement to bantustan

strategy. By early 1980, Buthelezi was publicly appealing for unity in his organisation,

Feuds were fought for control of various local branches and a senior Inkatha official was gunned down under mysterious circumstances. With the outbreak

of a further student boycott of apartheid educational institutions in 1980 - which unlike the previous round in 1976/7, now reached Inkatha-controlled Natal

and Kwazulu - Buthelezi mobilised armed groups to attack students. Appropriating the language of the apartheid regime he argued that the student boycott was as "part

and parcel of a total onslaught against Inkatha". At this stage Inkatha was again, attempting to build a strong base in the Johannesburg Soweto township, through participation in community Council elections. However its move to the right seemed to have strongly diminished its popularity. Polls conducted by the Angus group

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newspaper the Sunday Post and the Star, reported that 65% of the sample supported

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the Committee 1^ I en (boycotting the elections] compared with only 9% of Inkatha.

Moreover the Committee of 10 leader Dr. Ntatho Motlana was found to enjoy stronger support amongst Soweto Zulus than Buthelezi himself.

iii) Post 1980: The Buthelezi Commission

In this context of waning support for Inkatha, Buthelezi increasingly turned to his second political audience - the current wielders of economic and political power - seeking to present himself as the mediator who will resolve the

he pattern of conflictual politics. With all elements of the ruling class vitally pre-occupied with devising forms of restructuring socio-political relations so as to save capitalism and leave the basic structure of power intact (see p 000)s in

1980 Buthelezi announced the appointment of the so-called Buthelezi Commission to consider "the requirements for stability and development in KwaZulu and Natal".

This was clearly seen as laying down a blueprint for the constitutional development of South Africa.

The Commission was composed of a few Inkatha members, and dominated by the representatives of monopoly capital, together with Natal regional (white) capitalists, representatives of professional bodies, a number of internationally prominent conservative academics and the Progressive Federal and New Fledgling parties. The ruling Nationalist Party and ANC declined to participate. It is interesting that in this so-called "black initiative" to draw up a blueprint for the resolution of

South Africa's problems, the current representatives of the capitalist class together with leading white South African and American conservative academics, did all

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of the drawing. This clearly reflected in the recommendations of the Commission which in effect put forward proposals to preserve the existing structure of economic power in South Africa, and modify political relations so as to permit the entry of a small and highly controlled black elite into the political institutions of the central state in such a way that they are rendered political impotent and thus pose little threat to the existing structure of power.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the Report (see the excellent article by Southall cited in the references). However it should be noted that

the capitalist economy" and adopts the currently trendy political formula of "consociational democracy" as a form of power-

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-sharing designed to outflank, the advocates of violent change". It fails totally

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to address' the class inequalities in the capitalist system, or recommend a restructuring of exploitative economic relations. Its economic recommendations for greater labour mobility, freehold tenure in land etc., reflect the straightforwardly capitalist programme of the various class forces represented on the Commission. Moreover, the "consociational formula" put forward is explicitly based on the visiting American expert's view of this structure as "a grand coalition of political leaders of all significant segments in the plural society". [Designed to ensure the politics of power broking, compromise and consensus between racially defined elites, this formula is concerned with the regulation of conflict and the maintenance of stability and the existing order rather than the transformation of the

existing order and the transfer of power. Buthelezi has quite explicitly stated that he has now abandoned all his previous demands for majority rule as "unobtainable". The Buthelezi Commission signals to the ruling class that Inkatha

and its leader are available for cooption in return for certain minimum concessions to its leaders, and their admission into the magic circle of political decision makers in capitalist South Africa.

In return Buthelezi quite explicitly holds out his alleged capacity to stave off

the revolutionary onslaught. In this self-adoption of the IVluzorewa role in

South Africa, the declining support for Inkatha is an embarrassing problem.

Hence Buthelezi has again resorted to militant rhetoric in his rejection of the

"new ^tri-earner all constitutional dispensation" of the government - which totally

excludes Africans and seeks to coopt Indians and so-called coloured^ (see p OtrQ).

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He teas sharply attactedhis^SABA "allies", the (coloured) Labour Partyf f or accep-ting these proposals when he publicly urged their rejection.

Given the growing support for the ANC and rejection of Buthelezi and Inkatha's

politics of "collaborative opposition", Buthelezi clearly "needs to demonstrate to both blacks and the existing power-that-be that Inkatha can deliver the goods.

it calls for a "mixed-market^ |x

This however is extremely dubious.

SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR PARTY (2)

MssMfeTffl erfr political party formed and led by sections of the petty bourgeoisie from the so-called coloured community. Its declared objective; is to work

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for a system of universal suffrage within a single parliament. The chosen means of attaining this end is non violent struggle using the "platforms" created by the institutions of the Apartheid state against the /apartheid system itself, f *

Despite the claim^ merely to be using Apartheid institutions to- defeat the system, the Party's organizational machinery was in fact structured around the

Coloured Persons Representative Council (CRC) until the latter's abolition in 1980.

From the outset the Labour Party has been a parliamentary type party, playing little

part in mass organization or-mass struggles.

When it eventually gained control of the CRC in 1975 it attempted to make a strategic

shift from, what its leaders described as, the "politics of protest" to "the politics of negotiation". -

The abolition of the CRC in 1980 created a major problem of role definition

for the Party. It too.....bootycatched between the pressures of increasingly rising

struggles on 'the one hand, and the temptations of the increasingly attractive

"package" being offered to so-called coloured and asian leaders willing to collaborate

with the "Total Strategy", on the other (see p 100).

After much vacillation, the January 1983 party congress, finally resolved to

revert to "working within" the institutions of Apartheid and put up candidates for

the "coloured" chamber of the three tier parliament. A number of observers argue " S

that the Labour Party's mass base has largely been lost to community based organisations and that it will have trouble in mobilising even the 13% of the potential electorate which it mobilised in the last CRC by election.

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nizations and that it will have trouble in mobilising even the 13% of the potential electorate which it mobilised in the last CRC by election.

The Labour Party was a member of the South African Black Alliance (see p 100)

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until its suspension/following its decision to enter the so-called coloured parliament. 'â€¢ ... ---

â– The. South African Labour Party was formed in. 1964" on the initiative, of a group of petty bourgeois from the so-called coloured community. It drew some support from former members of the Coloured People's Congress. A component of the Congress Alliance ~ see p 103 and other militant groupings. The Permanent of the fcpbsh

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oafctawg up of â– â– ^iu,~Gulju'iiiBdfi'8-Qii^ag^rl^,WstfBreDemgjL!!!!H^6B&j /defined its strate-

gic objective as' "common roll representation with equal franchise rights f or

all Coloureds and Whites". By 1969, howe^or^ it was calling for "one* man-
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-one-vote, with direct parliamentary representation for all South .Africans,

Ik*, Voa-Vu' 'i CoV\%v'ilu.W&rn J\Â£Aw ^vMjf cJjuA'XxiWA vV (-\$ ".. ~

whatever their racial group". cmnw/NttV**

The Party acknowledged.from the outset that the CRC was- an /Apartheid i nstitution.

Nevertheless "accepted the Representative Coucil as a stepping stone to full

democratic rights because it offered the only means of political expressio n
\ - CRC

the interim to the Coloured people". In the 1969/election, jÂ»*Jr CLkV' A. .

Labour emerged from a 37% poll â– move-

with 35 seats compared/ie-the 11 won by the

pro-/partheid Federal party and 3 by independents. However, it was pre vented

from becoming the majority party within.the CRC when the regime award ed the 20

government nominated seats provided for in the Council's constitution to Federal:

â€Pary members. One of these went to the FP*s defeated leader, Tom Swartz, who

became chairman of the CRC executive - giving rise to the popular tag fo r the

CRC as "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

During the five year term of the first CRC, the Labour Party^ adopted what

is described as "tactics of exposure and embarrassment". Motions were framed in such a way that the Federal Party could only oppose them by exposing itself as a puppet of Apartheid and Labour refused to serve on committees set up to liaise with the government.

Despite being reduced to the position of a largely ineffective "opposition" party, Labour remained throughout this period essentially a parliamentary type party whose fundamental sphere of activity and tactics were orientated around the CRC. The leadership resisted calls from its Transvaal branch and Youth Section to withdraw from the CRC and transform itself into a mass party. It could not, however, escape the effects of the growing tide of mass resistance. At first, it tried to compete with the emerging black consciousness movement, launching its own slogan "brown power", as a non-militant alternative. Later, it attempted to use the burgeoning mass struggles as a "bargaining counter" - alternatively warning the government that moderates prepared to work within the system would lose out to radicals, and threatening itself become part of the mass movement if the regime did not enter into meaningful negotiations with it.

This first phase of the Party's existence ended in 1974/5. Taking advantage of a number of defections from the Federal Party, Labour managed to secure the adoption by the CRC of a motion calling for the abolition of all the institutions of Apartheid including the CRC itself. This crisis led the executive of the Labour Party to offer the chairmanship of the executive to the Labour Party. This was refused. The council was dissolved and

new elections were called in 1975. Labour emerged from the reduced (2B) poll with 31 seats to the Federal Party's 8, giving it an absolute majority in the council even allowing for nominated members.

This new situation led to a major debate within the Party's leadership which was complicated by an amendment to the Coloured Persons Representative Council Act allowing the Minister of Coloured Affairs to take over the functions of the executive of the CRC in the event of the latter failing to carry out its tasks. After some struggle the Labour leadership made a strategic shift from what it described as the "politics of protest" to the "politics of negotiation". This involved using its base as majority party in the CRC to negotiate

constitutional changes with the regime "on an equal basis". The party took up its seats on the CRC executive and its then leader, Sonny Leon, became chairman. It was also decided, apparently as a concession to the pro-boycott faction, that the chairman would not appropriate any monies allocated to the council by the central government as this would amount to accepting the council's subsidiary status as an Apartheid institution.

This latter decision led the government to revoke the appointment of Leon as chairman and replace him by a government nominee, Mrs. Althea Janse van Rensburg. Labour however retained the remaining seats on the executive and its position as a majority party.

During this phase of "the politics of negotiation", the Labour Party leadership became involved in numerous discussions with state officials on the "constitutional future of the coloured people" (though it boycotted the Inter-

During this phase of "the politics of negotiation", the Labour Party leadership became involved in numerous discussions with state officials on the "constitutional future of the coloured people" (though it boycotted the Inter-

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Cabinet Council meeting" with Vorster in 1976 -fsee ftefÂ«mf)Â«p WtJ)
These^however yielded few concessions. Djririg this period for example,
much of the chagrin of the Labour Party, the regime rejected the recomm

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tions of its own Theron Commission that inter alia, the Immorality and Mi
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Marriages Acts be abolished, that certain business areas be open to per
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of all races and that so-called coloureds be given'direct representation on

"decision making bodies". Even over minor issues the regime often refuse
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-give way%'In 1977 for instances it refused to allow Gatsha*Buthelezi to
open

the CRC session* sending the State President instead.

This evident failure of its strategy of negotiation in the context of growing militancy -of the masses, led the party to lose much of whatever mass support it imed previously had. This emerged in the last bye-election for the CRC held in 1978 where a disavowal 13%, 'poll was recorded. One of the responses of the Party to this situation was to seek alligj merits with ^ther like minded political groupings, .

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. In 1978 it Fair;;d the South African Black Alliance (see entry p 000). At the same time it supported the call by the Progressive Federal Party for a "national convention" to negotiate a new constitution for South Africa, although it later argued that the PFP was too concerned with guarantees for minority rig=t&£tp.

This period also saw schisr<r within the party. Its leader, Sonny Leon, resigned in 1978 ostensibly on the grounds of ill health but in fact under a cloud of criticism for being both ineffective' and for collaborating with the regime. Leon ha^, attended the funeral of State President, Diederichs, and went on a Defence Force sponsored tour of the "operational area".

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The coming to office of the Botha regime in 1978 and the adoption as official state policy of the "Total Strategy" (see p QyQ J marked a phase in the history of the Labour Party. Its leadership, under Rev. Allan Hendrik^-, at first welcomed the "reformist" rhetoric of the Botha regime particularly its announcement that it would make constitutional changes. In 1979 Labour announced that it would now also be willing to negotiate over "short term goals" such as housing, local government and education, whilst not losing sight of its long term constitutional aspirations.

â€¢ VWI

rations. At the same time, as a majority party in the CRC, it set up a commission

to formulate its own constitutional proposals. This du Preez Commission, issued its report later in the year and called for a system of one person one vote within the then existing Westminster type parliamentary system.

^_the end of 1979^the Party Found itself in deadlock with the Botha regime. When the latter set up the Schlebusch Commission to work out...proposals for a new constitution setting out from the 1977 Nationalist Party proposals (providing for three racially separate chambers of parliament^ see p CJCiO)s the Labour Party declared that it would only submit evidence if this did not prejudice the rights of the coloured^to other constitutional negotiations. When the Botha regime refused to give such assurances, the Labour Party and the CRC resolved to boycott Schlebusch.

This move, interpreted in the Nationalist press as a shift to "confrontation" tactics, brought a swift response from the regime. --â----- -

"who want to cause chaos".

These vacillations reveal much of the character of the Party's leadership as a petty bourgeois force caught in the midst of an intensifying struggle between the fundamental class forces in the society. They also reflect the

dilemma of a parliamentary type party deprived of a parliament. One of its members commented that "... the party had lost its direction and was no longer able to survive as a political force outside government-created structures".

It is thus not surprising that when Botha offered the prospect of further negotiations late in 1980, it was eagerly accepted by the Party's leadership.

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After which Botha agreed both to release a number of students detained during the 1980 school's boycott; and to abandon the idea of the nominated Coloured Peoples Council, Hendrikse declared that the freeze in relations since the end of 1979, was over and that both the Party and "government were now seeing" the togetherness of the middle of the road. "While the Labour Party understood the problems the Prime Minister faced with an increasing radicalisation of the white right wing", he continued, "The Prime Minister had understood

the problems that the Labour Party faced with the radicalisation of the left".

ft)-

January 1983

Congress the Labour Party "committed" itself to contesting seats for

the so-called coloured chamber of the proposed-three chamber parliament, after
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"Ä«km,Vur*I< .XV

previously hinting that it may not, nrbsÄ» led to the resignation from the party

of some of its more militant leaders. Meetings held by the labour leadership

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in an attempt to "explain" this step have been broken up by angry crowds
accu

sing the party of collaboration with apartheid, TLT AjXpiWA, "W -s-frXcr

isIWwk *0,k WUwM* j-Â»- HUV ~

:yV^mass base largely)

A Quflber of jsfcfs'ervers feel that the ^Labour Party ^-5 mat
ost to ^e^mmunity o3rg^nizationsJ//and that if ^these were to paunch a boy
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nti SA Ipdian Council^dampaign f 1.9ST1 (see p),

ampaign^similar tD^, â€¢ >--â€¢- j*

the Labour Party wdld have difficulty in rnpmlising^ven/tne 13% cf/me Ct
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which turoeo out to vol/fe in the lasi/ CPC by-election

Important leaders: Rev. Allen Hendrikse

David Curry

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The Coloured Persons Council Act of 1980 abolished the CRC and gave the Minister of Coloured Affairs the right to create a nominated Coloured Peoples Council to take over the legal responsibilities of the CRC. Presented ideologically as a response to the manifest "lack of interest" on the part of members of the so-called coloured community in the CRC, the Council's abolition was in fact a shrewd tactical move by the Botha regime designed to weaken the Labour Party. And indeed it did create a major problem of role definition for the Party.

For a short time, with its leadership visibly angered at being outmanoeuvred by Botha and under pressure both from the increasingly militant mass struggles and its own youth wing, the Party showed some signs of trying to

move "leftwards". A strategy conference held after the dissolution of the CRC, resolved to strengthen its grass roots organisation – to form new branches*. It declared it would work for the holding of a black convention, to be followed by a convention of all progressive forces. These conventions would draw up a representative alternative constitutional programme to that of the regime. It also declared its intention to work for a united front with bodies like AZAPO, COSAS and MWASA (see entries p. 100 and 101). It lent its name to the Free Mandela campaign and set up a commission to work out ways of mobilising "worker and consumer power".

However, the Party soon came under the counter-pressure of the more attractive "perks" being offered to so-called coloured and Asian political leaders willing to collaborate with the Total Strategy. In 1980 when the Botha regime abolished the Senate and set up the President's Council (PC) to formulate new constitutional proposals (see p. 102), it offered places on the latter body to the Labour Party. This created a major debate within the Party. The right wing argued that the logic of the "politics of negotiation" implied entering such bodies. ^>

When the majority of the Party decided against participation on the ground

ups, that

African were not included in the PC, a group of right wingers, including two

former party leaders and the chairman of the CRC's constitutional commission,

Du Preez, resigned to form a new political group, the Congress of the People (COPE).

Some COPE members now sit on the PC.

In the face of these pressures the party leadership, under Hendrikse,

was visibly vacillating.

His response to pressures from mass struggles

he declared itself in favour of the objectives, but not the strategy, of the ANC,

PAC, Black Consciousness movement and SWAPO. On other occasions, bowing to pressures

from its own right wing, it too declared itself in favour of "free enterprise"

and so on.

His "pragmatism", however, was not his total opposition to Marxism and criticised trade unionists

REFORM PARTY (RP) ^

Political party based on certain bourgeois and petty bourgeois class forces within the Indian community

The Reform Party was formed, by members of the South African Indian Council (SAIC) in 1976. It claimed to be using the platform created by the Apartheid state against the Apartheid system itself, a policy, is similar to that of certain Bantustan parties such as Inkatha and the Labour Party, the RP

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isthe South African Black Alliance ^ j.

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The Reform Party evidence/to the Schlebusch CommG/ssion of Inquiry i
nto a new

constitution, called for a single parliament for all races, but said this did

not mean one person one vote. The Party was dealt a.....decisive blow by the

mass campaign against the elections for the SAIC in November 1981.- Although

the RP belatedly announced a tactical withdrawal in the face of this campaign

one candidate did stand under its banner. His "success" in the election whose

^ 16 ^.ercar'i-

average poll was tessssteteas gives the RP one seat out of 45 in the thor
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ghly discredited Council.

Lacking any real effective base from which to pursue its strategy of nego-
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tion, the RP appears to be for the moment largely inactive, though it continues to serve as the Indian contingent" of SABA. However it, or so me

similar grouping could potentially emerge as a force based on the "Indian chamber" of the proposed three tier parliament.

Indian Council from which it emerged/aRd-wi4^-^t^iÂ©f^4^^ufemer;ged--a
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The history of the Reform Party cannot be separated from that the South African Indian Council from which it

The specific characteristics of the SAIC derive from the fact that devising a formula for the inclusion of the Indian community within the political institutions of Apartheid has always posed a particularly difficult problem for Apartheid constitutional planners. It was in fact only comparatively recently that the permanent presence of the Indian community in South Africa was officially acknowledged by Apartheid ideologues. Until 1957, official Nationalist Party policy was that the whole of the resident Indian Community ought even-tually to be "repatriated" to India or Pakistan. Until 1975 a free passage was

available to anyone from the community willing to accept "voluntary repatriation" (although there were very few takers -- 24 between 1955 and 1975).

Thus even by the standards of Apartheid institutions, the South African Indian Council has from the time of its establishment in 1968 been a particularly ineffective body. Until 1974 all its members were government nominees, unlike the Coloured Representative Council which was partly elected from the start.

After half of its members became indirectly elected on "behalf" of the community by members of local authorities, local affairs committees and management or consultative committees. The first time the SAIC was due to be directly elected was in November 1981. These elections were met by a massive boycott by the Indian community. SAIC has accordingly been based throughout on certain sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie with very little mass support amongst the Indian community as a whole, (important bourgeois as well as petty bourgeois class fractions within the Indian community have, it should be noted, refused to participate in the Council).

AW

The Reform Party was formed within SAIC in 1976. The immediate issue giving rise to its formation was a proposal by Prime Minister Vorster to set up an "Inter Cabinet Council" consisting of members of the "white Cabinet" plus the executives of the Coloured Representative Council and the SAIC. This council was to have had no decision making or legislative powers but was merely to serve as a forum for an "exchange of opinions". It never really functioned. +w*#Ä»%tÄ»3Ä»i.

The majority of the SAIC decided to participate in this body "on a trial basis". This decision was opposed by five members on the grounds that the proposal would exclude Africans. Led by Y.S. Chinsarorj this group constituted themselves

ves as "the Reform group". They were later joined by-another small faction, originally calling itself the Peoples3Party. These two groups then merged to form the Reform Party, with Chinsamy as president.

At its inaugural meeting Chinsamy defined the Rp*s immediate abjective as "... to get outspoken people elected to the Indian Council, and use the Council as

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a community platform from which the grievances of the people of South Africa could be aired", Its ultimate declared aim was to secure a society in which there would be, inter alia, "... peace and goodwill among the races;... equitable sharing of power by all citizens with safeguards against domination or oppression of one race by another ... (and) economic equality of opportunity for all (with a) raising of the status of workers". It pledged cooperation with "organizations striving for democracy by non-violent means". The last clause led it to affiliate to the South African Black Alliance } when the latter was formed in 1978.

Virtually the entire organizational effort of the Reform Party was directed towards the SAIC elections originally scheduled for the end of 1979. The RP opposed the various postponements of these elections, but used the time to

launch a recruiting drive amongst members of the SAIC, arguing that the re

would be no place in an elected SAIC for unaffiliated independents. A major coup; in this campaign was the recruitment of the nominated SAIC chairman,

J.N.Reddy, in mid 1979, after which emerged as the majority party in the SAIC.

The attempts by the Botha regime to formulate a "new constitutional dispensation" faced the RP, with major choices. After considerable internal discussion and debate the RP, unlike for example the Labour Party, (see paragraph) eventually gave evidence to the Schlebusch Commission of Inquiry. RP Congress

solved that the party's evidence should advocate one

man one vote, as an ultimate goal but recognized that there were different ways

of achieving this the RP favouring the summoning of a national convention.

that

In the event, however, its statement before Schlebusch stated that

the Party stood for parliament for all races, which did not necessarily mean one person one vote.

This rather loose interpretation of the Party's agreed policy led to severe criticism of its leadership. Eventually five branches disaffiliated in 1980 over this incident they subsequently declared themselves totally disillusioned with the SAIC. --

At the same time, as in the case of the Labour Party, the RP leadership came under pressure from elements within the party eager for the "perks" being offered by the Botha regime to so-called coloured and Asian leaders willing to collaborate with the Total Strategy'. In accordance with SABA policy, the

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RP refused to accept seats on the President's Council on the grounds that

Africans were excluded. However a significant element within the RP, opposed

this decision arguing that bodies like the President's Council rather than the

obsolete SAIC provided a more effective base from which to pursue the "politics of

negotiation". Three executive members who favoured this position were suspended

from the party in 1980s provoking a number of resignations both from the Party

and the SAIC in the same year. -^gsasto^ogs^sssteSssffiteEi^B^*. One member of

this group, Abram Mayet, subsequently accepted a seat on the President's Council.

The Reform Party* was swamped by the anti-SAIC campaign in 1981. As indicated

above (see p Cti), the anti-SAIC campaign raised issues going beyond the

question of elections for the SAIC, and the campaign became a real force for

mass mobilisation.

The HP's initial response to this campaign was to try to distance itself from the SAIC by agreeing with a number of criticisms being made of this body, but arguing that it was still worth while to capture it as a government recognized platform. Eventually, however, after intense pressure from SABA, the party, made a belated tactical retreat and announced in late September that it would not stand in the elections due in early November. In the official statement

Chinsamy declared that "while he remained committed to negotiation as a strategy ... the present climate made it untenable for him to enhance the credibility of the South African Indian Council" (our emphasis).

Despite this decision, however, one candidate stood "successfully" under the

Party's banner in the subsequent election. His return in an election whose average poll was 58% gives the RP one seat in the SAIC.

It deprived the RP of any effective base from which to pursue its "strategy of negotiation", the RP is largely inactive, though it continues to attend SABA

meetings. Though it has not yet decided

to stand in the 1994 elections.

It has declared itself on "the question of participation

in the Indian Affairs Committee of the three tier parliament/provided for in the

constitution's proposals/ the potential exists for the RB or some grouping to emerge as a force based on this body. Moreover, the

3-man committee that the R has

RPs

identity for, the role is of

by the fact that the major groupings within the SAIC have apart from being massively rejected by the Indian community /

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incapable of/even forming a/Stable bloc within/the Council],

the lgen elections thrare have been a
â€œdrpections from^SAIC, as well as ^several
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Leader#: Y.S.Chinsamy

SOUTH' AFRICAN-BLACK ALLIANCE fSAGA) (4)

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An alliance grouping/two Bantustan parties (inkatha of Kwazulu and the Inyandza

National Movement of Kangwane) plus two parties which emerged out of Apartheid

institutions imposed on the so-called coloured and Indian communities/* t he

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Labour and Reform parties respectively^see-entri-es-pp-----)___

All these parties claim to follow a strategy of using the institutions of Apartheid against the system itself.

. Sinfce its foundation in 1978 s SARA been dominated by the Inkatha movement led

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by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi^ Indeed to a large extent it has functioned as a â€¢vehicle for the promotion of the pretensions of the class forces controlling

V . â€¢

Inkatha to leadership of the oppressed masses.

. One of SABA major objectives was to prepare for a representative national convention to draw up a charter for a non-racial constitution. This project was however abandoned in 1981 when it became clear that the alliance could not attract a sufficiently representative grouping. Since then SABA has been much less actively promoted and in 1982 Inkatha produced its own proposals for a "consociational democracy" (see pGco).

SABA affiliates however continue to meet regularly and the alliance is used from time to time when the Inkatha leadership feels the need for a broader platform. Meetings were held under its banner to protest against the proposed Ingwavuma-

--Kangwane land transfer to Swaziland (see pCRSO). It was also used to condemn the Labour-Party's decision to enter the new constitutional arrangements of the /Apartheid regime (see.).

The South African Black Alliance- was formed in March 1978 at a meeting chaired by Chief Buthelezi and attended by Inkatha plus the Labour and Reform parties.

It succeeded the abortive Black Unity Front (BUF) set up on the initiative of Buthelezi and two other Bantustan "leaders" (Ntsanwisi of Gazankulu and Phatudi of Lebowa) in 1976.

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Both SABA and its predecessor emerged as part of an attempt by certain class forces operating within the Bantustan structures and other Apartheid institutions to widen their political bases in the wake of the 1975 uprisings. The immediate impetus giving rise to the formation of the BUF was a meeting between the then Prime Minister Vorster, and Bantustan "leaders" at the height of the Soweto revolt in August 1975. Vorster refused to make any significant concession to the Bantustan "leaders" who were then both eager to take advantage of the uprisings.

sings to advance a number of their own specific demands and worried about the effects of continued mass action on their own positions. ^

/Vorster's intransigence part prompted Buthelezi, Ntsanwisi and Phatudi to call for a meeting of "black leaders" to discuss a "closing of the ranks".

About 50 "prominent blacks" including a number of "community leaders" from

Soweto and some representatives from Black Consciousness organization attended.

After a follow-up meeting chaired by Buthelezi later in the year. Although a

number of political differences emerged, the meeting decided to set up a Black

Unity Front. This front basically represented an attempt by class forces among

the Bant'ustan leadership which did not see their long term future in C
independence.

dence, to forge an alliance with sections of the black urban petty bourgeoisie.

However it proved few still born. By the BUF's inaugural conference in April

1977 Buthelezi's opportunism in Soweto (see p Otto) led to a boycott by most of the urban "community leaders". Moreover, even the support among Bantustan leaders

proved to be patchy. The conference held in Lebowa and opened by Phatudi was

only strongly supported by Inkatha and was generally regarded as a flop.

Meanwhile as part of the Inkatha leadership's efforts to promote their organization

on a national level, contacts had been established with the Labour and

Reform parties. After several preliminary meetings these three parties, even-

they eventually constituted themselves as the South African Black Alliance in March 1970.

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/jPoABf defined its objectives as being "... to endeavour to create a just

society

in South Africa .. [through] determining a common strategy in struggle and unity among all black organizations", More specifically, the alliance pledged itself to "... prepare for a national convention representative of all South Africa to draw up a charter for a non racial constitution". This planter was clearly intended as a 'moderate' alternative to the Freedom Charter (see p); its envisaged

role being to 'serve as the focus for a campaign (backed up, if necessary, by industrial and consumer action') to "impress upon the white electorate their responsibility to force the government to negotiate".

However, in the event SABA palpably failed to emerge as a sufficiently broadly based alliance to undertake this project. Buthelezi immediately tried to use SABA as a base for a renewed effort to mobilise "anti independence" Bantustan leaders. These efforts were largely unsuccessful, mainly because most S.A. "leaders" regarded SABA as too "radical". After making initial declarations of support Ntswane and Phatudi eventually decided against joining. A pledge by a meeting of 6 Bantustan "leaders" to send a delegation to a SABA meeting in February 1979 has not honoured and the Dikwankwetla. Party of the Qwa Qwa bantustan

(see p fitiO) which had joined in 1979, disaffiliated in 1981. / Only the

Inyandza National Movement of Enos Mabuza of KaNgwane (see p (TGO) which

joined in 1978, has stayed with the alliance.

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â€œesÂ»-4Â«-48^Â©* SAB/y failed to attract other urban based community or political organizations. The alliance became a grouping of 4 parties: two (inkatha and

the; INM) based on Bantustans and two. (the Labour and Reform Parties] ! based on "councils" imposed by the Apartheid regime on the so-called coloured and Indian

communities.

SABA confinement to this narrow political base led to the abandonment^ of

its initial project to prepare for a national convention, This occurred in

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1981 in the face of a mass campaign/affirms support for the Freedom' Charter

and following the collapse in June of preliminary discussions between SABA.

the Progressive Federal Party, Azapo and the^fcen (see pp(TO\$, Cno'V OdÂ©) .

After the failure of the June meeting Inkatha announced...that it was abandoning

the idea of-a national convention. It has subsequently presented its "own"

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proposals for a "eeÂ«Â«&l-3-4at'4&^ democracy" in the 1982. Report of it s Buthelezi Commission (see p <300).

This, setback has led to SABA being much less actively promoted in recent years. However, its member parties continue to meet. In the past these meetings have had some influence on the policy of individual affiliates. A SABA

resolution-criticising the President's Council because it excluded Africans was clearly a significant factor in the eventual decision by the Labour and Reform parties, not to accept nominations to the Council. Similarly, the Reform Party's belated tactical withdrawal from the 1981 Indian Council election (see p 0130) followed a SABA meeting in which the RP came under strong pressure from other SABA affiliates anxious to avoid the effects of the anti-SAIC campaign rubbing off on them. More recently, with both the KaNgwane and Kwazulu Bantustan administrations affected, SABA meetings discussed the proposed Ingwavuma-KaNgwane land transfer to Swaziland^S

July 1982 a number of small protest meetings against the land deal were held under the SABA banner. The decision in January 1983 by the Labour Party to put up candidates for the "coloured" chamber of the proposed three tier parliament (a decision strongly opposed by Buthelezi) led to the Labour Party being suspended from SABA

Chairman: Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

The Media - Press and South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) (5)

The South African media consists of two major sectors: the privately owned press and the state owned broadcasting service.

Despite its widely promoted self image; the South African press is not a separate independent force in the political-ideological arena. Rather, different groupings within the industry are linked to specific class forces engaged in the wider struggle.

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The major division in the press is between the so-called commercial press on the one hand owned and controlled by capitalist and allied interests - and on the other hand a range of progressive publications currently produced by community organisations, the labour movement and student groups, as well as clandestine publications of the national liberation movement.

Within the commercial press there is a further broad division roughly corresponding to language cleavages. The English language commercial press is dominated by two conglomerates: South African Associated Newspapers/ and the I

Argus Group, "Both linked to major non-Afrikaner monopolies. Politically, these groups strongly support capitalism but are critical, of certain aspects of Apartheid policy. The Afrikaans language commercial press is also dominated by two groups: . Nasionale Pers and Perskor. Nasionale Pers. is effectively controlled by Saniam (see p 030) - and the leadership of the Cape Nationalist Party, and 14- functions as the principal organ of the P.W. Botha faction of the Nationalist Party (see p 000). Perskor is linked to the leadership of the Transvaal Nationalist Party (traditionally more petty bourgeois-dominated and reactionary

than the Cape Party). The class conflicts in the Nationalist Party and the eventual triumph of the monopoly-linked Botha faction have led to intense competition between the major Afrikaans press groups coupled with the defec

of large sections of the Transvaal readership to the right of the NP this has
 j created serious problems for Perkor.

In terms of circulation figures, it is clearly the commercial press (and withi
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 that the English language, commercial press) which dominates. This is part
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because of the huge competitive advantages enjoyed by the capitalist ow
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of these publications, but is also partly- the result of restrictions placed

on progressive publications by the regime - ranging from outright banning
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strict and costly/for registration. Further restrictions can be expected

in the near future, following the February 1982 Report of the Steyn Com
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sion of Inquiry into the Media. .. j

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The state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation has long been a

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— straight forward propaganda vehicle for the ruling Nationalist Party. In the 1960's it was a bastion of far-right (verkramp) politics. It is now however a crucial vehicle in the mobilisation of "total resources", particularly those of psychology and propaganda against what the Total Strategy of the Botha regime labels the "total onslaught" against apartheid South Africa.

1 The Commercial Press

The current 'commercial press conglomerates came into existence through the

* merger and take over of a number of individual newspaper companies formed in the

— case of the English language press since the mid nineteenth century and between

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1915 in the case of the Afrikaans language press.

(1) The English commercial press; This is dominated by two conglomerates - The

Argus Group and South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN). The Argus Group is the larger of the two. Its origins date back to the foundation of the "Cape Argus" newspaper in 1857. Intensely pro-British and pro-imperialist from the outset;

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Argus company was eventually taken over by a syndicate of mining capitalists including Cecil Rhodes. They used it as a base to launch another newspaper* The Star, in Johannesburg in 1899. Until 1931 all directors of the Argus Group were drawn from two mining houses - the Corner House Group (now part of Barlows Rand) and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments (JCI - now controlled by Anglo American), (see p 10) Thereafter a Voting Trust was set up in an attempt to still, the

growing criticism that the group's newspaper were the mere mouthpieces of foreign

minjg capital. At the same time the previous practice of recruiting editors and senior journalists exclusively from England was abandoned. However, in terms of

effective control these changes were more cosmetic than real. Until 1949 the

Voting Trust consisted of two trustees - John Martin and Reginald Holland - both

former Chairmen of the Corner House Group, After their deaths (in 1948 and 1949)

respectively) a formula was devised under which half the directors were appointed

by a somewhat widened Voting Trust and half by the leading shareholders. Through JCI

and various nominees. Anglo American currently owns 28,02% of Argus' share capital;

/ & p.c>- CXn)-

the Argus pension fund .^4,91^the Standard [^ank 10,05^ (see p CTCW)|SAAN in a cross

shareholding 6,94^and sA Mutual 8,53^ (see pCKTO). The group's major newspaper are

The Star', The Argus "(Gape Town), the Daily News (Durban), Sunday Tribune (Durban)

Diamond Fields Advertiser, (Kimberley) The Friend (Bloemfontein) and Pretoria News

plus Post Natal, The Sowetan, Ilanga and Cape Herald - the last four aimed at different sections of the black population. In addition to its public a-

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tions together with the food group, PreraierJWzmzste&e the Argus group also con-

the land
controls the Central News Agency* the monopoly distributor of English language land

magazine'

South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) was formed in 1955 through the merger of the former Daily Mail Ltd. and the Sunday Times Syndicate which then controlled both

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*The Sunday Times and Sunday Express. The Rand Daily Mail, had been founded by Sir Abe Bailey, At the time of the formation of SAAN it was

controlled by the trustees of Bailey's estate. The Sunday Times's syndicate was
. closely tied to the families of R.Ward Jackson and G.H. Kingswell, British and Australian journalists who had come to South Africa with the objective of establishing down-market "popular" newspapers.

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The Bailey Trust remained the clearly dominant force within SAAN until 1962 when the company became a public corporation quoted on the Johannesburg stock exchange. Thereafter Bailey's relative stake has progressively declined. In the late 1960s and early 1970s large blocs of SAAN shares were bought by the Argus group in an attempt to take over the company. This was however blocked by the intervention of Prime Minister Vorster in the early 1970s who threatened legislation to prevent "monopoly"

control" being established over the English language "opposition" press.

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Nevertheless the Argus Group remains the largest single shareholder in SAAN, with

39,397 shares of its share capital in 1981. Other major shareholders include Anglo American

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ican (through nominees) 20, 96k, and Nedbank 7,54%. (see p GxX>)-whii

e the Bailey j

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Trust holds 8,21% and the editor of the Financial Mail, Stephen Mulholland, 1,18%
Major SAAN publications include The Rand Daily Mail, Sunday Times, Sunday Express, Cape Argus, Eastern Province Herald, The Evening Post (Port Elizabeth) and the influential business journal The Financial Mail.

In addition there are four important English language commercial newspapers which

do not fall under either the Argus or SAAN groups. These are the Natal Mercury and

Natal Witness.. (Durban and Pietermaritzburg), the Daily Dispatch (East London) and

The Citizen (Johannesburg), The first two are owned by the same company based in

Pietermaritzburg whilst the Daily Dispatch has a complicated ownership structure

in which its editor and staff hold a large proportion of the shares. The Citizen
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differs from all other English language commercial newspapers. It was set up in

1976. by the former state Department of Information in a secret project to develop

a conservative, "patriotic" English morning newspaper, after the Department's attempt

to take over SAAN failed. Both of these projects were fronted by NP industrialist

Louis Luyt using secret state funds. The uncovering of these projects by the

other English newspapers was a major factor provoking the Information Department

Sandakal* in 1978-9 following which the Citizen was bought by the Afrikaner

Perskor group, (w-d-Â»4;h*>OHgh ^

With the exception of the Citizen* no English language commercial news paper directly supports the Nationalist regime. Rather as their ownership patterns suggest, they are supportive of monopoly capitalist class forces outside of the governing party. They are all strongly pro-capitalist and "anti-communist",

They BT

opposed to and critical of specific aspects of Apartheid policy, such as job reservation, "petty Apartheid", aspects of the Bantustan policy, blatant forms of repression considered likely to provoke a response from the oppressed masses or criticism from abroad and, in the Total Strategy period, the slowness in accommodating a blade middle class'. An interesting indication of the basic political stance of the liberal commercial press emerges from the fact that the Rand Daily Mail coined the ~sloc(rj^ ' Adapt or Perish' in 1964, prefiguring the slogan "Adapt

or Die" later adopted by P.W.Botha to promote the 'Total Strategy' .

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In terms of party political allegiance most of the English language commercial press now supports the Progressive Federal Party (see ewfeapy OTTj) although the Natal Witness publications support the New Republic Party (see ont^y p 0 t)O) this represents a change from the position prior to the collapse of the United Party in 197? (see pdOOj, when only the Rand Daily Mail and the Daily Dispatch - generally regarded as the most liberal bourgeois papers - clearly identified with Pro-gressive Party. Most of the others than supported either "an undifferentiated parliamentary "opposition1^ or the United Party specifically. Given the extreme weakness of the parliamentary opposition the editor of the Sunday Times during r, his period argued that the press itself should assume the functions of the loyal opposition". In some cases, the ~liberalism of certain editors allowed space for the printing of occasional articles more "radical" than the general political stance of

the paper concerned. Furthermore, some papers have from time to time been willing to enter into confrontation with government officials on specific issues. Perhaps the best known example here was during the Muldergate scandal, when the role of certain English, language papers in publishing damaging material leaked to them by anti-Mulder, factions in the Nationalist Party was crucial in the latter's eventual defeat by the P.W.Botha faction (see p).

A further important factor accounting for the "anti-government" tone of some sections of the non-Afrikaans, commercial press is that both the Argus and

SAAN groups have sought to expand their black readerships both on purely commercial grounds and in order to counter more radical publications. Most major English language papers now have "township editions" and the Daily Dispatch even has a majority black readership. The Argus, group in particular produces a number of publications aimed exclusively at black readers. The most important of these are The Sowetan/ 'fjie most recent successor to The World which was itself set up in the 1930s with the deliberate objective of combatting the influence of publications emanating from the ANC and Communist Party. Although these publications consist#

largely*of sex scandal and sport stories they are occasionally compelled to permit certain community issues to be taken up.

However, there are definite 'limits to how far any of these publications is pre-

pared to go in allowing criticism of the Apartheid system of capitalist exploitation based on national oppression. Extremely rare indeed are articles portraying capitalists as anything other than enlightened benefactors of the community as a whole.' Articles dealing with conditions of black workers in the mining industry have been practically non-existent - not because they have not been written t.a. because they have been spiked by editors anxious not to antagonise their major shareholders. Further more, where there have been conflicts between the demands of investigative journalism (even on topics normally permitted) and the demands of profitability, it is invariably the former which has to give way.

The best example of this came in 1955 when the Rand Daily Mail published a series of articles about prison conditions. The regime's initial response (prior to the

enactment of a law prohibiting the publication of all unapproved articles on

prisons) was to bring a costly prosecution using perjured witnesses. The response of the directors of SAAN to this strategem was to warn its other papers not to print similar stories and to manoeuvre the dismissal of Laurence Gandar as editor.

Another slightly different incident also affecting the Rand Daily Mail, came in

1982 when the editor Allister Sparks, who had followed a policy of promoting critical investigative articles, was dismissed in a bid to increase circulation by giving more emphasis to "popular" articles on sports, entertainment and crime.

(2) The Afrikaans Language Commercial Press is dominated by two groups^ Nasionale Pers Beperk and Perskor^ Both/closely connected to factions in the ruling

Nationally Party, There are also smaller companies which produce papers supporting far right parties.

Nasionale Pers is the oldest of the Afrikaans language publishing companies.

It was formed in 1915 by the very same individuals who in the same year founded the Nationalist Party in the Cape and who were to set up SANLAM three years later, (see entries pp (X&M500). The group's first newspaper 'Die Burger', began publication in the same year. Its first editor was D.F. Malan, Prime Minister from 1948 to 1954, who forsook his clergyman's pulpit for the more effective podium of the editors chair. He became leader of the Cape NP at the same time. The groups next paper Volksblad began publishing in the Free State in 1917 and its third Die Oosterlig first appeared in the Eastern Cape in 1937.

From the outset Nasionale Pers committed itself to the promotion of the variant of Afrikaner nationalist ideology favoured by the agrarian capitalist and aspirant

financial capitalist class forces dominating the Cape Nationalist Party.

When the Nationalist Party split in 1934 over the formation of the fusionist/gover-

ment [see p (HTO") Nasionale Pers supported the Purified Nationalist Party led by

its first editor, D.F. Malan.. In the following year in association with the

leadership of the Cape party it took the initiative, in setting up Voortrekkers

in the Transvaal, which began publishing Die Transvaler in 1932. This represented

the

led a deliberate attempt by the Cape party to counter what it saw as the republic

the extremism of the petty bourgeois Broederbond leadership of the Transvaal

party (see p SCCT). However, this manoeuvre backfired when H.F. Verwoerd sent

up as the nominee of Nasionale Pers and the Cape party to edit Die Transvaler

the

sided with the leadership of the Transvaal party, Nasionale Pers withdrew in

1939. and the paper was placed under the effective political control of the

Transvaal NP.

After the coming to power of the Nationalist regime in 1948, Nasionale Pers, initially had extremely cosy relations with the government leadership.

Especially under the premiership of Malan 1948 to 1954. Die Burger for instance

was the only paper permitted to sit-in meetings of the NP parliamentary caucus.

However the intensification of conflict within the Afrikaner nationalist alliance

ce in the 1950s led to, the dominance of the more petty bourgeois oriented Transvaal NP. Given its deep with the. larger Afrikaner capitalist grouping

Sanlam and the mn'-le capitalist oriented Cape NP by the late 1950's^ D ie Burger become somewhat isolated from the dominant tendencies in the NP. In t ie 1960s, the paper had a major clash with the then Premier, Verwoerd, when it op posed proposals to remove coloured representatives from parliament. This led t o an oft quoted retort from Verwoerd that the whites could defend themselves without the support of any other population group. When the verligte / verkrampste split came out into the open (see p<yÂ°t)), the Nasionale J3ers groups clearly i dentified

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itself as^_a verligte force. In 1965, against the express instructions of P rime

Minister Verwoerd, it launched a verligte Sunday newspaper Die Beeld in the

Transvaal in direct competition with tha-flmalH-fen the Transvaal1 in'iria pegiyncornpg-

with the Sunday paper of Northern Afrikaner nationalism Daabreek. Die Beeld

broke new ground in Afrikaans journalism.' It was explicitly used to"let the

voice of the Cape be heard in the,Transvaal" and began an unprecedented campaign

.Â» * of exposes of the far-right " Hertzog group" in the NP. These exposes tog ether

with the.furious circulation battle which developed between Die Beeld a nd Dagbreek,

were a major intensifying the verligte/verkrampste schism in the late 1960 * s and

the eventual split of the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) in 1959 (see p (F&XD) â€

The success of P:-e- Beeld forced the northern Afrikaner press group, Pe rskor to enter into an agreement with Nasionale Pers to merge Pie Bgeld and

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'into the jointly-owned Rapport in 1970. Rapport followed basically the same

line as Die Beeld, with the fresh intensification of factional struggles in the

NP in the mid 1970s, Nasionale Pers again intervened in the Transvaal. In 1975

it set up a new morning daily called Beeld with the explicit aim of driving,

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Perskor's Die Transvaler out of the market. Like its predecessor, Beeld, it basically propagated the line of the P.W. Botha faction of the NP. Its circulation battle with Die Transvaler was also a significant factor in the resurgence of factionalism in the NP in the late 1970s. Eventually in early 1983, Die Transvaler was forced to withdraw from the morning daily market resulting in a complete triumph for Nasionale Pers - and P.W. Botha's faction in the Nfp, .

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Currently, Nasionale Pers's most important newspapers are Die Burger, Beeld, Rapport, (in association with Perskor) and Die Oosterlig. It also produces a number of entertainment magazines including some aimed at black readerships, and runs several retail outlets, including the Via Afrika chain operating in several Bantustans as well as Botswana and Lesotho.

The other major Afrikaner press group? (the Transvaal-based Perskor, was formed in the late 60s through the merger of the two existing Transvaal-based Afrikaans newspaper groups, Afrikaanse Pers (1962) Beperk and Voortrekkerpers.

Afrikaanse Pers was founded in 1931 by the then Prime Minister and leader of

the Nationalist Party, General J.B.M. Hertzog. It was published in the afternoon daily, Die Vaderland. Afrikaanse Pers was a fusion of the Nationalist and South African Parties in 1934 (see pfftrti). After the 'reunification' of the Nationalist Party in 1940 (see p 0t5Â£>) control over the Afrikaanse Pers passed through the Hertzog trust to N.C. Havenga, leader of the small Afrikaner Party. During the 1940s Afri-

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kaanse Pers became a refuge for a number of figures associated with the para-military and pro-Nazi Ossewabrandwag. In 1947 a group of these led by Marius Jooste and P.J.M. van der Merwe; formed Dagbreekpers, as a vehicle for their reintegration into the mainstream Nationalist movement. Dagbreekpers took over Die Sondag, launched only 6 months earlier by Afrikaanse Pers and relaunched it as Sondag weeklik. It broke away from Die Sondag. In 1962 it came under effective Dagbreek control, as Afrikaanse Pers (1962) Beperk.

The origins of the other component of Perskor, Voortrekker Pers have already been discussed in the section on Nasionale Pers. After the withdrawal of Nasionale Pers in 1939, the Board of Voortrekker Pers was dominated by the leadership of the Transvaal NP, with the Transvaal leader serving as chairman.

Perskor was formed in the late 1960s in an attempt by the two Transvaal groups

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siÂ«GÂ©-&te flatter an afternoon and Sunday paper, jaaasssaisJBaKa
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fÂ«wÂ»eÂ»~f*apeÂ«i. However, each faced growing pressure from the ve
rligte Cape-
-based -group trying to break into the Transvaal. Although Perskor conti
nued
until the Muldergate scandal (see p COÂ©) with the Voortrekker Pers trad
ition
of appointing the leader of the Transvaal Nationalist Party as chairman of
its
board, the leading force within the group has undoubtedly been the Dagb
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Trust dominated, until his death in October* by Marius Jooste.

Despite the greater resources made available by this merger, Perskor ha
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not been able to'insulate the Transvaal papers from the effects of the pro
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sive break up of .the Afrikaner nationalist class-aliiance. the group was b
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affected by the .Muldergate pcandalg-* fas leader of the iransvaal party*/

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was a one time chairman of the Perskor board^ and the scandal revealed
that
Perskor had inflated the circulation of its papers to the. Audit Bureau of C
ircu-
lation >- widely used in the placement of advertising revenue. This led to
a
multimillion Rand suit against Perskor' by Nasionale Pers. The triumph of
the
P.W.Botha faction in the NP in 1978 also resulted in Perskor- losing a n
umber
of highly profitable government printing contracts to Nasionale Pers, Mor
eover,
Prskor has also been caught in a classic crisis of indecision in the face o
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increased competitive pressures from Nasionale Pers on the hand,

and clear indications that a large section of its own petty bourgeois reade
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are increasingly turning to parties to the right of the Nationalist Party, on .

the other. This emerged clearly in September 1982 when Willied de Klerk
was
dismissed as editor of the Transvaler by Jooste. De Klerk, a well known ve

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who in fact first coined the terms verligte and verkrampste, had been brought

in some years earlier in an attempt to offset the inroads made by Beeld.

His

dismissal was widely interpreted as the prelude to a sharp change in direction

in which the Transvaler largely for commercial reasons would take an increasing

Conservative Party line. Jooste's/however gave rise to a sharp struggle in

Dagbreek Trust. Eventually a "moderate" faction won out and entered negotiations

with Nasionale Pers., These resulted in Perskor's agreement to withdraw

Die Trans-

valer from the daily market in return for an end to the civil action

brought against it by Nasionale Pers. — English language newspapers have commen-

ted on the "total triumph" of this "total onslaught" on Perskor.

Another millstone around the neck of the group is the English language

Citizen, launched in 1976 in conjunction with the Department of Information

after the latter had failed to take over SAAN. Despite being financed by a

F} 12 million state hand-out, subsequent identification as piece of the

disgraced Department has badly affected its credibility) ^d-%^~;4,!4&F--

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I newspapers*. In addition to the Nasionale Pers and Persic or papers, a number of other Afrikaans newspapers are published by smaller companies. The most important of these are: Die Afrikaner, the official organ of the Herstigte

Nasionale Party - published by St&ydpers; and Die Konservatief/The Conservative, the bilingual organ of the Conservative Party.

II The Progressive ' Press.

No attempt will be made here to provide a comprehensive guide to progressive publications, ndr to trace the history of the progressive press in South Africa.

It is sufficient merely to note that both the Communist Party and the ANC/Congress Alliance (see pp *3TTO) produced a range of publications before their banning. Best known was the New Age weekly, banned in 1962. Currently the organizations of the liberation movement produce for circulation underground such journals as Sechaba^, The African Communist, Dawn and Workers Unity (SACTU

A number of publications linked to the trade union movement have also emerged. The most comprehensive of these is the quarterly South African Labour Bulletin. Individual unions and federations also produce their own newspapers,^.

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also

A number of community newspapers have appeared since 1976. The best known of these is the Cape Town based monthly Grassroots. The student press, after undergoing a major transformation since the mid^Os has also emerged as a significant force in progressive publication* SASPU National is one of the best sources of regular news on developments in the democratic movement. Finally, mention should be made of the journal Work-in Progress, providing one of the best informed analyses of recent developments.

III State Intervention and Control _____

The existence of progressive publications challenging the Apartheid system plus sections of the liberal English language commercial press opposing certain aspects of government policy, have prompted numerous interventions by the Nationalist regime to control or restrict the press.

Prior to 1948 state control over publications was principally exercised through the common law (which forbade the publication of "libellous" or "obscene" material) and the 1930 Riotous Assemblies Act which prohibited the publication of material likely to have the effect of undermining the security of the state or

engendering feelings of hostility between Black and White persons".

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The first additional controls were imposed by the Nationalist regime in the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act, allowed the Minister to ban any publication

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considered to be "furthering the aims of communism". Anars, was used to ban

the Congress aligned newspaper, The Guardian (which promptly reappeared under

the names Mew Age, Clarion and Spark each banned in succession). In order to

prevent any recurrence of this episode the Act was amended in 1962 to prevent

any newspaper from registering under more than one name. Proprietors of any

new newspaper were obliged to deposit with the Minister of the Interior such

amount not exceeding R20.000, as the Minister might determine - a clause which
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has acted as a major barrier to the formation of community and progressive-news-papers ever since, . The Minister was also given powers to refuse the registration^ Of any newspaper he considered likely to be banned.

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After the prison conditions exposed mentioned^the Prisons Act made it an offence to photograph or sketch any prison or publish "any false information" about prison conditions.

A more comprehensive attempt to control all publications came with the 1963 Publications and Entertainments Control Act. This set up a Publications Control Board (replaced in 1974 by a Directorate of Publications) with wide powers to censor books, films, magazines and other publications. However, members of the

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Newspaper Press Union (NPU to which belong all major English and Afrikaans language commercial newspapers) were exempted from the provisions of the Act after agreeing to draw up their own "self censorship" Code of Conduct. The NPU Code of Conduct, rejected by the SA Society of Journalists and only accepted under protest. SAAN, requires inter alia, that "Comment should take due cognisance of the complex racial problems of South Africa and take into account the

general good and safety of the country and its people". Frequent complaints*

and threats by government officials that the NPU members were following the

1976 uprisings, led to an amendment of the NPU code. In 1977 the NPU established an "independent" Press Council consisting of with greater powers to "police" the industry.

an "independent" Press Council consisting of a retired judge and two assessors

Despite, this, a number of further controls and restrictions have been imposed on the press by the Botha regime. In 1979 the Advocate General Act was passed.

This was a clear attempt to prevent anyone doing to the Botha faction what it had done to its opponents during the Muldergate scandal. It provided for the appointment of an Advocate General, to investigate any allegations "regarding the

m- 'dishonest use of State monies". During such an investigation published comment is prohibited and the report of the Advocate General recommends prohibition of the publication of information considered prejudicial to state security.

In 1979 the regime also appointed a Commission chaired by Judge M.T. Steyn to make recommendations on, inter alia, "ways of reconciling, without detriment to the State: on the one hand the interests of the news media in informing

the public..

5? On the other hand the interests of the State ... which require that news worthily

information should sometimes not be known'.

The Steyn report was published in February 1982. It argued that the press generally "lacked professionalism" and was "over politicised", while some sections, notably the English language press, displayed "undue negativism" towards "persons in authority". "The situation is even more unfortunate", - wrote Steyn, "as overseas attacks on South Africa, including ANC propaganda,

are inspired to no small extent by reports and comments emanating from the English language newspapers". The Commission said of the Afrikaans language newspapers that "...though supporting the government and ruling party on most fundamental issues.... are no longer mere party organs. They indeed play

an ever more important role in educating the Afrikaner on economic and labour reforms". However, they had not in the past been sufficiently "aware" of the "aspirations of the black community" and "their challenge in the future" was

to "promote moderation in South Africa". ~

The Commission concluded that the strategic objective ought to be to establish a "moderate" press in South Africa broadly supportive of the programme of the

Botha regime. There would be no place in such a press it suggested for the - "extremes" of the HNP organ Die Afrikaner on the right or the Argus-owned Sowetan on the left. The commission thus recommended inter alia that a register of journalists be established. Only registered journalists would be permitted to write for registered newspapers. No person who had ever been convicted

- of "subversion" would be permitted to register as a journalist. In addition, a Code of Conduct for journalists should be drawn up.

Another recommendation (which the Commission freely acknowledged originated with Nasionale Pers) was that the leading shareholders in the Argus group and SAAN be required to divest themselves of their monopoly control within three years. No equivalent recommendation was however made in respect of

SANLAM'S position in Nasionale Pers. Finally, it urged that the state revamp its information and public relations bodies to create a better relationship between government and press,

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By the end of 1982 no legislation emerged from the Steyn Commission report.

The regime has apparently opted for a tactic of negotiation and discussion with bodies like the Newspaper Press Union to see how much 'it can first get

them to accept "voluntarily".

IV The South African Corporation (SABC-]

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The other key component in the South African media, the SABC controls radio

and television services. In formal legal terms it is an independent state corporation with its own statute, board of governors and policies. Formed

in the 1920s, throughout its first thirty years of existence the SABC main-

tained a relative balance between the different bourgeois factions and par-

-ties in its presentations of news, information and entertainment. However

under successive NP regimes -since 1948, and in particular following the

appointment of Broederbond Chairman^Dr. P.J.Meyer as Director General in

1958, it became a highly partisan vehicle for the propagation of the current

line of the Nationalist Party. Dissenting views, even those of the ineffectual parliamentary opposition, were systematically denied any platform in

the broadcasting media. With the attempt of the Botha regime to widen its

political base after 1978, this "slanting" of the news has changed slightly and more time is now given to the views of the official parliamentary opposition.*-

tion. However the SABC is firmly closed to political views outside the narrow range of parliamentary politics, and is a crucial vehicle for the propagation of the "total onslaught" hysteria of the Botha regime

The basic services of the SABC today cover radio and television broadcasting-

'ting. However for many years the corporation firmly resisted the intro-

diction of television. Its radio broadcasts were divided into separate English and Afrikaans services until the early 1950s when a bilingual Commercial Channel (Springbok Radio) was introduced. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw the establishment of broadcasts in various African languages under the "Radio Bantu" rubric, consisting of bland musical programmes and programme propaganda. The establishment of Radio Bantu coincided with the introduction of television.

duction of Frequency Modulation (FM) broadcasting in the early 1960s., This "technical innovation" had a highly political purpose. In an era of intense anti-apartheid struggles and the independence of much of Africa from formal colonialism, the /Apartheid regime feared that South African blacks would be incited by foreign (and particularly African) news broadcasts. The introduction of the aggressively publicised. FM'services went hand in hand with the promotion of relatively cheap, single-charinel FM receivers incapable of receiving foreign short-wave broadcasts, thus barricading South Africa's oppressed population^ behind a wall of. misinformation and propaganda about South Africa' and the world. The introduction of FM also- saw the establishment of. local musical commercial channels, aimed al.white listeners, and likewise trivialising news and information- à«à« tion. In 1965 external broadcasting in several languages was introduced. This "Radio.RSA" was explicitly seen as .the regime's external propaganda weapon. Directed mainly at Africa, it seeks to present an idyllic picture of life in "developed" and "stable" South Africa, compared with "underdevelopment" and "instability" in the rest of Africa. Like all SABC services, Radio RSA actively promotes the view that the problems of Africa in general and South Africa in

1 particular are all the result of the "total onslaught" against South Africa, I

inspired by the -"imperialist" Soviet Union. An important sub-theme is constant reference to the "decadence" and alleged lack of political will in the major Western powers in the face of this "Soviet threat".

These themes were taken up with a vengeance by the television service^, introduced after much internal conflict in 1976 (see below). There are currently three television channels in South Africa, one for whites (balancing English and Afrikaans programmes) and .two- for blacks. The introduction of television, and the heightened technical and artistic demands of this medium over the relatively simple one of radiojhas forced the SABC to move awayTrom its often lau

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C^UjJe propaganda slant of the 1960s, and develop a more-sophisticated approach.

Nevertheless television is now perhaps the most important medium in the propagation of the "total onslaught" ideology of the regime. It has isolated white South Afr:

Â«cans even further from any anti-Apartheid world view and source of information.

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Given the SA'BC's partisan position and crucial role in the dissemination of in-

â€ formation, it has inevitably featured centrally in emerging conflicts with in the Nationalist Party since 1948. In the 1950s the most reactionary NP elements, roughly grouped around Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, fought to replace the pro-Nationalist but nevertheless relative unpartisan Gideon Roos as Director General . When

Verwoerd became Prime Minister in 1958, one of his first acts was to install the Broederbond Chairman P.J. Meyer as Director General of the SABC. Immediately the SABC became the central propaganda vehicle in the NP's struggle to declare South Africa a republic. The control over crucial policy decisions now rested very firmly within the Broederbond (see p 40).

During much of the 1960s the SABC was a major base for the extreme right; in the Afrikaner nationalist class alliance (of whom Verwoerd was the acknowledged leader). The responsible Minister (and leading theoretician of this far right) was Dr. Albert Hertzog - who was later to lead the breakaway far right Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP - see p 41). Director General Meyer was another prominent philosopher of the far right and until the HNP split was regarded as a leading member of the far right "Hertzog group". Under Hertzog and Meyer the SABC not only vigorously propagated full blooded Verwoerdian Apartheid policies, but also a narrow Calvinistic moral philosophy.

Among other things this led to a long standing refusal to countenance the introduction of television - on the grounds that it would inevitably lead to contamination by "liberalistic" and/or "communist" ideas.

With the split in the NP in September 1969 and the formation of the HNP by Hertzog, the SABC again became centrally involved in these struggles. Given his position as Chairman of the Broederbond (clause 6 of whose constitution forbids "party politics" in the organisation), Meyer was unable personally to support the HNP despite a strong affinity with its politics. Prime Minister Vorster thus skillfully used the arch-verkrampste Meyer and the SABC in an extended witch hunt against the HNP. As a result, although Meyer remained as director general until 1976, and as such supervised the introduction of the television services he had resisted, he himself was politically largely discredited and the Corporation was

- firmly in the hands of the Vorster "centrists" in the NP.

With the adoption of the "Total Strategy" of the new Botha regime in 1978 the SABC became a crucial medium in the attempt to inculcate in the white pu

blic
a "total onslaught" hysteria. Its top management has been systematically infiltrated by supporters of the Botha faction of the NP. The Directorate-General designated in early 1983, Riaan Eckstein, is a former South African Ambassador to the United Nations and a close confidant both of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pik Botha. ' Its programmes likewise reflect and justify the increased militarisation of the South African state. Particularly notable in the post-1978 period has been an increase in the number of programmes designed to boost

morale within the armed forces and present the Defence Force's own self image to the public. ____

South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (6)

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A liberal research body and pressure group whose basis philosophy, is that:

"In South Africa more ill is wrought lack of understanding than through ill.

will". In accordance with this premise the Institute has dedicated itself, since its foundation in 1929, to research aimed at improving knowledge about

the conditions of blacks in South Africa. Although from the outset a multi-

-racial body, the Institute's research has largely been, directed at influencing

decision makers within the ruling, class in the hope that these will act

to defuse potential "racial conflicts". perhaps its best known publication is the annual Survey of Race Relations in South Africa. In addition to its publications programme, it also organizes seminars, discussion groups and lectures

and occasionally gives evidence to government commissions.

The SAIRR was founded in 1929 by a small group of liberal intellectuals and

professionals led by J. D. Rheinallt Jones. It grew out of the "European" and "Bantu

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Joint Council" movement which developed at the beginning of the 1920s in direct

response to a perceived increase in "racial tension" - manifest in such events

as

the 1920 African mine workers' strike, the 1921 massacre by government troops

of a religious group at Bulhoek, and various forms of resistance by blacks

against the imposition of segregation measures in the major towns. Two

American

educationalists then visiting South Africa proposed to local liberals that as

an "experiment in improving race relations", inter-racial bodies be formed along

the lines of inter-racial commissions established in a number of towns in the

Southern USA during and after World War I. By the end of the 1920 joint councils

were functioning in most major towns. The founding of the Institute of Race

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Relations was financed by grants from the Carnegie Corporation and Phelps Stokes Fund in the United States. It represented an attempt to coordinate and spread on a national level the work begun in the joint councils.

This was an important milestone in the development of South African liberalism, reflecting a break from the ideology of segregation. Prior to the mid 1920s many prominent liberal intellectuals supported "fair" segregation policies which, in particular would create sufficient opportunities for "ambitious blacks" to "better" themselves in the reserves. However, after the installation of the Pact regime (which a number of liberals had initially welcomed) many of them came to regard an increasing number of segregation measures, particularly those relating to job reservation, as placing "ambitious blacks" under pressures which could drive them to take up nationalist and anti-capitalist positions.

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To avoid this potential danger the capitalist ruling class/accomodate and seek an alliance with a black middle class outside of the reserves even if this meant allowing the "vanguard of. the black population" to overtake the "rearguard o'f the whites"; Although the SAIRR statutes defined it

as an organization "tied to no political creed" and committed to taking "due account ... of opposing views earnestly and sincerely held", over the years it in fact provided an important platform for the propagation -of this brand of liberalism. . - â€¢

The Institute's basic modus operandi derived from an analysis well expressed

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by its founder, Rheinallt Jones: "In the Book of Proverbs there is an aphorism

which those who are in positions of authority may well keep ever in mind:

For a ruler is like a city.

For a prince that lacketh understanding is an oppressor always?, "in South Africa more ill is wrought lack of understanding than through ill will". Accordingly

â€” the Institute defined its role as being to work for better 'race relations' in South Africa-through research aimed at "improving understanding". It sought particularly-to influence white decision makers in the state or private sector on "race relations" problems. Over the years it has produced numerous publications and organized seminars, discussion groups and various inter-racial contact meetings. It has also regularly monitored government legislation' and carried out a number, of welfare and educational programmes. Finally it has served as a consultant on "race relations" questions to a number of capitalist enterprises. . .

During the period of the United Party government (1933-1948) the SAIRR had some influence on a number of legislative measures. Segregation of course re

mained

official state policy. However, the Institute's recommendation that "hurtful
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and overtly discriminatory clauses in bills ought to be minimised in favour

of an approach which, "where barriers are inevitable...based [on them] on
some

principle other than colour - the fixing of minimum wage rates etc"., was ad-
op-

ted in a number of laws of the time - notably in the 193^Industrial Concilia-

- tion Act, During this period, the Institute also came to play

a personnel management consultancy role for a number of large corporat-
ions.

Rheinallt Jones, for example, became an adviser on "native affairs" to the
Anglo

American Corporation.

With the coming to power of the Nationalist Party in 1948 the Institute's in-
flu-

ence in government circles clearly ended. In fact the Broederbond had in
1947

set up the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA - see entry p
OTTO)

as a pro-Apartheid alternative to what it called "the leftist -inclined" SAIR
R.

s

Under the Nationalist regime SABRA rather than the Institute of Race Relations

served as the "independent" consultant and outside "think tank" for government

on "racial policy". The Institute's reaction to the advent of the Nationalist regime and decline in its own direct influence, was to expand its research

activities in the general expectation that one day, somehow the objective

truth would triumph

During this period the SAIRR began publishing its annual Survey of Race Relations

which, in the absence of any alternative, serves as a standard reference

work.

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During the Total Strategy period of Apartheid, the Institute, has organized a number of seminars and conferences on the theme of "change" in South Africa.

beefamaduagoneiwforfliq-,
pfa-ming whirh, whistfalinn..-Fan.,ghnjda~jiL-Qnfi.-paaawm"i"
nniA»"-Tm'fe*j-w,'m i'1-ri' iwaJ up

QB4^e^sa^u^af-JXU3suJ.^±^ddJDC--aod-In addition, the Institute has also become involved in administering a number of bursaries on behalf of private companies - as part of the accelerated drive to train more blacks to fill the growing shortage of technical and managerial labour power.

South Africa Council of Churches (SACC) (7)

_ -J-

A consultative body to which are affiliated the vast majority of organised Christian groups in South Africa, with the significant exception of the Roman Catholic Church and the three white Dutch Reformed Churches (the black Reformed churches are members of the SACC). In 1975 some 23 denominations had joined the SACC, representing collectively a claimed 13 million Christians. Since the late 1950s the Council has taken an increasingly strong position against the Apartheid state, and has been threatened by the regime on a number of occasions. â€¢

The SACC began life as the Christian Council of South Africa, a body which mainly represented the white leadership of the major establishment churches (excepting the Catholic and Dutch Reformed). In 1958 it changed its name to the South African Council of Churches and adopted the controversial "Message to the People of South Africa". This marked the beginning of its sustained opposition to the Apartheid state. The Message, stated that "Apartheid, with its attendant hardships, was doing no good". The following year, the Council initiated the Study Programme on Christianity in an Apartheid Society (Sprocas), to study the practical implications of the Message. Eventually Sprocas produced a series of books setting out its view of the way to a "just" society in South Africa.

In the 1970s, the previous white leadership of the SACC was gradually replaced by blacks, and the Council initiated "positive action" to achieve a just society. It began to support "Black Theology" as a way to "free the man of Africa from his inferiority". By 1974 the Council was beginning to support moves to urge white Christians not to fight in "unjust wars", such as one in defence of Apartheid, and to provide support for conscientious objectors to military services. It also opposed foreign investment in South Africa.

Bishop Desmond Tutu was elected Secretary-General of the Council in 1978.

Under his leadership SACC took up a much stronger anti-Apartheid position.

ions.

Member churches were urged to "withdraw from cooperation with the state as far as possible", and work out "strategies of resistance". At its 1980 congress, the SACC adopted the Freedom Charter (see p (JVC) as its programme of a just society, called for the release of Nelson Mandela, and the end to Apartheid. It refused to condemn violence "executed in pursuance of a just society". The Council, also resolved to withdraw its support from organisations like the Urban Foundation (see p) "likely to promote class divisions" amongst the oppressed population.ctrinej truly hostile to Christianity".

The increasingly radical stance of the Council has led to confrontation with the state. On a number of occasions government ministers have warned that action will be taken against the churches if they fail to obey the law.'

A number of individual churchmen have been banned, or deported, or had their passports removed etc. Most recently the state has alleged gross misuse of funds within the SACC and fees* set up a Commission of Enquiry into its finances. -j â€¢ â€¢

Prominent officials

Bishop Desmond. Tutu' - Secretary-General
Rev. Peter Storey - President.

Each, of the organizations dealt with in this chapter produces its own publications* ^n addition their activities are covered in the press-
for the most convenient sources see &1TC Weekly ITewsbriefinrrs and South
African Pressclips (produced by Barry Streek, Cape Town)* See also the

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1* Sou.thai: " , lezi-t Inkatha and the Politics of Compromise",

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% ^TC Weekly I-Tewsbriefin~s *-----'

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3o ibid .

4. ibid

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Reports of the Six Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid
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Power, Privilege, and Poverty, Johannesburg, 1972*

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