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Sud. in S.A.

Already the entire east bank of the Nile is prone to SPLA attacks, so that the supply of essential commodities to Juba, including fuel, is under threat. By practically controlling all of the south, the SPLA will obviously be in a stronger negotiating position. (In the next issue we will examine the military position in the south in more detail).

The armed forces command in Khartoum is acutely aware of the government troops' predicament: they are being asked to launch themselves into the hostile southern bush with totally inadequate equipment, without logistics back-up of any description, with practically no communications, no air cover or intelligence worth mentioning and with no sane military objective in sight. The answer of course, ultimately, is that there never has been, and never will be, a military solution to the south's political problems.

But a combination of frustration and annoyance with what it sees as Ethiopian-supported SPLA intransigence, makes the army's high command continue the war even if the army is demoralised and resentful, perhaps dangerously so. The series of meetings between Sudanese senior officers, notably defence minister Maj-Gen. Osman Abdulla (who was in Tripoli a few days after the American bombings), has led to some Libyan military involvement in

Sudanese that the photographs of the bombing raid had to be developed in Moscow).

The retiring of all but four of the TMC, and the taking over of the army command by Maj-Gen. Taj el Din Abdulla Fadul, who is strongly anti-Libyan at present (though, by no means pro-American), might well presumably reduce future Libyan military involvement to a minimum. Provided the UP leads the coalition, with Sadiq as prime minister or president, Col. Gadaffi will not be displeased. Partly because of the DUP's traditional alliance with Egypt, Gadaffi has always been one of the UPs biggest benefactors.

While Libya's *Revolutionary Councils* in Sudan have made no political impact (AC Vol 27 No. 6), popular Sudanese reaction to the United States' raid on Tripoli and Benghazi was immediate, spontaneous and enraged. The TMC, which has warm ties with Tripoli, did not need to prompt about 10,000 demonstrators onto the streets in Khartoum. Organised by the National Salvation Alliance, the demonstrators showed anti-Americanism and pro-Gadaffism in equal measure. But Sudan's internal problems outweigh foreign events. A march on 20 April, organised by the *Sudanese Workers' Trade Union Federation* (which, admittedly, is still closely identified with Nimeiri's regime) attracted only 200-300 followers.

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South Africa: Afrikaner fragmentation

The *National Party* (NP) government, having already lost the political initiative, is rapidly being overtaken both by black opposition and by more pragmatic whites, particularly the "New Nationalist" (New Nats) group of Afrikaners, which now believe in the desirability - and inevitability - of majority black rule. The erosion of apartheid and white government has accelerated faster during the past few months than anticipated. President P.W. Botha's government has only a 50:50 chance of surviving the next 12 months.

Black organised opposition has been given a big psychological boost by a remarkable, sustained conviction that the "final phase" towards the transfer of power to blacks has been entered, decisively. One important turning-point was last month's "national education crisis committee" conference in Durban. The conference decided that black pupils, who had boycotted classes for months, should return to their desks. Behind this move lies some of the most sophisticated revolutionary theory to emerge within the country's divided black opposition since the *African National Congress* (ANC) and *Pan-Africanist Congress* (PAC) were banned in 1960. It is articulated notably by Zwelakhe Sisulu (son of Walter Sisulu who is serving a life sentence with Nelson Mandela) and his mother Albertina Sisulu, a patron

Footnote
There is a total of 301 seats, of which 37 in the south were uncontested because of the civil war. Nearly 20 results from the south were unconfirmed at the time of writing. The results so far give the *Umma Party* 99 seats, the *Democratic Unionist Party* 63, the *National Islamic Front* 51, the *Sudan National Party* 8, the *Communist Party* 3, the *Beja Congress* one, independents 5, and the southern *Peoples Progressive Party* about half a dozen.

of the *United Democratic Front* (UDF) and a highly-respected veteran of the black struggle. Zwelakhe, a former president of the *Black Consciousness-oriented Media Workers' Association of South Africa*, has been detained (or banned) for much of the past five years. Coming from the same generation of the equally impressive Thabo Mbeki (ANC director of information), he straddles the gap between ageing black nationalists and the alienated young blacks now spear-heading the township violence. In his capacity as editor of the Catholic-funded weekly newspaper, *New Nation*, Zwelakhe says the national liberation struggle has reached a crucial point. Blacks must now choose, he says, between a descent into "chaos and barbarism" or a return of parents and workers to the youth-led struggle, in order to redirect political energies, which have rendered many townships ungovernable, into the fledgling structures of "peoples' power". He argues, justifiably, that townships which have established an "organised centre of peoples' power" (in contrast to mob violence alone) have been most successful in rolling back state repression. (The planned May Day work stay-aways next week, organised by the *Congress of South African Trade Unions* - Cosatu - will provide a symbolic return of workers to the

“vanguard of the liberation struggle”.)

In the Eastern Cape, where the people's power Zwelakhe refers to is most advanced, the *South African Defence Force* (SADF) has been forced out of some of the townships. Even the most brutal repression has failed to reverse the advances made by blacks to create alternative administrative structures for their townships. The question of whether change is possible without blacks *concentrating* on violence is obviously much debated. Winnie Mandela, for one, appears to believe violence should not be deplored at this late stage, partly because it is inevitable, partly because it does break down apartheid and the white state. The danger lies in whether such sustained violence, in the absence of organised “people-power”, will make the country ungovernable well after the white government has gone.

A crucial goal of many political activists now is to recruit more whites into the country's extra-parliamentary internal opposition. The UDF is leading the wooing campaign, hoping to breach the vast chasm between the dying stages of nationalist rule and the forming of a representative government. Since his resignation in February as leader of the *Progressive Federal Party* (PFP), Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert has applied himself to the same general campaign. His first major engagement was a well-publicised speech to 2,500 people at the Johannesburg city hall earlier this month.

Van Zyl Slabbert has also been encouraging contacts between the ANC in Lusaka and extra-parliamentary groups of the Afrikaner establishment. A continual stream of delegations from South Africa to Lusaka, and the resulting joint communiqués, not only improves the prospects of the ANC becoming accepted as an umbrella organisation, but it is also a shrewd psychological tactic. For sooner or later the NP government will realise that it would be less damaging to the NP's own perceived interests if the ANC were allowed to be a legitimate, unbanned political party within the country. Anyhow, the 26-year ban of the ANC has effectively been set aside by black control of some townships in western and eastern Cape. A “Free Mandela” rally in Cape Town earlier this month, attended by over 2,000 people, saw ANC flags by the score, ANC uniforms, rosettes and the presence of the ANC Youth Brigade. A speech by a leading black revolutionary thinker, Johnny Issel (who has spent most of the past 16 years banned or detained), openly espoused the ANC's aims, and urged the crowd to come into the open and support it. Meetings like this are now widespread. The official ban on the ANC is thus a nonsense.

The recent court ruling on the invalidity of arbitrary banning orders has led to the unbanning of nearly all the country's main opponents of apartheid, including even those such as Roley Arstein, an acknowledged communist. That the NP manifestly is being overtaken by events has greatly encouraged activists and intellectuals who were so dejected until now that they had gone almost into hibernation. Professor Jakes Gerwel, a leading pro-ANC black intellectual in the Cape who was recently appointed rector of the *University of Western Cape*, is addressing white audiences again after deciding three years

The New Nats

Politically more radical than most members of the liberal white PFP, they demand the total abolition of apartheid, the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC and other political organisations. They then propose a geographic federation is worked out at a constitutional conference. They oppose special protection for ethnic minorities, believing that the individual's right – to be enshrined in a Bill of Rights – should take precedence over the rights of any ethnic group. But they want a lot of devolution of central government's executive and legislative powers, and hence demand some constitutional protection for the regional components of their proposed federal system.

The New Nats are to be found among leading Afrikaner academics, journalists, in the private sector and civil service, the Afrikaner churches, think-tank bodies, the *Broederbond* and the organisations under its umbrella. Pik Botha and minister of trade Dawie de Villiers, are the only cabinet members considered sympathetic to the New Nats. Deputy minister of education Sam de Beer and his counterpart at finance, Kent Durr, can be considered New Nats.

Other Transvaal sympathisers include well-known figures such as Theo Alant, Piet Coetzer, Wille Cuyler, Jan Grobler, Roelf Meyer, Wynand Malan, Org Marais, Albert Nothnagel, Stoffel van der Merwe, Lukas Van Vuuren, Veltie Veldman, Piet Welgemoed and Leon Wessels. Cape New Nats include Hendrik Coetzer, Peet de Pontes, Lampie Fick, Pietman Hugo, Hernus Kriel, Sakkie Louw and André van der Walt. Sympathisers in Natal include Connie Botha, Willie Heine and Hendrik Tempel. The only Orange Free State New Nats are Wynand Breytenbach and one nominated MP, Fanus Schoeman.

While the New Nats are not yet ready to break away from the NP, they will probably be the catalyst which forces Botha's government into an alliance with the PFP in order to keep the Afrikaner-dominated right-wing at bay. But whether the New Nats have the courage of their apparent convictions remain to be seen. Leon Wessels, Wynand Malan and Stoffel van der Merwe wanted to visit the ANC in Lusaka. The NP caucus told them not to. So they stayed at home.

ago that it was a lost cause.

The strains of the past 18 months have been felt throughout the white establishment, ranging from the PFP, the press, commerce and industry, the ranks of former *United Party* white conservatives, and to the core of President Botha's embattled NP. The last is the most important. As previously reported (AC Vol 26 No 22), Botha's presidency is grinding to an end. Not only are leading Afrikaner politicians effectively campaigning for the presidency, but the New Nats (see box) are threatening to bust up the already diminished NP. The *verligte/verkrampste* distinction is rapidly being turned by the urgency of the situation into outright division.

Aside from the 30 or so New Nats (out of the 127-strong NP caucus), about 35 MPs appear to support Chris Heunis, the Cape leader and minister for constitutional development. F.W. de Klerk, minister of national education and leader of the dominant Transvaal NP caucus, has a hard-core of about 28 parliamentary supporters. He has enthusiastic backers among the increasingly influential English-speaking members of the government, including the arch conservative John Wiley (minister of environmental affairs), Kent Durr (deputy minister of finance), Ron Miller (deputy minister of foreign affairs), and the more liberal Denis Worrall, the South African ambassador in London. Worrall, who seems to have made the psychological transition from Botha to De Klerk with astonishing ease, is tipped for the constitutional portfolio in a De Klerk government – however short-lived it might turn out to be.

That leaves about 34 undecided NP MPs. Their vote could be crucial. Equally crucial will be the second-round voting of those who opted for Heunis

or foreign minister Pik Botha in the first round. The emergence of Gerrit Viljoen, minister of cooperation and development, especially if he gets New Nat support, should not be discounted. The expected axing of two politically-discredited conservatives in the cabinet – law and order minister Louis Le Grange and minister of communications Lapa Munnik – will be a boost to the *verligtes*.

Some analysts believe the pending disarray in white party politics could result in a nationalist coalition between the NP and the 27-MP PFP in order to keep the growing extreme right-wing parties (19 MPs) at bay. (AC Vol 27 No 5). Others believe the collapse of the political centre would strengthen the security arm of government – at least in the short-term – or even lead to an open military coup. Fearful of this prospect, a number of worried businessmen are urging Botha to suspend the NP government and form a “government of transition” of all races. His response, characteristically, is icy.

The future of the tricameral parliament looks most shaky. MPs in the coloured and Indian chambers are increasingly dissatisfied with the pace of apartheid reform, and they all share a vehement dislike for De Klerk. If he were to succeed Botha, they could well walk out of parliament. They might walk out anyhow if legislation to restore arbitrary powers to the police following the lifting of the state of emergency is pushed through parliament by the NP majority on inter-chamber committees. (The prospect of a walk-out because of legislation like this has already led to a “shoot-out” in cabinet. We understand Le Grange lost).

The role of the police, under Le Grange, has become a major stumbling block to implementing further reforms of apartheid. Though Le Grange is a target of the New Nats and cannot expect to survive much longer in cabinet, the NP caucus and extra-parliamentary right-wing parties and pressure groups increasingly believe tough policing methods are needed. Otherwise, they say, there will not be enough order for reform to be seen to be having an impact. Certainly Botha's announcement last week of an amnesty for all pass-law prisoners and an end to further pass-law arrests failed to have much impact at home. Internationally it was completely overshadowed by President Reagan and Col. Gadaffi. Botha is now making noises about reforming the Group Areas Act, saying that it is not a “holy cow”. He envisages a crash session of reformist legislation in August. As in the past, he will probably be overtaken by events.

The reformist bills include the restoration of black citizenship rights, the granting of black property rights, the reform of second-tier government and the formal abolition of the pass laws. Most important will be legislation to set up the proposed National Statutory Council – a forum for negotiation between the NP government and black leaders. The above reform session is due a week after the NP's extraordinary federal congress in Durban, where Botha will try to get approval for the proposed council and a mandate for the unspecified political accommodation of blacks.

A version of the Swiss cantonal system, itself adapted to the dictates of an ethno-geographic fed-

The day of the EPG

General Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Nigerian head of state, and Lord Anthony Barber, chairman of *Standard Chartered Bank* and a former British chancellor of the exchequer, have emerged as the EPG's key figures. Obasanjo was the first African politician to meet Mandela. Later in the EPG's recent two-week visit to South Africa, Barber and others also met him, and were much impressed.

Apart from the lifting of the ban on the ANC and the release of Mandela, the EPG's main proposals are in fact made up from Botha's own reported commitments to reform – including the scrapping of the pass laws, the restoration of black citizenship and the accommodation of black political rights within a system which respects universal franchise.

The EPG is due to meet in London again next week to decide whether to go ahead with another visit to South Africa in May. Meanwhile the group is working on its report for the seven-nation Commonwealth committee meeting at the end of June which will advise on whether economic sanctions should be applied. The Commonwealth's demands, made at the Nassau summit last October, are:

- The renunciation of apartheid, accompanied by specific action to that end.
- The termination of the state of emergency.
- The immediate, unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.
- The lifting of the ban on the ANC and the creation of conditions of political freedom.
- The initiation, in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides, of a process of dialogue across lines of colour, politics and religion towards establishing a non-racial and representative government.

So far only the state of emergency has been lifted. A lot more progress will have to be made before June if sanctions are not to be recommended by the EPG and put into effect by the Commonwealth. The *quid pro quo* for Pretoria in cooperating with the EPG will be an ANC truce once apartheid is abolished, before round-table talks. ANC leader Oliver Tambo is working with the EPG. This could be the NP government's last chance for a negotiated settlement.

eration, is often pondered in top government circles today. The choice of Durban for the NP meeting will keep nationalist minds focussed on power-sharing: Chief Buthelezi's KwaZulu administration and elements of the white second-tier government are attending the “indaba” (meeting) there to find a formula for the joint administration of Natal province.

Nationalist organs are already preparing the party faithful for another change of the “adapt or die” mould. This time they are being presented with a choice between national suicide and the forming of a new alliance of “black, brown and white democrats”. There might be a white referendum on the matter before the end of the year.

Little can be expected to come of the NP's tortured efforts to form such an alliance. Since Botha's announcement in January that he intended to form a statutory council, the idea has been widely discredited by blacks, including Buthelezi. Intense cabinet discussion about appointing black cabinet ministers has been a non-starter for the simple reason that there are no black volunteers. Equally superfluous is the idea of trying to draw Buthelezi into a “Muzor-ewa-option” in which whites would retain real power, with black ministers and a black president installed for show. (De Klerk, who caused foreign minister Pik Botha to be slapped down for talking about the possibility of a black president, is now himself canvassing the idea privately).

With the NP looking increasingly lost, the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group (EPG) – AC Vol 26 No 25 – is playing a far more important role than originally thought possible. The group left a

carefully-worded set of proposals on President Botha's desk after a low-profile visit last month. (See box). International pressure on the NP government, threatened with economic sanctions and financial

pressure from its creditor banks, is at least having some effect. A full round-table conference of South Africans is still just possible.