

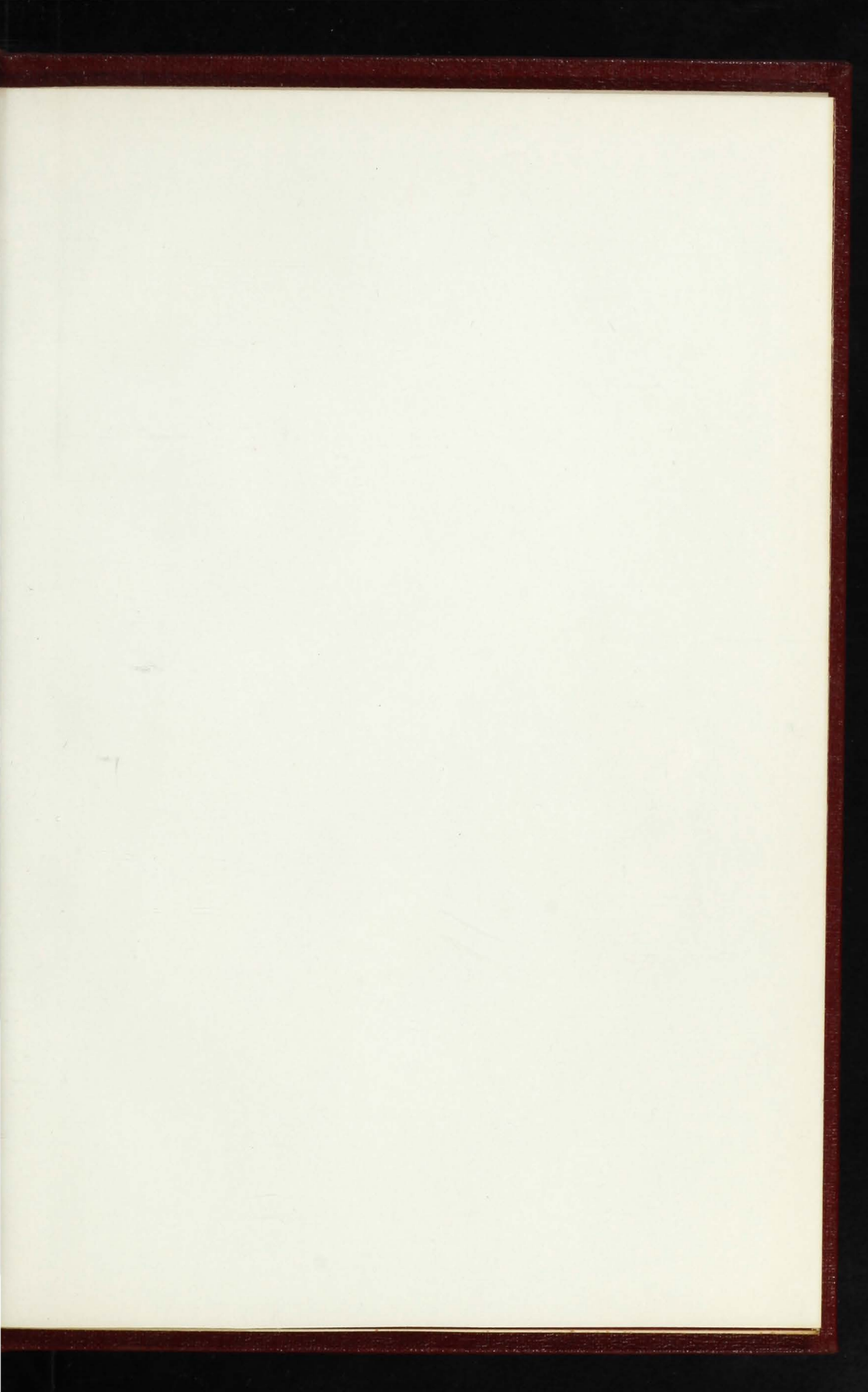
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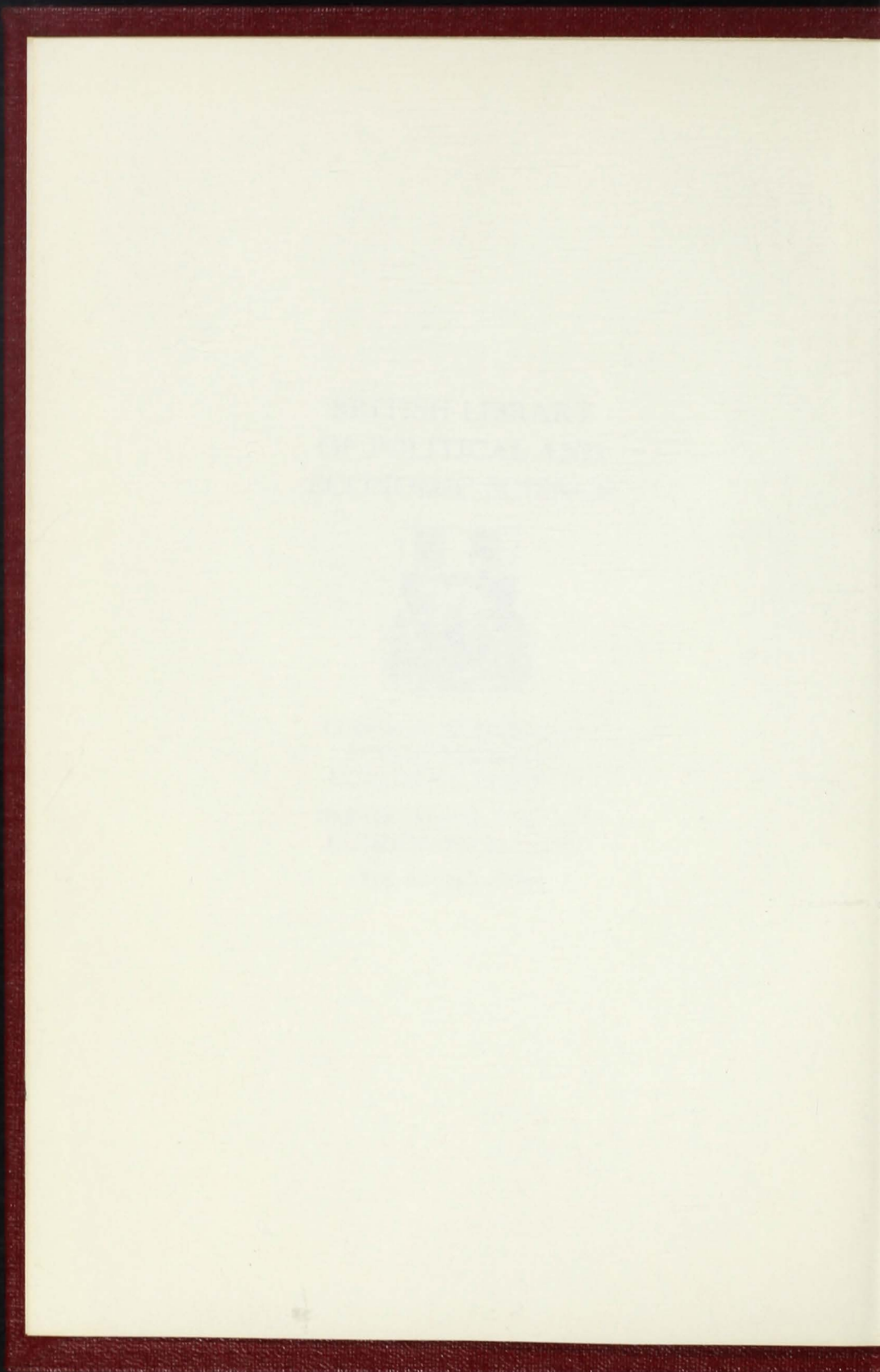


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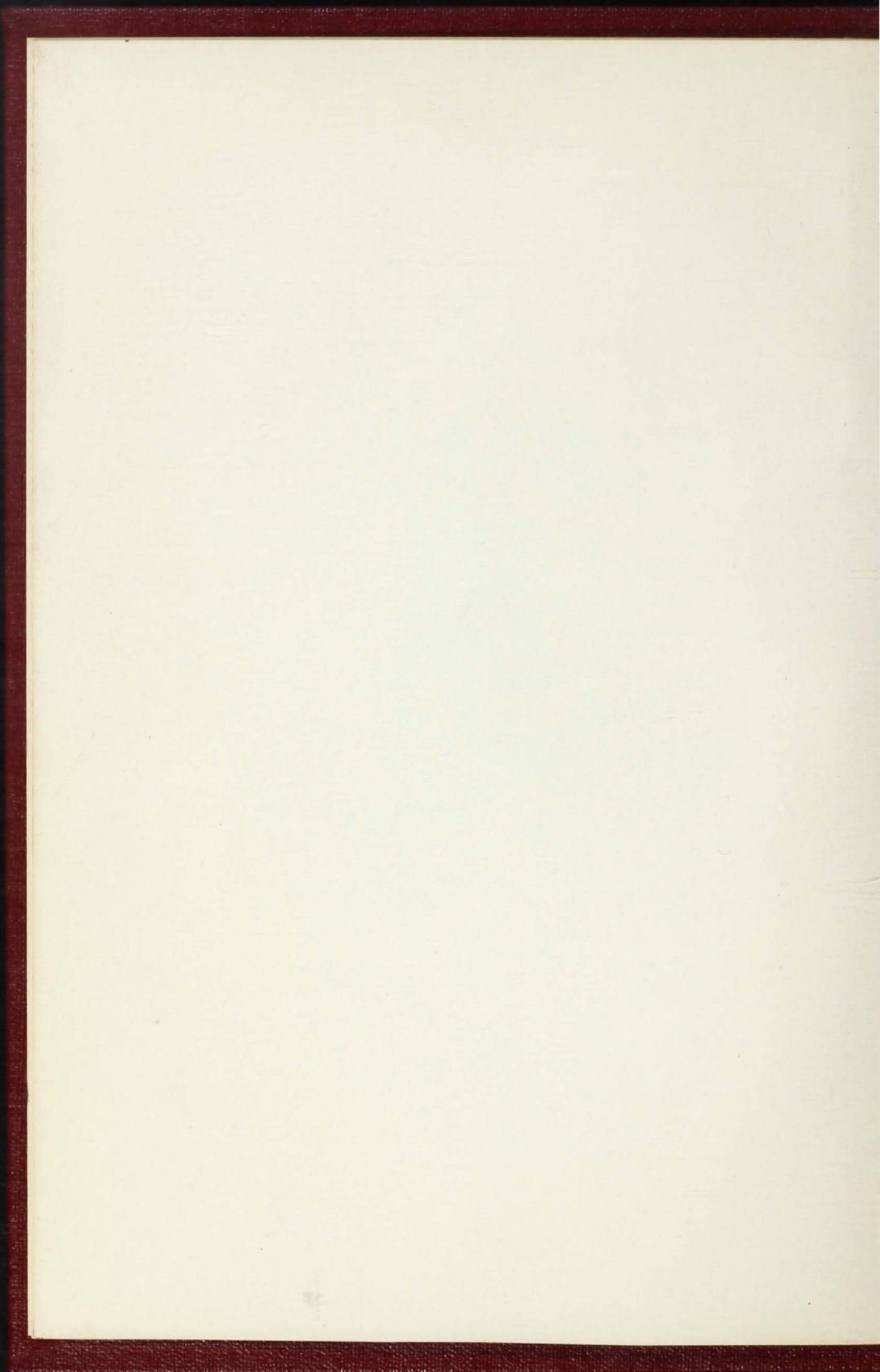
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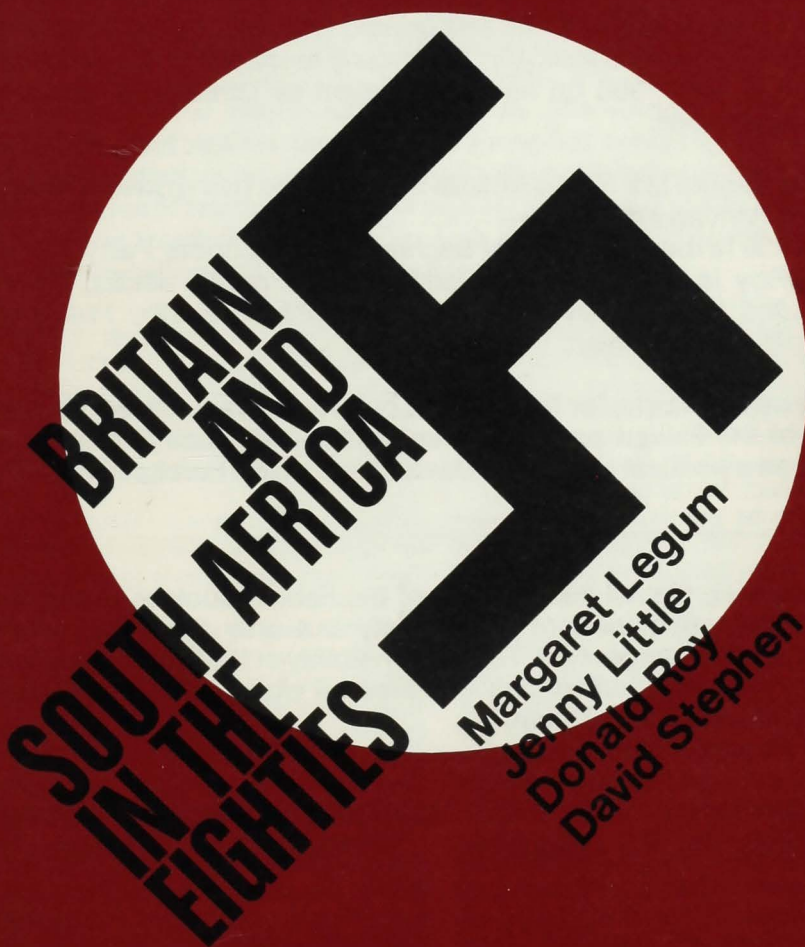




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against all reason

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this pamphlet, like all publications of the Fabian Society, represents not the collective view of the Society but only the views of the individuals who prepared it. The responsibility of the Society is limited to approving the publications it issues as worthy of consideration within the Labour movement.

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1. Introduction ---

The object of this pamphlet is to concentrate on the challenge posed by South Africa to present and future *British* policy-makers. We have tried to provide the raw material for the accurate consideration of issues in which – whether we like it or not – this country is deeply involved. The parallel of Zimbabwe – in which, after a long, expensive and brutal war, Britain finally discharged her political responsibilities – will be present in many minds. The long-term financial costs of the failure to think clearly are still unknown in that case. But the differences, many of them formal, also need to be looked at. Thus Britain has no formal colonial responsibility for South Africa, and the liberation movements are struggling, not against the rule of a European occupying power, but against a system set up by a racial elite in a formally independent country. The question of relations with, and support for, those resisting the system needs to be faced; and we therefore look closely at the different forces of black nationalism and liberation in South Africa.

Similarly, the British economic stake in South Africa is looked at coolly and hard-headedly, to see both what the economic interests at risk really are, and whether there is any scope for using these contacts constructively to bring about change.

This pamphlet does not attempt to provide detailed information about developments in *apartheid* or about changes in the South African economy. Readers wishing to pursue these matters in more detail are referred to *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey of Race Relations 1980* (ed. L Gordon); to *Race Relations in South Africa 1929-1979*, edited by Ellen Hellman and Herry Lever, published in Britain by Macmillan in 1980; to R W Johnson's *How Long Will South Africa Survive?* (Macmillan, 1978); to the publications of the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (104 Newgate Street, London, EC1); and to two pamphlet series: "Economic Sanc-

tions against South Africa" edited by Dr D G Clarke and produced by the now defunct International University Exchange Fund, and that of the Africa Bureau (c/o Mein and Fowler, Montagu House, Main Street, Huntingdon).

The standpoint of the Fabian Study Group which wrote this pamphlet also needs to be stated. We believe that *apartheid* is a cruel system which must be dismantled, and that Britain's involvement in South Africa will become dangerously prejudicial to Britain's overall interest in Africa and the world unless she is seen to be other than acquiescent in the situation. The challenge is, therefore, to assist the process of change in South Africa by working constructively with South Africans, black and white, who are working for change. We do not believe in a policy of verbal highmindedness or blanket ostracisation but in one of constructive co-operation, and understanding, with those South Africans who genuinely seek

change. *They* must be the principal agents of change. This means maintaining relations with a variety of different groups. It also means taking a tough line with those who attempt to blackmail Britain and the west morally by pretending that internal reform in South Africa, at a time of global superpower conflict, must take a backseat since, such people would say, South Africa is part of the West.

The temptation on the part of the military men in the West to see South Africa's considerable military strength as a potential ally in a global conflict is understandable, but there should be no misunderstanding on this point: South Africa's internal political system is an affront to the values of the West, and any move towards closer political identification with South Africa on the part of Britain or her allies would be disastrous in political terms. Since South Africa's racial injustices are opposed by virtually all of the so-called "third world" countries, including the Muslim World, Western support for her policies is likely simply to invite the Soviet Union to attempt to enhance her credentials as the leader of the third world by intervening to support liberation movements. It is South Africa's internal policies which start the process of bringing the Soviet presence into South Africa, and which therefore pose the major threat to regional stability and to Western interests. Conversely (and here the parallel with Zimbabwe is obvious), stability can start only with the establishment of non-racial democratic government.

Nelson Mandela called for a "multi-pronged strategy" for the defeat of *apartheid*. Socialists in Britain need to look at the possible prongs in which they can be involved, and to do this they need to be aware of the nature of South Africa's different internal political forces and their response to various external pressures. We also need to understand very clearly the limits of our possible role, and not to

South Africa: the oppressive society

- ★ Since 1955 over 10,000 people have been convicted under one or other of South Africa's security laws. In addition, over 16,500 have been detained without trial, over 1,400 have been banned and 162 have been banished to outlying areas. Twenty two organisations have been banned.
- ★ There are over 102,000 people in South African prisons every day: this exceeds the theoretical capacity of the jails by 30,000. Remand prisoners make up 14% of the total. Black pass law offenders can wait on remand for as long as two months before being tried for an offence carrying a penalty of ten days.
- ★ Over the past decade the prison population has risen by 12%, the population by 7%. About 440 out of every 100,000 are in prison. In the absence of figures from the communist countries, this is the highest per capita prison population in the world.

fall into the trap set by those whose case is based on an exaggeration of Britain's economic dependence on South Africa by imagining that we in Britain hold the key to change in South Africa. We do not hold the key, but (as this pamphlet attempts to argue) there is very much more which we can do to assist the process of change: and we have a great deal to lose if things go wrong.

2. *Recent changes in white supremacy*_____

“We must adapt or die. Revolution is not a remote possibility. It can only be averted if the government looks at the interests of all population groups, not just the whites.”

PW Botha, South African Prime Minister, quoted in *The Star*, Johannesburg, February 4, 1981.

“The systematic removal of discretionary measures and other crash programmes for improving the quality of life must inevitably lead to the removal of the final form of discrimination: political discrimination.”

General Hendrik Van den Berg, former head of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS).

“... I choose uncertainty as the theme of the New Year. Uncertainty among whites... about our political future... whether there are enough guarantees for white authority... whether the black people will push us out of our environment... and whether they will overwhelm us with their numbers and therefore destroy the kernel of our *volk* and its traditions... Nor can we hide this uncertainty from the blacks. They know it; they mock it, and they even frighten us with their threats about what will happen on the day of reckoning.”

Mr Willem van den Berg, prominent Afrikaner establishment intellectual, writing in *Rapport*, Johannesburg, February 4 and 11, 1981.

The dilemma of South Africa's ruling elite is now out in the open. Premier Botha's realism over the imminent possibility of revolution is exploited by his right-wing enemies, whose answer, given above by the disgraced Van den Berg, shows equal realism in its forecast that reform cannot be limited so as to maintain white political supremacy. Willem Van den Berg sums up the white nightmare that white uncertainty and loss of confidence is matched, noted and exploited by black bitterness and a no-compromise confidence.

Since Mr Botha became Premier he has encouraged the hope that real change in the relationship between blacks and whites can be effected by internal political change and without further international intervention. English speaking white opposition interests, especially the business community, are loud in their praise of the new “enlightened” regime, angrily asserting that white attitudes have changed so profoundly that the problems are virtually solved; that internal violence, lacking real continuing grievance, will end; and that

there is absolutely no further justification for the world's condemnation. If the average black encounters no real change in his everyday life, say these voices, they should show some patience, realise that "Rome was not built in a day", and help by their "moderation" to show the rest of the world that together South Africans can work things out on their own.

Such an appeal is as attractive to British and other Western policy makers as were countless similar appeals by Mr Ian Smith, as he too tried to deal with mounting internal violence and guerilla warfare by making reluctant gestures towards multi-racial cooperation. The idea that the post-Zimbabwe trauma has, indeed, produced a real change in South Africa is very seductive. In assessing it, British policy makers must be careful not to fall into either of two traps. The first is that nothing has changed – the whites have simply become cleverer at hoodwinking us. The second is that greater realism on the part of PW Botha and his entourage will automatically lead to a democratic South Africa.

It is true that some of PW Botha's own words to his own people often contradict everything white South Africans have been used to hearing from their leaders for over thirty years. Here are some samples of angry speeches made at rallies of the faithful; bear in mind that thousands of South Africans of all races have been jailed under the Suppression of Communism Act for expressing these very sentiments:

"We are prepared to allow black people into our kitchens to prepare our food, but the moment (they) appear next to us in a Post Office we say 'go away'. What kind of nonsense is that? . . . I hate no black men. The same God who created me is responsible for their existence. . . . I can get these people to stand with me against the hell of terrorism. . . . must I keep insulting them while they are fighting alongside me? . . . It

is an unarguable fact that we are part of Africa. . . . and we must play that role or we die. . . . There are people in South Africa who think you can curse a man in the morning and in the afternoon try to get his cooperation to fight together against terrorism. . . . The 1936 Land Act was introduced by a United Party government and was opposed by the Nationalist Party. Today it is regarded as a holy cow. . . . If the white man in South Africa is to survive, he must also show respect for others. . . . Accept the way I am going or I cannot lead you. . . ."

“Clearly there is a titanic struggle going on inside Afrikanerdom.”

Clearly there is a titanic struggle going on inside Afrikanerdom. For the first time since the Premiership of Verwoerd, the Afrikaners have a leader who likes to lead from the front and who has, in local terms, radical ideas about Afrikaner survival. The fact that Botha needs to wean the *volk* from the Verwoerd vision does not affect the principle.

How do we evaluate this apparent change in the leadership's attitude and its apparent loss of confidence? The fact that the all-white government has the power to make changes in South Africa renders simplistic the notion that *only* black politics has relevance for policy-makers outside the country. Several questions are relevant. What lies behind the ferment in official thinking? How far does it go? What are its likely consequences in South Africa? How should it affect British policy? All these questions should be seen in conjunction with the analysis in the next chapter on black politics.

New Ingredients in Official Policy-making

Five recent changes in South Africa's

international position together constitute the worst nightmare for its political leaders.

●● South Africa is now surrounded by countries most of which are ruled by blacks who have achieved their independence by armed struggle. If there are qualifications to be made to that statement – Britain's role in Zimbabwe's struggle, Namibia's still ambiguous position – South Africa's political leaders are past comforting themselves thereby.

●● The victory of the armed struggle in these neighbouring states owes much to active backing, including military support, by the major communist powers. This provides a new dimension to South Africa's external position. Accustomed to the notion of a South African laager surrounded by hostile black forces, whites have always seen those black forces as inherently weaker than themselves – technologically, economically and militarily. Now these surrounding forces are seen to be effectively backed by others, inevitably and inherently stronger than Southern Africa. The sight of Cuban troops in Angola sent waves of pure horror through White South Africa because it was a clear warning that once Southern Africa becomes an *international* cockpit South Africa's purely *local* military supremacy has only limited value.

● International economic sanctions played a considerable role in weakening Smith's Rhodesia. In the effort to strengthen sanctions, militants and radicals outside Rhodesia sometimes under-estimated the role of sanctions in isolating Rhodesia, and in sapping its economy and its means of resisting the armed struggle.

Not so South Africa's policy makers. They know very well how desperate were Smith's attempts to keep his economy afloat. More important, they cannot forget the crucial role South Africa itself played in that process. They know that without South Africa's underpinning, sanctions would indeed have pulled down Smith's

Rhodesia before the war reached its full destructive force. The implication is that without a similarly powerful and openly supportive friend, South Africa might go down under concerted international sanctions – even given the difference in the relative strength of the two countries, and hence time scale.

●● The Republic looks in vain for powerful allies. Its leaders see South Africa as having been abandoned by the West. One cherished illusion has been lost: that "when the chips are down" and South Africa is threatened by a "Communist take-over" the West would step in to rescue the "anti-communist" whites. The Reagan victory in America to some extent restored some such dream; but the fact that hopes aroused by the Thatcher government in Britain were quickly dashed by the Tory somersault over Zimbabwe limited the jubilation over the Reagan success.

Many of South Africa's policy makers see the Western governments cynically as lily-livered toadies to the Third World: having lost confidence in the use of their own strength, the West, as they see it, has surrendered in craven and unprincipled obedience to Arab oil and Algerian trade. In their less paranoid mood, South Africans see Western policy-makers more realistically as having concluded that the very existence of the apartheid government increases the risks of a "communist take-over". On either view, the conclusion is that Western military rescue is out of the question; and that economic support cannot be guaranteed.

●● South Africa's own guerilla war, fuelled by all the above factors, has already begun. As long ago as 1973, PW Botha, then Minister of Defence, told Parliament: "I do not wish to spread alarm, but I must state unambiguously that for a long time already we have been engaged in a war of low intensity". At that time these words were being devalued by contrary declarations to the effect that "no real threat"

could be expected from South Africa's neighbours; and that internal disorder could be met by repression, since it was "instigated from outside".

Today there are no such illusions. A Defence Force study completed in 1979 showed that over half the farmers in the regions bordering Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique had abandoned their farms. A survey by the Army's "Terrorism Research Centre" for the period June 1976 to June 1979 brought whites up short. Over that three year period, there had been 110 bomb, fire-bomb and grenade attacks in urban centres, as a result of which eight people had been killed and over 140 injured. By early 1980 four more police stations had been attacked. New levels of sophistication were reached in 1980 with the attack on the SASOL oil-from-coal plants in June and the attempts in March to take hostages at a Pretoria bank with the apparent aim of releasing political prisoners. 1981 saw a series of coordinated attacks on police stations and electricity installations.

Meanwhile the Minister of Police, Mr le Grange, told a press conference that the situation was serious and 'not as peaceful internally as people think'. He pointed out that 168 trials involving national security had come before the courts in the first seven months of 1979 alone. Official statistics of this kind are not issued regularly, but only when a political point is being made. Thus Chief of Security Police, Brigadier Johan Coetzee meant to draw alarmist conclusions from the information he gave that 170 "trained terrorists" had been captured since October 1976. It is officially admitted that last year (1980) the number of servicemen killed on the Namibian border tripled to just under 100.

These figures are here quoted not as an accurate assessment of the level of guerrilla warfare: guerrilla leaders' claims are very much higher: and we are not in a position to adjudicate. The significance of the

statistics in this context lies in the importance given them by the South African authorities themselves – and hence their part in the increasingly cohering jigsaw that constitutes South Africa's nightmare.

At Home the Dream Fades

If South Africa's assumptions about its position in Africa and the world have been shattered, its hopes for the ultimate vindication of the policy of "separate development" have been equally undermined. The vision of the future has gone, and nothing precise has taken its place. Again, the jigsaw has several pieces which are becoming clear.

The crude Nationalist slogan when they won the 1948 election was "*die koelie uit die land en die kaffir op sy plek*". Loosely translated in political terms this means repatriating South African Indians to Asia and pushing Africans out of the "white" farms and cities, except in so far as their labour is needed there.

The "white" areas were to become "whiter".

The opposite has happened. Both absolutely and proportionately the number of blacks in the cities has more than doubled. The ideological precondition for the avoidance of "race friction" – race separation – has patently failed. The cities are blacker than ever.

Nor have the Indians been repatriated. They and the "Coloured" communities have simply been ghettoised under the Group Areas Acts, entailing their wretched removal in their hundreds of thousands, from prosperous businesses, traditional communities, established homes and places of worship to the bleakness of a new start without human roots. In the process they have been in every sense impoverished, without solving by one jot the white dilemma of inter-dependence between the races.

“The ideology of separate development has patently failed to produce less ‘race friction’.”

● Blacks in South Africa’s cities are in revolt. There is now no significant section of the black population in the townships – no age-group or class, no shade of blackness – which can be excluded from that statement. The ideology of separate development has patently failed to produce less “race friction”. While the government has reacted to the revolt with characteristic repression, it no longer pretends the revolt has other than indigenous roots. Indeed the report of the government appointed Celliers Commission into the 1976 riots created a precedent by reporting that black discontent was *caused by the conditions in which blacks live*. With some prescience, Judge Celliers, known for his pro-government sympathies, warned that the situation in 1979 was as explosive as it had been in 1976. Anticipating the 1980 “Coloured” riots he said: “As a result of the unnatural separation of population groups enforced by a white government, the view developed that the white man had rejected the Coloured as a friend and fellow citizen . . . The Coloured has turned anti-white and joined the black community to remove his grievances and gain rights through joint struggle.”

The view has been forced upon the government that the ‘solution’ of migratising all black labour in the cities is a myth. There is no longer an official belief that urban Africans can be treated, while in the cities and towns, as units of labour, content to exercise their *human* rights and needs – for family life, personal aspirations, voting rights, community traditions and so on – in the distant homelands, which they visit once a year. The argument now is not over whether this *is* a viable long-term policy

towards urban blacks, but what should take its place – not *whether* urban workers have a right to decent living conditions in “white” areas but how to give it them without undermining a major pillar of the ideology of apartheid.

● The other major ideological pillar of apartheid – the success of the “homelands” policy as the repository of black political and personal aspirations – is also acknowledged to lie in ruins. Thus, Minister of Finance, Senator Owen Horwood, was quoted in the *Johannesburg & Financial Mail* (February 4, 1981): “South Africa is phasing out apartheid because it does not work . . . The plan is to set up homelands for the various population groups has not proved economically viable.”

Senator Horwood would have read the latest report of the government’s “think tank” on the homelands known as BENSO, which was published in August 1980. It declared that the policies designed to get the homelands’ economies off the ground had failed and that there was no possibility, under those policies, of reversing the flow of black workers to South Africa’s metropolitan areas. It pointed out that homeland development had fallen so far behind the rest of the country that they were no more than breeding grounds for unemployment and violence. They were now able to absorb less than 15 per cent of new work-seekers generated by *local* population growth – and far from absorbing workers expelled from “white” areas.

None of these new insights have made a difference to the lives of South Africa’s Africans. The policy is still being applied *as though it worked*. Blacks are still being expelled from “white” areas to starve in growing numbers or to swell the number of “illegal” workseekers in the cities. And the “governments” of these homelands are still being encouraged to assume the trappings of independence. The fact that the old Separate Development vision has failed does not mean it has been replaced.

Mr Botha now publicly floats new ideas: about changes in the homeland borders so as to incorporate formerly sacrosanct white cities and farming areas. Also he has begun to speculate about confederal forms of government, including joint South Africa – homeland citizenship, but no one in the government or in government-supporting intellectual circles pretends that a real alternative proposal is worked out, let alone agreed. The result is that the fictions of the old vision are still maintained.

“What has crumbled is the theoretical ideology of separate development. There is no longer a sustaining vision of a morally acceptable order in which whites can enjoy their privileges with a good conscience.”

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the laws, the institutions and the practices of apartheid – including the penalties for breaching them, remain intact. What has crumbled is the theoretical ideology of separate development. There is no longer a sustaining vision of a morally acceptable order in which whites can enjoy their privileges with a good conscience, knowing that, whatever the costs at present, in the end blacks and whites will cooperate as brothers and sisters in equal but separate states.

This is very frightening for them. With that vision and its underlying morality removed, what is left but a fight? Moreover, every day it seems the blacks are gaining ground such that when the fight becomes serious they will hold some strategic areas. Not only are the cities getting “blacker”, but more and more vital jobs – including those in security, in the police and in the army – are being held by blacks. White youngsters return from

the army’s Namibian stations to report that blacks and whites share the same facilities, and blacks are being appointed to positions of command over white privates. The old assumed dependence relationship is being stood on its head. Increasingly, it looks as though the white state is being placed insidiously in thrall to blacks. Apartheid was invented to deal with *die swart gevaar* (the black danger); and all around is evidence of its failure.

“ ‘Muldergate’ shook the faith of the essentially puritanical Afrikaner community in the rightness, the morality and hence the stability of their cause.’ ”

- “Muldergate” shook the faith of the essentially puritanical Afrikaner community in the rightness, the morality and hence the stability of their cause. It showed their leaders as corrupt and self-serving. *Die Boer met sy roer en sy Bybel* (The Afrikaner with his gun and his Bible) was a strong upstanding and reassuring folk myth on which much of the confidence of the Afrikaaner nationalist party depended. Muldergate’s searing reminder that, after all, the leaders of Afrikaanerdom could descend to the level of the greedy politician provoked traumatic implications that the whole apartheid policy might also be based upon greed. The integrity of the policy was tainted with the venality of the men.

If this analysis seems far-fetched in the secular democracies of the West, the essentially moralistic basis of Afrikaner Calvinist society should be emphasised. It is, in fact, the Afrikaner Calvinists who have produced the “idealistic” solutions to South Africa’s conflicts. Unlike the English-speaking community – which has on the whole tended to the vaguely paternalist, not to say cynical, posture that blacks will be content with rising standards of living, “decent treatment” and the like

– Afrikaners have understood at gut level that political power and dignity lie at the root of the black-white conflict. The Bantustan policy was at least an attempt to create a policy based on moral principles. It is a measure of the Afrikaners' almost religious belief in the morality of a political solution that they swallowed the policy whole and uncritically; and that its failure represents so traumatic a shock. In this respect Afrikaner nationalism has different roots from the fascism of the thirties.

● At a less populist level, two further factors have shaken the confidence of South Africa's political leaders in the viability of the present order. The first is the kind of immigrants South Africa is now attracting. Although immigration is marginally higher than emigration, the quality of the respective flows is very different. Not only do those who leave take with them in general higher levels of skill and entrepreneurship than those who arrive, but they are generally more "desirable" citizens from the Afrikaner view-point. Over the past decade most new immigrants have been Greeks, Portuguese and Rhodesians. The two former are reckoned to lack much commitment to the maintenance of white – let alone Afrikaner – supremacy; and they also tend to swell the ranks of the resented and rejected Catholic community. Rhodesians are often seen, like many recent immigrants from Europe, as fair weather friends who will remain only so long as the going is good – or better than it is in Europe.

● Second, the conflict between inexorable economic forces and apartheid ideology is becoming inescapable. For instance, unemployment among blacks is now seen by government as both intractable and highly dangerous. In 1979, the Minister of Manpower Utilisation, SP Botha, reckoned there were a million unemployed blacks, and that this represented a "revolutionary situation". Economists outside government

reckon black unemployment as up to two and a half times Mr Botha's estimate, giving an unemployment rate of about 25 per cent.

Even more important than the actual number is the structural nature of unemployment. Unless the skilled labour force is immediately and enormously swelled by blacks, increasing unemployment among the unskilled is inevitable. White immigration can help by only a trivial degree. Yet the only possible solution – dissolving the industrial colour bar – means taking on, and defeating, the white trade unions – who represent the present government's largest constituency.

To some extent the colour bar in the work place is being eroded – both by the turning of blind eyes, and by official encouragement of black training schemes – in so far as the government can get away with it *vis-a-vis* the white unions. But to the extent that this is having an impact it is undermining the ideology of apartheid and the confidence of the faithful among the *volk* – hence the huge increase in the vote recorded in the last election for the far right-wing *Herstigte Nasionale Party* (HNP).

The Immovable Object

All this suggests that South Africa's political leaders – together with their influential backers in mining, commerce and industry, the Churches, the universities and even the Afrikaner press – have seen the need for a rapid U-turn into the twentieth century. We must now look at those forces which account for the fact that there is so little change. If irresistible forces seem to be moving the country forward what, and how strong, are the immovable objects?

From where Mr Botha sits the most immovable object is his own party. The Nationalist Party's Parliamentary caucus is largely dominated by its right-wing mili-

tants and its inert conservatives. These are not necessarily the same people, nor are they always in mutual alliance. The militant right – the so-called *verkrampies* – are certainly out to frustrate Botha's purposes. But the Nationalist Party has, in fact, three factions which vary in proportions according to the issues: the *verkrampies*; their "opposite", the *verligtes* (reformists) and the centre. That is fact number one.

Fact number two is that Nationalist Party mystique requires that the principle function of the leader is to keep the Party – hence the *volk* – united. Afrikaner disunity is seen as the forerunner to loss of Afrikaner "identity" – either to the culture of the decadent money-grubbing, ungodly English or to the black hordes.

Fact number three is that the *significance* of the imperative to keep the party together arises not from loyalty and cohesion, but from the fissiparous tendencies of the *volk*. Every one of South Africa's political parties from the time of Union in 1910 has been formed as a result of a traumatic split in Afrikanerdom. Each of them triggers the same harrowed reactions as the Labour Party in Britain suffers at the memory of Ramsey MacDonald.

Now, leaving the realm of the facts facing Botha, we begin to speculate – with the help of Afrikaners close to the ruling elite. Most of these think a split in the Nationalist Party is inevitable under Botha's leadership, and that this is accepted by Botha himself. His problem is to effect the split so as to take the centre with him, leaving the *verkrampies* out on a limb as the "Party wreckers". If he chooses the wrong issue, the centre will stay with the right, leaving Botha dependent on English-speaking votes, and hence forcing the end of his career as an Afrikaner leader. Until he finds the right issue Botha is paralysed in the centre – like his predecessor, Vorster – whatever his *verligte* rhetoric.

For Vorster, the possibility of a split in the Party overrode all other consideration.

That he failed to move the country towards even minor reform in the wake of the 1976 riots – when every indication suggested the electorate was ready, even eager, for such leadership – was the measure of his fear of provoking a split to the right. His inertia was reinforced by the conservative nature of the man himself, and his early fascism.

On the face of it PW Botha is a man of the same mould. A Party professional who rose through the ranks as a conformist organiser and who was associated in the recent past with the strengthening of the Army and concern for security matters, he was at first feared, on his accession to the leadership, as a man to the right of Vorster.

“Throughout the 1970's the Army has been associated with the *verligte* elements in the Nationalist Party.”

Paradoxically it is Mr Botha's association with the Army which lifts him out of the mould of his predecessors. Throughout the 1970's the Army has been associated with the *verligte* elements in the Nationalist Party. Seeing the Army's role as basically counter-insurgency, its leaders have studied the experience of others in this field. The Army Chief, General Magnus Malan, now Defence Minister in Botha's Cabinet, has made a study of Third World revolutionary movements. He enjoys quoting Mao Tse-Tung, though that particular author is banned in South Africa. His studies, as well as his Army's experience in Angola, Namibia and Rhodesia, have taught him, he declares, that revolutionary struggles cannot be won by weapons alone. His maxim is that military power represents only 20 per cent of the battle, while 80 per cent is political – winning the loyalty of the people, and especially the African majority.

Thus General Malan and his Army planners have used their influence on the government in favour of changes in the

apartheid apparatus which are most likely to appease the blacks – whatever the effect on apartheid ideology. “We will never be able to withstand the modern threat”, says Major-General Boshoff, chief of Army logistics, “unless all the nations of South Africa strive for solidarity and form a solid communal front against outside attack.” In this, they think they have their best hope yet in the Premiership of Mr PW Botha.

“The influence of the army is not restricted to military and security questions: they now have a major say in nearly all aspects of government.”

And *vice versa*. Since becoming Prime Minister in 1979, Botha has been quietly changing the decision-making process in the government by establishing a number of key Cabinet committees on which the Army is directly represented. The influence of the army is not restricted to military and security questions: they now have a major say in nearly all aspects of government. The appointment of General Magnus Malan as Minister of Defence was only the overt culmination of the process of integrating the army in government.

General Malan was associated with the genesis of the government’s official policy of “total strategy to meet a total war situation”. It is designed to mobilise all the economic and human resources of the country for a “total onslaught” against external and internal enemies. It envisages not only building up a powerful and mobile military fighting machine, but also “preparing the hearts and minds” of black and white South Africans to engage the common enemy.

The Internal Strategy

The internal strategy, as worked out by

Botha with his advisers, many of them military, has four objectives: first, establishing the basis for racial cooperation by easing discrimination through the removal of laws not necessary for the preservation of white political power; second, finding a solution to the dilemma posed by the intractable fact of a permanent black population in the “white” areas; third, encouraging Bantustan independence by new steps towards consolidation of the homelands, thus creating cooperation between the “white” and the “black” states; and fourth, increasing the Prime Minister’s own freedom of action by undertaking constitutional reforms and structural changes which make Botha less dependent on the right-wing party caucus for support.

The External Strategy

The external strategy seeks to develop South Africa’s economic and political ties with its neighbours through a Constellation of Southern African States. This strategy is intended to defuse these neighbouring states as potential jumping-off points for guerrilla action, and provide a rich economically expanding hinterland for South Africa.

“The Parliamentary caucus is largely representative of the *verkrampte* elements – the farmers and the workers.”

In all these aspects of the “total strategy”, Botha has the support, broadly speaking, of the English-speaking section of the electorate, especially the business community; and also of the *verligte* elements among the Afrikaners – businessmen, the press and many academics, students and churchmen. But the Parlia-

mentary caucus is largely representative of the *verkrampte* elements – the farmers and the workers. Dr Andries Treurnicht, who heads the Party in the Transvaal, is the strongest and most forcefully articulate leader of this group in the caucus. If anything, the *verkrampte* element in Parliament has been strengthened by the last election in which many safe Nationalist seats were threatened, though not won, by the HNP.

By the end of 1980 Botha had reached stalemate in the caucus on all important issues. The Treurnicht camp, together with the centre, had stalled or defeated most attempts to dismantle the apartheid system, even some of its most trivial aspects. The Constellation of States idea never got off the ground: South Africa's neighbours saw it at once as a threat to their freedom of political action and economic direction.

“Botha’s one chance at home is to dilute the influence of his party caucus.”

In these circumstances Botha's one chance at home is to dilute the influence of his party caucus. One way has already been mentioned: to bring the Army into Cabinet committees; and the same applies to the appointment of other Botha men of *verligte* outlook to important positions.

The President's Council

But this is not enough. The Botha camp is putting a great deal of store by the operation of the “President's Council”. This is a nominated advisory body, ostensibly representative of all non-blacks in South Africa, which took the place of the Senate, abolished last year, and which is intended to lend the government an overall air of representativeness, and sagacity,

such as would be associated with a second Chamber in a federation. Its immediate political purpose is to make proposals for constitutional change in South Africa, changes which would be unlikely to be accepted by the caucus, except perhaps under the imprimatur of so august a body.

But Botha's hopes for the President's Council ran into difficulties from the start. First, it did not include Africans – only Coloureds and Indians. Africans were to be consulted separately through their homeland leaders on a separate African Council, with which the President's Council would confer from time to time. But the exclusion of black Africans led representative Coloured and Asian leaders to refuse to accept nomination to the Council – though some individuals have been induced to serve. The (white) Parliamentary opposition Progressive Federal Party (PFP) – under Dr Van Zyl Slabbert – which espouses non-racial proportional representation voting and a federal constitution – therefore also refused to accept nomination, on the grounds that to do so would lend the Council a spurious respectability as representing opposition opinion. For this the PFP are furiously condemned by *verligte* Nationalists for scotching the only instrument they think might allow Botha to bypass his caucus.

The crux of South Africa's dilemma remains: political power; whether and how it is to be shared. Practically everyone from the English-speaking businessman to Botha's confidants will tell you that there will be black Africans in Parliament within the foreseeable future – ten years is the figure they tend to pull out of the air. How this will happen, few will hazard a guess, except for the hopes put on the President's Council. These prophets suggest that Coloureds and Asians will be re-enfranchised before the next elections – whether on a separate or the common roll they think is less important.

This, they believe, will produce "an inevitable process" leading to black African representation as well. But that process is not spelt out. Nor do they face the hostility to any such piece-meal and minor reform by articulate leaders of the Coloured and Asian communities.

One hard fact stands out. Botha's early reforms – trade union rights, access to public amenities and the like – represent statutory changes which did little more than reflect current practice. Although radical in the South African context and bitterly resisted by the Treurnicht element, they simply gave legal sanction to what was already happening.

Moreover, and most important, they did not affect the political power of blacks or the more repressive aspects in practice of the separate development policy. Population removals under the influx control laws, migratisation of labour, Group Areas Act "clearances" and mass imprisonment for breaches of these laws continue unabated. Visitors to South Africa seldom see the vast dust-bowl rural slums of places like Qwaqwa, Kwazulu and Ciskei, where the population density is in some areas higher than that of Johannesburg, and where people are yet expected to live off the soil.

"The imperative to preserve Afrikaner unity is being challenged by the security imperative."

Two conclusions are appropriate. The current white power structure shows a pluralistic political system within a society groaning under the weight of its own internal contradictions. The imperative to preserve Afrikaner unity is being challenged by the security imperative. The impulse to appease the *verkrampte* electoral element is contradicted by the need to maintain cordial relations with Western

South Africa: the military dimension

In the 1980 budget the increase given to Defence was more than the total Education and Training expenditure, despite the fact that the latter was upped by 32% that year.

The Defence budget voted through Parliament (which excludes a number of para-military and secret operations) has risen as follows:

1959/60: R40m
1969/70: R271.6m
1974/75: R692.0m
1979/80: R1,972.4m

The various components of the South African Defence Force grew as follows between 1960 and 1979:

	1960	1979
Permanent Force	11,500	40,000
National Service		
Manpower	10,000	60,000
Citizen's Force	48,500	150,000
Comandos	48,500	150,000
Civilians	6,000	180,000
Standing operating force at any time	11,500	180,000

governments. The urgent necessity to educate and train blacks compounds black political expectations and political consciousness. The need to expand the economy and decrease unemployment is fundamentally at variance with the apartheid economy. And so on. A sophisticated approach by Britain and other Western governments requires that we keep abreast of these contradictions, and devise accordingly a multi-pronged strategy to the problem. Simplistic analyses in terms of purely black-white conflict or Marxist class-war hypotheses are too crude.

Second, recent changes in South Africa have been provoked by a combination of

internal and external pressures. Political structures and practices are being questioned only because these pressures create intolerable tensions between the Government's various (now mutually contradictory) aims. Any chance that these conflicts can be resolved by radical reform and power-sharing rests on a continuation at this point of these pressures and hence a heightening of the contradictions. We do no service to elements in the government

structure who see the need for real change if we take the pressure off now; to do so would be to allow the issues to be fudged again. One important task of Western governments is to keep the issues sharply before the white electorate. The process of change has in practice hardly started; the time for reassurance will come when such a process has developed a strong impetus. Meanwhile, the pressures must be intensified.

3. *The black revolt*

“Sure, we followed Chief Luthuli and his like. For half a century we have had campaign after campaign for peaceful change – showing how *reasonable* we are. Do you think that’s what we would have done if we had had guns and tanks instead of begging bowls? If you do, you must think very little of us.”

These words, spoken by a middle-aged veteran of the African National Congress (ANC) at an international conference exactly twenty years ago, encapsulate many elements which make up the mood of the history of black political effort.

First, for roughly the first half century of its existence (1910-1958) the ANC had the loyalty of most politically conscious black South Africans. Second, it was led largely by middle-class, educated, Christian Africans with a genuine belief in non-violence as a means of change. Third, it included in its ranks, however, angry men and women who used its tactics only *faute de mieux* – there seemed to be no alternative. Fourth, many adherents of the ANC were ready to use force whenever the opportunity presented itself. Fifth, the individual and national pride of these people became involved in taking up arms and winning

freedom, rather than asking for concessions.

The formation in 1960 of *Umkonto We Sizwe* under the leadership of Nelson Mandela was therefore inevitable. Mandela was deputy leader of the ANC; and the new tactic of armed struggle did not have the whole-hearted support of others including its leader, Chief Luthuli. But Mandela acted on the maxim that the strength and complexity of the South African state demanded a “multi-pronged strategy”. The ANC should, in his view, continue to operate as an overt political movement of protest under Luthuli, seeing *Umkonto* as its secret underground military

wing. That purpose was frustrated with the banning of the ANC in 1960.

In 1958 the ANC had split, with the formation of the Pan African Congress (PAC). From the time of its formation until that split, the ANC was a large mass coalition movement. It was in close alliance with separate Coloured, Indian and White Congresses, ANC membership being restricted to Africans. The non-African Congresses were relatively small in membership and support. Nevertheless, the ANC encompassed a wide spectrum of feeling and opinion.

“Surprising alliances periodically surface precisely because the elements which comprise it cannot easily be categorised in terms familiar to European political traditions.”

That spectrum is worth close attention, because several splits have occurred since 1958. Some surprising alliances periodically surface precisely because the elements which comprise it cannot easily be categorised in terms familiar to European political traditions.

One end of the spectrum represents *feelings* about race. It starts with an acknowledgement that it means something unique to the individual psyche to be black in a white supremacist society. It is concerned to build positive feelings about black consciousness – assertiveness, pride and self-help. It aims to end the colonial or dependent mentality easily acquired where all the symbols of blackness are associated with inferiority. It also encompasses negative feelings about non-black people. Its emphasis upon black exclusiveness derives from either or both of the positive and negative feelings about being a despised part of a white society. It deals with feelings of inferiority as well as with anger. Its first institutionalised manifestation was in the

ANC Youth Movement; later in the PAC which was banned with the ANC; and more recently that mood is caught in the various manifestations of the “Black Consciousness” movement.

The other end of the spectrum represents a rational and intellectual attempt to find an ideological framework and a programme for social change. In the absence of democratic institutions which blacks could use as a means of change – even passive resistance was met with violent suppression – the Marxist model of mass organisation was an obvious alternative. It had intellectual and emotional attractions which appealed to many black leaders. As a philosophy, it was absolutely non-racialist; non-Africans in the South African Communist Party (SACP) threw their lot unflinchingly in with the African cause, through the white, Coloured and Indian Congresses. Its disavowal of private property and its emphasis on common ownership clearly appealed to a dispossessed people. It was not afraid of violence as a method; and when white liberals, equally devoted to the black cause, continued to preach non-violent methods, their advice and commitment came to seem half-hearted by contrast.

Communist leadership and organisation was also, however, centralised and hierarchical. This end of the spectrum was thus associated with an authoritarian and non-populist leadership. Some of the most prominent intellectual and organisational leaders were not black: the most sophisticated and educated were white.

Tensions therefore began to develop between the feeling and the intellectual ends of the spectrum. The black nationalists, representing popular, angry exclusive feelings about black pride, felt themselves becoming overwhelmed by a multi-racial elitist leadership which exercised control with an emphasis upon “correct” interpretations and political exclusiveness. Not so much the Marxist philosophy as authori-

South Africa: the violent society

• During 1978:

Suspected contraventions of the Immorality Act (forbidding sexual relations between the races) investigated were:

363

The number of fire-arms licenses issued was:

118,515

The number of people charged with murder was:

4,246

The number of people convicted of murder was:

1,925

The number of rape cases reported was:

15,175

The number of cases reported of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm was:

125,772

The number of people serving life sentences was:

247

The amount of money paid to members of the public for assault by members of the Police Force was:

R178,725

The number of people killed and wounded by the Police during the execution of their duties was:

Adults killed:

192

Juveniles killed:

12

Adults wounded:

467

Juveniles wounded:

47

tarian methods and choice of leadership began to be seen as enemies of black nationalism. Not surprisingly, anti-communist non-Africans tended to support the non-Marxist nationalists in the ANC and later the PAC, while Moscow channelled funds through the SACP to the ANC.

This was the basis of the split in the ANC which created the PAC. Both movements were moving towards the use of armed struggle. On the question of the use of armed force, there was more tension *within* the ANC than between it and the PAC. Mandela's decision to include armed struggle as one of the prongs of liberation had the support of those elements which had formed the PAC. The split was not about violence, but about methods of organisation and the prominence of non-African leaders.

Since then the ANC has periodically shed larger or smaller groups of members for the same reason as led to the PAC formation. Outside the country it has concentrated on building an army of guerrillas under *Umkonto We Sizwe*. Inside its banning led to a lengthy vacuum. A clandestine organisation which has been decapitated (the Rivonia trial and imprisonment or exile of its leadership) cannot easily or quickly be re-built. However there is now evidence that ANC activity is once again a factor inside South Africa based upon trained cadres infiltrated by the guerrilla leadership. Evidence led in recent trials shows an intricate network of contacts between South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique. The successful explosions at the vital government SASOL installations are widely assumed to be the work of the ANC, which has raised its stock with African opinion.

After the similar banning and exiling of its leadership, the PAC gradually declined. With its first President, Robert Sobukwe, jailed, it suffered the erratic and quarrelsome leadership of Mr Potlako Leballo

and this drove out many of its best people. Currently a fresh start is being made following Leballo's expulsion.

The Black Consciousness Movement

Meanwhile, two broad movements have grown up in South Africa: The Black Consciousness Movement and *Inkatha*. The Black Consciousness Movement, (BCM) whose best known leader was Steve Biko, rests firmly on the feeling end of the black political spectrum. Its leaders and spokesmen are not anti-communist. They call themselves African socialists, and declare that their differences with the ANC seldom touch upon socialist ideology.

Instead, they claim, differences concern a "remoteness" on the part of the ANC leadership, together with a sense that new recruits or "cadres" are expected to know their place and fit obediently into a hierarchical structure. They project much of the blame for this on the whites (and to some extent other non-Africans) in the ANC. They have a feeling – some may say a paranoia – about the control exercised by "powerful" Marxist whites, who seem to them ruthless and manipulative. Some make the cynical interpretation that their power rests on the fact that as whites they are in control of the "money from Moscow".

Some of this general mood was summed up by a BCM spokesman in 1979, who charged the ANC with being "afraid of competition from a new generation of anti-apartheid militants". He criticised it because of "the stranglehold of the South African Communist Party, mainly made up of whites". He added: "We have nothing against Marxism, but we want to know who controls the organisations." He added that he was himself "a socialist".

As those sentiments would suggest, the BMC is itself highly non-centralised;

"The Black Consciousness Movement... is a loose organisation of individuals and groups promoting the cause of black pride and community self help."

indeed, it is only slightly organised, if at all. Its political umbrella is the Black People's Convention (BPC). It is populist in the extreme, seeing itself as a loose organisation of individuals and groups promoting the cause of black pride and community self-help. Sympathetic non-Africans are seen as friends, but as having no membership role in the BPC. The place of whites, says the BPC, is in a parallel white consciousness movement which will rid whites of their own equally crippling, historical mentality. Real equality between blacks and whites, they say, can be the product only of individuals thus freed of the consequences of their birth in a racialist society.

The BCM sees itself as responsible for the black urban revolt since 1976. It felt let down by the ANC over this period having vaguely expected outside assistance or even some kind of military *démarche* when the townships erupted. It also resents any ANC claim to have had a hand in that eruption.

Inside South Africa the BCM operates as a mood and a set of activities rather than a close-knit organisation. Groups arise with particular purpose, become banned or dissolve spontaneously, to be replaced by others doing similar work. Generally they are centred in a particular task – running a self-help clinic, or a neighbourhood group, giving information to students or trade unionists, or simply consciousness-raising. They become sporadically involved in concerted political action. Their members and leaders are in and out of detention, to be succeeded by others.

AZAPO (The Azanian People's Organisation) and COSAS (Congress of South African Students) make some attempt at national co-ordination of black consciousness: their leadership is regularly jailed.

In exile some BCM members joined the ANC and a few the PAC. Others have started a "third force" guerrilla operation, the SAYRC (South African Youth Revolutionary Council), with the backing of the Nigerian government and the PLO. The hostage-taking exercise at the Silverton bank near Pretoria in 1979 was said by some to have been the work of SAYRC operatives; but the South African government blamed the ANC. Still others think the operation was the result of an ordinary bank raid which went wrong. All the raiders were killed, and no arrests have been made in connection with its planning.

Inkatha Yenkululeku Yesiswe (Inkatha)

The Inkatha movement, started by the "Kwazulu" leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, is variously estimated to have a paid-up membership of 200,000 to 300,000. It is certainly the largest legal black organisation in the country. Originally confined by government edict to "Kwazulu citizens", it opened its ranks to other blacks in 1978 in defiance of the government. Because of its origins and Buthelezi's leadership, Inkatha's critics dismiss it as a tool of "Zulu hegemony".

Inkatha's leadership has always linked itself loosely with the traditions of the ANC. In an important sense the movement sees itself in the tradition of the non-military wing of the ANC – the followers of Chief Albert Luthuli – who carry on the overt, mass organisation of the ANC's work, while its guerrilla leaders conduct the armed struggle. In public, Buthelezi carefully dissociates himself and Inkatha

from the use of violence as a political weapon, calling in aid his Christian beliefs. He also uses pragmatic arguments: "It is all too easy to talk about . . . overthrowing the South African government . . . by violent means. This is truly a case where talk is cheap and mistakes cost lives. If violence is employed . . . it will only be justified if there is nothing else left."

But Buthelezi's ambivalence about the role of the armed struggle is much in evidence. Reflecting Mandela's maxim, he refers to the need for a "multi-faceted strategy". At a large rally in Soweto in April 1980 he refused to condemn the ANC for the decision to wage armed struggle: his quarrel he said was only with those who see violence as the only acceptable strategy, and would not recognise what he called the "democratic opposition". He said that the ANC had not succeeded after twenty years of effort because the conditions were not yet right. What was needed was two pre-conditions: "an enemy regime plagued by deep-rooted internal problems, and a set of logistic and geographic circumstances which allowed armed struggle to operate from bases within the country". Neither of these apply in South Africa Buthelezi said, concluding that "unless black and white learn to live with each other and share economic and political power, they would both end up losers". This harks back directly to the Luthuli. Moreover, despite its broadly anti-violence and anti-communist bias, Inkatha's political heroes are ANC figures. In defiance of government decrees against quoting ANC leadership, Buthelezi and others refer constantly to men like Mandela and Tambo as true leaders of the African people who must be consulted by government in planning for any new dispensation. Inkatha has formed an alliance with Coloured, Indian and other political groups. Calling itself the South African Black Alliance, it reflects some of the strategies of the ANC's old

Congress Alliance.

It is true that a publicised "secret" meeting in London in 1979 between the ANC and Inkatha leaders led to open disavowal of such an alliance on the part of some sections of the ANC. It is also true that the Inkatha/ANC link is partly due to the rejection of Inkatha by the BPC and its associates; they are violently opposed to any person or institution associated with the Bantustan policy, in which context they put Buthelezi and Inkatha.

Thus there remains a loose philosophic connection, if nothing more formal, between the external and internal operations of each of the two ends of the black political spectrum; the BPC and PAC on the one hand; and the ANC and Inkatha on the other. These are not immutable, and certainly not formal, alliances. Both contain elements of the other and are capable of cross-fertilisation. They emphasise the complex nature of the black political scene.

They also influence and are influenced by the way non-African forces feed into the black struggle. The ANC is financed and militarily supported from Moscow, apart from its Organisation for African Unity (OAU) backing; while anti-Moscow supporters of blacks – ranging from white liberals to Lagos and Peking – have tended to throw their weight, finance and/or arms and training facilities behind the PAC and the BPC. Most Western governments have not contributed to the funds of either; the exceptions are the Scandinavians and the Dutch who support the ANC's humanitarian needs.

Such historical and philosophical strands apart, what is the mood and what are the strategems of blacks in South Africa today? Perhaps most obvious is the sense that "the revolution" will come from inside the country. Although well-armed and trained exile movements are seen to have a role at some point simply because of their advantages, they are generally thought to be

dangerously out of touch both with the grassroots of the movement and with the strategic possibilities of using violence inside the country. "South Africa", they tell you, "is very different from Zimbabwe and Mozambique: the armed struggle will not work here in the same way as it did there".

Yet this sentiment does not indicate lack of confidence, as it might seem. On the contrary it seems to suggest that irresistible black power *can* develop inside the country; and that this power will form a bridge – when it is ready – with the technical weaponry the exile movements can provide. Privately, one black leader has said recently: "You will soon see a new black movement growing up which will be wooed both by the exile movements and by the government. That movement will be seen to be representative of all black – and brown – people and we will not be dictated to either by the government or by the exiles."

There are two obvious features of this new mood. One is that it is, paradoxically, non-racist. Though based on the concept of black power, it connects with and uses individuals of all race groups, including whites, to build its strength. Second, its principal plank may be summed up as non-collaborationist. No organisation or institution "tainted" with government money or approval is to be used however valuable the facilities or material advantages they might provide. Restaurants and theatres which have official permits to admit blacks are boycotted; while a great deal of multi-racial socialising – eating, drinking, dancing, bathing and such like – takes place in defiance of laws and notices forbidding them. Generally the police turn a blind eye.

Even the Urban Foundation, a private industry charity formed to upgrade black township facilities is frequently rejected as a source of help because it has the blessing of the government. Confidence in the

philosophy of self-help means that official or big business charity is accepted reluctantly and on black terms, if at all. Of course, in this matter, as in others, there are degrees of purism and pragmatism; and blacks will argue among themselves as to whether to accept, say, a new sportsfield in Soweto financed by the Urban Foundation. But the mood is common to all.

The non-collaborationist purism is the principal point of violent disagreement between the BPC and Inkatha, since the latter is led by Buthelezi, leader of a despised homeland government. One black militant ventures the opinion that "if Buthelezi resigned his Chief Ministership tomorrow, the BCM and Inkatha would very soon be working together."

"The two movements (Inkatha and BCM) share one overall strategy for the growth of black power: the use of black consumer and worker solidarity."

Even so, the two movements share one overall strategy for the growth of black power: the use of black consumer and worker solidarity. In the past four years black trade unions have become a significant factor for the first time. Government legislation legalising black unions following the Wiehahn report was a consequence, not a cause, of growing black worker strength. It was an attempt to control a *de facto* power by giving it a *de jure* status in which it could be subjected to regulation. In 1980 there were 207 strikes involving the loss of 174,615 man-days – more than double the 1979 figures. By September 1981 there had been an average of one strike a day for that year.

A feature of black worker action over the past two years has been its backing by consumer action in the form of boycotts.

South Africa: indicators of racial discrimination

Average annual earnings (non-agricultural) 1979

White 7,627 Rand
Coloured 2,468 Rand
Asian 3,280 Rand
African 1,831 Rand

Per Capita expenditure on school pupils 1978-9

White 724 Rand
Indian 357 Rand
Coloured 225 Rand
African 71 Rand

Pupil/teacher ratios

White 1:19
Coloured 1:29
Asian 1:26
African 1:46

Maximum monthly social pensions, October 1980

White 109 Rand
Coloured/Asian 62 Rand
African 33 Rand

Prison population per 100,000 total population

847 Coloured
450 Black
97 White
68 Asian

Several strikes have succeeded in gaining not only wage rises but re-instatement of sacked union leaders as a result of a mass consumer boycott of the firms in dispute. The scale is still relatively small in relation

to the country as a whole, but each success compounds the challenge and the confidence of blacks in the use of combined industrial and consumer action. Moreover, while the unions are by law explicitly non-political, they will obviously increasingly develop political objectives, such as the removal of influx control; hence they must become a political and social force, as well as an industrial one.

Both Inkatha and the BPC back this strategy. Institutions for doing so remain divided. There is no one centre to which all black unions are affiliated or through which calls for consumer boycott are made. The monitoring of foreign firms' adherence to the various codes of practice is also performed by groups affiliated to, or started by, the BPC and Inkatha. Both see this kind of action as part of the liberation process and black confidence building.

What conclusion should we draw from this analysis as to Britain's role in the resolution of the South Africa conflict? Clearly, we will draw some lessons from

the varied experiences of Zimbabwe and Namibia; and their resolution as international foci will leave South Africa as the main problem. The role of outsiders would be greatly simplified if there were one black movement, clearly representative, behind which the outside world could throw its support. The OAU, the UN, international agencies, governments and solidarity movements will be looking for some such body of leaders with which they can work, in the confidence that blacks in South Africa are broadly behind them. Unfortunately as yet this is a vain hope.

At present the OAU officially gives equal recognition and support to the ANC and the PAC. But since the recognition of SWAPO by the OAU and the UN as "sole legitimate representative" of the people of Namibia, there has been pressure from the ANC and its supporters to grant the ANC the same status. For several reasons it would be a mistake for the British government and people to support such a move.

4. *Can Britain disengage?* _____

There are three main arguments against any proposal for economic disengagement. First, it would have the effect over time of rendering worse off those groups in South Africa for whose ultimate benefit the strategy was conceived. Second, it would have no effect other than that of diverting attention from other, presumably better, means of bringing pressure to bear. Third, it might inflict damage on the United Kingdom economy out of all proportion to any conceivable benefits in other terms.

The Effect on the Republic

It is a truism that increased economic activity does not necessarily improve the condition of the poorest groups. However, changes in the structure of an economic system taking the form that can be loosely described as "industrialisation" may often improve the economic and political position of the poor by endowing at least some of them with "industrial muscle". In view of this, it can be argued that relatively efficient, modernising but repressive regimes (such as contemporary Brazil and Korea or Taiwan and Spain in the 1960s) may prove to be more to the advantage of the poor in the long term than bumbling, if relaxed, democracies. If it could be shown that South Africa did constitute a regime of this type (efficient, modernising but repressive) and that economic disengagement by the United Kingdom would hamper the process of development and thus desirable change, then it would follow that disengagement would be ill-advised.

The Republic's Economic Record

An observer looking at the performance of the Republic in the 1960s could be forgiven for concluding that its economy was being managed by a relatively efficient, modernising but repressive regime. Gross Domestic Product at constant prices increased at 6.4 per cent p.a. (3.7 per cent per head), rapidly enough for it to reach the average 1981 level in Australia, Japan or North West Europe by the end of the century if it had continued. However, between 1970 and 1978, growth in Gross Domestic Product amounted to a mere 3.7 per cent per year (0.9 per cent per head) at constant prices. Since 1974, real Gross Domestic Product per head has actually fallen.

It is of course true that most countries experienced lower economic growth in the

1970s than in the 1960s. Nonetheless, the scale of deterioration in the performance of the economy of the Republic was unusual. Both the developed countries and the more successful of the developing have had to make do with rather less growth in real incomes since 1974. They have not, however, found it impossible to achieve any increase at all.

“Why was it that South Africa, seemingly written off after Sharpeville, should have achieved an economic miracle in the 1960s only to descend into stagnation by the middle 1970s?”

An economic paradox is crying out for explanation; why was it that South Africa, seemingly written off after Sharpeville, should have achieved an economic miracle in the 1960s only to descend into stagnation by the middle 1970s. The economic achievements of the 1960s took place in the context of widespread international disapproval of the regime and under conditions of comprehensive protectionism and controls over capital movements.

The combination of an inward-looking approach to the economy and rapid economic progress is less paradoxical than the outsider would think, accepting the conventional wisdom of free trade and a liberal world economic order. Economic historians can cite many instances where mercantilist and even protectionist policies have paid off in terms of activity output and even welfare, and more than a few where orthodox liberal trading practices have led to unnecessary grief. There can be circumstances where protectionism is the best option available to an economy, as well as those where a more liberal approach would be justified (The United Kingdom economy gained a new lease of life in 1914 as a result of the attempted

blockade by Imperial Germany. The subsequent recoveries towards full health in the later 1930s and after 1945 were due in part to a high degree of protection. Conversely, nineteenth century France probably lost out by an excessively protectionist approach. This century, the Brazilian authorities achieved a truly remarkable performance by switching adroitly between the two).

The origins of the protectionist approach in South African economic thinking go back to the 1930s. During the Great Depression, the Afrikaner Nationalists discovered a "poor white" problem. There were three strands to the solution proposed and, in time, adopted. Two were economic; the third sociological. The last, not implemented until after 1948, was to restore the morale of the "poor whites" by differentiating between them and the non-white population. The other two measures were no different in essence from those followed in many other developed and developing countries at the time. The expansion of import-substituting manufacturing industries was encouraged by tariffs (especially generous for industries with a predominantly white labour force) and a number of public corporations were set up, in part to promote industrialisation, in part simply to "soak up" unemployed whites.

The effect of the second World War was to expand the new manufacturing industries while cutting down the supply of white labour. In consequence, a substantial non-white labour force in manufacturing was created. The United Party Government which ruled until 1948 was prepared, however hesitantly, to accommodate to this change. The Afrikaner Nationalists by contrast chose to regard the urban non-white population as essentially sojourner in character, providing cheap labour for domestic service and the mines.

The election of the Nationalists in 1948 led to a flight of capital. The authorities responded with further protectionist

measures, though the full height of protection was not reached until after Sharpeville, when the confidence of foreign investors collapsed entirely. These had the contradictory effects of reducing vulnerability to external pressures yet substantially adding to the inherent unworkability of the apartheid policies that they were intended to safeguard. As more and more black Labour was attracted into the industries which were intended to substitute for imports from an increasingly critical world, the permanent urban black population continued to grow in spite of all the rhetoric and showy brutalities of the system.

“External disapproval obliged the authorities to follow a policy of import substitution which resulted in rapid economic growth over most the post-war period.”

External disapproval obliged the authorities to follow a policy of import substitution which resulted in rapid economic growth over most of the post-war period. This growth created a large urban black labour force which was far less easy to police than either domestic servants or semi-servile contract labour for the mines. The South Africa of 1938 might have evolved into a predominantly white state employing black migrant labour for a limited number of functions, surrounded by labour surplus countries, rather as some European, Middle Eastern and even West African states which import migratory labour have developed. Ironically enough, the stimulus to industrialisation given by the Second World War and the subsequent strategy of inward-looking development rendered any later attempt along these lines impossible.

From 1970 onwards, the South African economy has been in severe difficulties.

Between 1970 and 1978, income per head increased at less than 1 per cent per year, as against nearly 4 per cent per year in the 1960s. The check to growth cannot be accounted for by the international energy situation in the 1970s nor by the unstable conditions of international finance and trade. Both are more likely to have worked to the Republic's economic advantage than not – stimulating demand for exports of steam coal and raising the price of gold in real terms. Rather the causes of difficulty lie within the economic and social system itself. In order to understand them, it is necessary to look at the overall functioning of the economy.

White South Africa had started out as a farming community providing supplies to passing ships. Later on a mining complex had been added. In most peripheral countries, whether in South Africa or elsewhere in Africa, mining complexes, if they developed, tended to separate themselves from the rest of the economy, which they dominated. They formed enclaves within traditional economies, from which they required cheap, semi-servile labour. South Africa was unusual in that the real, if restricted, constitutional and democratic system there prevented mining interests from acquiring or maintaining the kind of domination they possessed in, say, Bolivia or, for that matter, much of Central Africa. The South Africans succeeded in more than holding their own against multinational capital, even when backed by the full might of the British Empire. This achievement enabled them to use the income generated from the mines to begin the industrialisation and modernisation of the rest of the economy rather as many oil-exporting countries are now using the incomes generated from oil. It was this that permitted rapid inward-looking economic growth for over a generation. Protectionism caused consumer goods industries to develop, while nationalisation enabled public funds to be used to build up

steel and coal-based chemical industries.

There was much less success at building up the keystone of any modern full-line industrial economy – engineering (more or less coterminous with “machinery and transport equipment”). It is through machine-building that an economy acquires an ability to grow faster than simple additions to the capital stock and labour force would permit. Furthermore, any economy which depends principally on foreign suppliers for most intermediate and investment goods will have severe difficulties managing economic growth without a continuous structural deterioration in external payments balances.

The Republic has effectively exhausted the possibilities of import-substitution in both consumer goods and basic industrial materials. For growth to continue at the pace of the 1960s, there would have to be either a successful opening-up of the economy to international trade or else the process of import-substitution would need to extend to the capital goods/engineering industries. The chances were that the first course would have proved impracticable. In any case, it was not seriously tried.

The second was not necessarily impossible. Brazil has managed it – as has India to some extent. However, the Brazilians are colour-blind on the shop-floor, if not necessarily always elsewhere. By contrast, job reservation in the Republic has helped to create a general shortage of skilled and semi-skilled manual workers in the capital goods/engineering sector. Imports of skilled labour from recession-hit white countries could act only as a palliative. Domestic demand for engineering products is unlikely to fall. Quite apart from general investment good requirements, more and more armaments are required by the state, while the mining companies have for many years found it convenient to obtain much of their machinery locally.

The logic points to “dilution” of labour through the admission of non-whites to

apprenticeships. Such a course is being followed, falteringly and to much opposition. Without a much more vigorous approach, import substitution there and thus growth in the wider economy will not take place. Yet it is questionable whether the will exists to move in such a direction to more than a strictly token extent. Unless it could be shown to exist, it must be concluded, however reluctantly, that the Republic of South Africa is not capable of providing the basic conditions for amelioration of the circumstances and, in due course, enlargement of the status of the worst-off groups which are provided by a number of relatively efficient, modernising but repressive regimes elsewhere.

The Relationship with the United Kingdom

Over the last generation and a half (that is since the 1930s), the economic relationship between South Africa and the United Kingdom has been transformed. In 1938, the Union as it then was constituted the largest single market outside the United Kingdom for British goods, taking as much as 7.5 per cent of UK exports. By contrast, South Africa accounted for a mere 1.7 per cent in 1979. In 1938, it was part of the sterling area and a beneficiary of imperial preference; at present, it is one of the most highly protected economies in the world.

“To a large extent, the process of import-substitution and inward-looking growth has been at the expense of the British exporter, who has seen an economic preserve disappear.”

Thus, to a large extent, the process of import-substitution and inward-looking growth has been at the expense of the

British exporter, who has seen an economic preserve disappear. Exchange controls and restrictions on the repatriation of profits have rendered British capital in the Republic something between the prisoner and the junior partner of the Afrikaner state. In this context, it is laughable to talk of the South African authorities as agents of external capital. It is also unwise to pay too much attention to the book value of foreign holdings there, since it is difficult to realise any of them.

Nonetheless, the South African regime finds tame and singularly “wet” allies among British business interests. In part this is due to imperial nostalgia. In part, it arises from the fact the Republic is still rather a good market for specialised engineering goods and process plant, if for little else. In addition, it is seen as a significant source of rare metals, not simply gold. And as a member of the sterling area for much of the time it existed, it is regarded as a traditional preferred supplier to the United Kingdom.

The Costs of Disengagement

To a large extent the process of disengagement from the economy of the Republic has already taken place as far as the United Kingdom is concerned. This has occurred not as a result of British actions but of those of the Afrikaner Nationalist governments which have ruled since 1948.

The remainder of UK South Africa trade has been variously estimated as providing employment in the United Kingdom for 250,000, 70,000 and 13-14,000 people. The figure of 250,000 comes from the UK-South Africa Trade Association (UKSATA), and that of 70,000 from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Barbara Rogers and Brian Bolton suggest the 13-14,000 total. The derivation of the CBI figure of 70,000 is unknown but looks suspiciously like a simple-minded appor-

tionment of UK manufacturing employment according to the estimated proportion of exports to the Republic within production in manufacturing. If this were the case, then the UKSATA estimate can safely be dismissed as the product of double-counting. The Rogers/Bolton estimate is based on a sector-by-sector, company-by-company analysis. As such, it is more likely to be reliable. It is also consistent with the specialised character of South African imports.

“The solicitude for employment shown in this instance by the CBI seems hardly consistent with the remarkable stoicism with which it appears to contemplate the pastoralisation of large parts of the industrial base of the UK, especially the West Midlands and South Wales.”

It is doubtful whether a loss of 13-14,000 jobs or even a few more can be regarded too seriously in an economy where the vagaries of economic fashion can produce fluctuations of a wholly different order of magnitude in the level of employment – in the millions rather than the tens of thousands. This does not imply that circumstances should not exist where the fall of every economic sparrow were marked; only that it is observable that such conditions do not prevail at present, and that the solicitude for employment shown in this instance by the CBI seems hardly consistent with the remarkable stoicism with which it appears to contemplate the pastoralisation of large parts of the industrial base of the UK, especially the West Midlands and South Wales.

The other area of anxiety is the supply of strategic rare metals, particularly important for aerospace, defence and specialised engineering activities. Other indus-

tries have either or both traditional sources of supply outside the Republic or large strategic stockpiles of the relevant materials. It is more than possible that the United Kingdom could be at a significant commercial disadvantage as a result of disengagement/sanctions, unless offsetting action were taken

The Benefits of Disengagement

There are three different contexts within which benefits could arise. First, the United Kingdom could take a lead in disengagement. Second, it could participate in a wider international effort. Third, there are the longer term effects of helping to promote change in the Republic.

If the United Kingdom were to take a lead, the chances are that it would improve its position in the Nigerian market substantially. Between 1978 and 1979, as a result of Nigerian unease over the trend of British policy in Southern Africa, United Kingdom exports to Nigeria fell from £1,133.4 million to £638.2 million in current money. In 1979 prices, the reduction was £618 million. By comparison, the 1979 figure for the whole of United Kingdom exports to the Republic was £713.5 million.

“At least as many jobs were lost between 1978 and 1979 as a result of the partial trade boycott by the Nigerian authorities as are at stake in the whole of United Kingdom trade with the Republic of South Africa.”

Adjusting for the unusually capital-intensive nature of South African imports from the United Kingdom, it seems plausible to estimate that at least as many jobs were lost between 1978 and 1979 as a result of the partial trade boycott by the

Nigerian authorities as are at stake in the whole of United Kingdom trade with the Republic of South Africa.

Nigeria is a rapidly growing economy and while manufacturing industry is being developed, it will be a long time (perhaps a generation) before it can replace imports to the same extent as its South African counterpart today. In the 1970s, income per head in Nigeria grew at 3½ per cent per year in real terms – as against less than 1 per cent a year in South Africa. But the volume of imports by Nigeria grew at a staggering 25 per cent per annum, while those by South Africa actually declined by 1.8 per cent. In 1978, Nigeria had become a substantially larger export market than the Republic. It imported £6,698 million worth of goods as against £3,747 million by the Republic. Depending on the measure used, the Republic's economy is between 10 per cent and 36 per cent smaller than that of Nigeria.

Common sense would dictate that exports to the more rapidly growing market should be promoted more vigorously than to the shrinking one. Ironically, official representatives of British business (like the Confederation of British Industry) appear to be committed to the opposite approach.

If international action took place, a certain amount of benefit could be expected to accrue to the United Kingdom from trade diversion. South Africa is emerging as a major exporter of steam coal. It is expected to supply up to 30 per cent of the international market during the 1980s. Much of this trade will be to Western European countries outside the United Kingdom and West Germany. It would

not be difficult to divert at least 5-10 million tonnes of that trade to the United Kingdom coal industry. Such a diversion would be worth £200-400 million a year to the balance of payments and 10,000 to 20,000 to employment. In addition, the conditions would be appropriate for a sharing agreement on strategic metals as works already for oil.

Lastly, in the longer run, political and social change inside the Republic, such as might be assisted by sanctions, is likely to lead to its becoming a far better potential market for British goods. This would be so both if the economy opened up or if it began to grow at a respectable rate while remaining relatively self-sufficient.

The Effects on the Republic

It is questionable whether even full international sanctions would have much material effect overall on the South African economy, whether for good or ill. The authorities are capable of switching coal destined for export to oil-from-coal plants. Indeed, the export licences are conditional on regular supplies of oil from the parent companies. The soft fruit industry would have a rough time, like tobacco in Rhodesia. The realisable benefits from sanctions on the economy (though much is made of them by South African propaganda) have, in fact, already been realised in the 1960s. The main factor at work would be the discouragement of skilled workers from going there and the reminder to South Africa's rulers of the nature of the economic impasse at which they have arrived.

*The South African Economy
A Selective International Comparison*

Income per head

Parities \$US (1975)	At Actual Market	At Purchasing Power
	Exchange Rates \$US (1978)	
3,170	Argentina	1,910
2,250	Brazil	1,570
1,750	Korea (South)	1,160
1,960	Mexico	1,290
1,980	South Africa	1,480
4,800	United Kingdom	5,030

Comparative real growth in Gross Domestic Product (per capita figures in brackets) % pa.

	1960-70	1970-78
Argentina	4.2 (2.8)	2.3 (1.0)
Brazil	5.3 (2.3)	9.2 (6.2)
Korea (South)	8.5 (6.0)	9.7 (7.7)
Mexico	7.2 (3.8)	5.0 (1.6)
South Africa	6.4 (3.7)	3.6 (0.9)

Structure of Manufacturing Activity 1976 (%)

	Food and Agriculture	Textiles, Leather & Clothing	Machinery & Transport Equipment	Chemicals	Other Manu- factures
Argentina	17	13	24	13	33
Brazil	15	10	30	12	33
Korea (South)	15	25	24	8	28
Mexico	21	13	19	14	33
South Africa	17	13	18	12	42

5. *Britain's traditional ambivalence* _____

Until 1978, the Labour Party tended to take a strong line against *apartheid* in opposition, but in government to accept that any change in the economic relationship with the Republic would be detrimental to the economy and in particular to British jobs. It is worth recalling in some detail the South African arms episode in the sixties to illustrate this point.

Labour and South Africa

Before the 1964 election, and particularly under the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell, Labour had taken a hard line against South Africa, and was indeed pledged to implement the then non-obligatory United Nations ban on the sale of arms to South Africa. Soon after he became leader of the Party, in early 1963, Harold Wilson spoke at an Anti-Apartheid rally in Trafalgar Square which left no one in any doubt of his seriousness in wishing to change British policy towards South Africa. The supply of British arms to South Africa would not take place under a Labour government as long as the apartheid system continued; things had gone from bad to worse in that country, he said.

But at the same time the party, under Harold Wilson's leadership, was opposing, within the Socialist International and elsewhere, any moves to impose a trade embargo on South Africa or to affect British-South African trade in any way. As Paul Foot points out (*The Politics of Harold Wilson*, Harmondsworth, 1968), it was that self-same government of Harold Wilson which, in February 1966, set up a South Africa section of the British National Exports Council. Simultaneously, important members of Wilson's Cabinet were

coming to the conclusion that the arms embargo should be relaxed.

A row over that issue in December 1967, apparently provoked by a suggestion by Jim Callaghan at a private gathering in the House of Commons that, in view of the economic situation it might be right to drop the embargo, very nearly split the Wilson government. Indeed, in order to set the record straight, Wilson broke his self-imposed vow of silence about the internal affairs of Cabinet committees, and set out a full account of it in his memoirs (*The Labour Government 1964-70*, 1971). From that and other accounts, such as Crossman's, it is clear that George Brown, as Foreign Secretary, was strongly in favour of relaxing the ban, and that Harold Wilson, in imposing a policy of "no change", was in a minority in his own Cabinet. Marcia Williams has commented that "many surprising characters were the principal advocates... some escaped notice who should have been identified as supporters of reactionary right-wing policies" (*Inside Number Ten*, 1972).

The issue had caused such a furore in the press and elsewhere that the Conservatives, sensing an easy issue on which to embarrass the Government, pledged that they would resume the sale of arms to South Africa if returned to power in the

election that followed soon afterwards. When in June 1970 the Conservatives formed a Government under the prime ministership of Edward Heath, this policy was basically confirmed: in August that year, at the Commonwealth conference in Singapore, Mr Heath's insistence on going ahead with the lifting of the arms ban in spite of strong Commonwealth opposition almost caused a split in the organisation. The situation was very nearly reached in which the Queen, as head of the Commonwealth, would have found herself presiding over a body from which her own government had been expelled. A policy of minor importance from any internal British economic or strategic point of view had very nearly caused incalculable damage to this country's political standing in the world.

But it did, of course, thrill those people in this country, particularly in the Conservative Party, for whom the South Africa connection is a symbol of past grandeur and a dream of a reactionary future. It is worthwhile pondering the words of Richard Crossman, looking back in 1970 at his experience in government: "Our policy of banning arms sales to South Africa is . . . very unpopular in the country and, in my view, we have in this respect been a puritanical, prim government". (*Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, Volume 3, 1977).

“The important point, however, is not that members of that Labour government followed the pragmatic policies wished on them by officials, but rather that their own convictions and their own assessment of public attitudes were leading them in the same direction as the businessmen and the trade bureaucracies.”

At various stages in his memoirs, Crossman shows himself to be in favour of the

resumption of arms sales to South Africa, and generally to have little interest in the subject. But his view of the public's attitude to South Africa and the arms embargo is interesting. It shows – and the same impression is gained from Wilson's memoirs – that the issue was regarded by the Labour leaders of the time much as they looked on the question of prescription charges: one of immense political significance to the Labour faithful but of little real importance or even dysfunctional in pragmatic political terms.

The furore over the row in December 1967, and the extraordinary lengths to which Wilson has gone to set out his own side of the story, confirm this impression. But while being highly sensitive to the feeling of the activists, the party leaders of the time had concluded that, on balance, arms should be supplied: it was only Harold Wilson who prevented his Cabinet's view from prevailing. The faithful were thrown a bone: it was a controversial bone, but while it was being devoured the businessmen, officials and others who were developing contacts with South Africa could get on with the job.

The important point, however, is not that members of that Labour government followed the pragmatic policies wished on them by officials, but rather that their own convictions and their own assessment of public attitudes were leading them in the same direction as the businessmen and the trade bureaucracies. They clearly believed that the Labour supporters who saw the arms issue as a major moral symbol for the Labour Party were in a minority in the country: Crossman actually concludes that the government's policies were unpopular. The uneasy marriage between Labour politicians and the bureaucracy could thus be rationalised away by that hoariest of excuses for preferring opportunism to principle: electoral expediency, or rather the belief, wholly untested but accepted as inherited wisdom by the politicians, that a

tough line with South Africa would lose votes.

By the mid-seventies the third Labour Government of Harold Wilson confronted a reality which was changing fast. Jim Callaghan, who on leaving the Treasury in 1967 had been the one to raise publicly the possibility of resuming arms sales, was by now Foreign Secretary: the Portuguese Empire was collapsing and, in a move which was to prove traumatic for the South Africans, Henry Kissinger first encouraged the South African defence forces to invade Angola and then hurriedly withdrew his support for them. Nigeria had become a major Western trading partner and, following the 1973 rise in the world price of oil, had become an important source of oil, particularly for the United States. By 1977 Britain, along with France and the United States, was supporting, in the UN Security Council, a mandatory world arms embargo against South Africa. There were in any event good pragmatic reasons for going along with the third world and non-aligned nations at the UN. But the United States changed Presidents in 1977 and the new administration named a former black activist, Andy Young, as Ambassador to the UN. Young forged an important alliance with the new British Foreign Secretary, David Owen, who took up the job following the sudden death of Anthony Crosland in March 1977. Owen was committed to a review of British relations with South Africa, and studies were set in hand.

Whitehall concluded that pressure from the international community on Britain over South Africa was likely to become intense. Black African countries would pressure Britain, in the United Nations, the Commonwealth and in other fora, to cease her *de facto* economic support of South Africa; the communist world would fan the flames of any discord between Britain and black Africa over South Africa; and some of Britain's Western partners,

particularly those with relatively little to lose, would themselves adopt tough measures against South Africa. As Whitehall saw it, the problem of Britain's relationship with South Africa – which they assessed as economically profitable – was that it would attract increasingly harmful and damaging criticisms and pressures. Thus the basic issue was whether, and for how long, these pressures could be resisted. David Owen called for a reduction in the British economic over-exposure in South Africa. This was agreed government policy, but apart from David Owen's speeches little evidence of it could be found in other quarters.

There was a strong school of thought in the Labour Government that any economic action against South Africa would damage British interests, so that, in the event of a mandatory call from the Security Council, even if France and the United States were prepared to go along with it, Britain should be prepared to use the veto. In the end the crunch moment never came. But those members of the Labour Government who thought that use of a British veto in these circumstances would have been politically disastrous were not helped by a statement in the House of Commons on 15 December 1978 by Richard Luce, then a Conservative Opposition foreign affairs spokesman, that Britain should on no account go along with economic sanctions against South Africa. Not surprisingly, the Tories have been as good as their word.

In a report eloquently entitled *Buying Time for South Africa*, published in August 1978, Counter-Information Services listed details of the continuing, and in some cases intensified, economic relationship between some firms and sectors of the British economy and South Africa. The report showed that the Labour Government had failed to honour a pledge in the 1974 manifesto to cancel the RTZ uranium contract in Namibia, was still backing trade promotion trips to South Africa by

British businessmen, and was involved, through its stake in the company, through the National Enterprise Board, in ICL's sales of large numbers of computers for use by South African government departments including the simplification of the pass system, bedrock of apartheid. Despite Cabinet decisions, and despite a distinctly frosty turn in diplomatic relations between Britain and South Africa, it was, it seemed, business as usual.

In 1980, Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, and black guerrillas of the African National Congress mounted spectacular attacks inside South Africa. With the major shift in Zimbabwe, and the escalating violence and unrest in black South Africa, it would have been easy for a socialist Government to press for tougher policies.

Mrs Thatcher's Government, however, is unlikely to take action except under intense pressure; the last British cabinet minister, other than a foreign office minister, to visit South Africa officially was, after all, Mrs Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education in 1972. Exports to South Africa were booming in early 1980, boosted by two huge orders for power station turbines won by GEC.

But more typical of the times was the decision of the Sports Council – strongly opposed by its only black member, Paul Stephenson – to allow a rugby tour of South Africa by the British Lions rugby team in the Spring and early Summer of 1980. Highly controversial, and formally disapproved of by the Minister of Sport, it went ahead with the known approval of the Prime Minister's husband. The decision to go was greeted with delight by the South Africans. But the attitude of Ian Todd, the *Sun's* rugby correspondent, perhaps sums up what the more sensitive of the touring party felt: "I have never known such a sad and deeply-divided society. I came to South Africa believing the Lions could, possibly, play a part in generating sporting goodwill through all

creeds and colours in South Africa. I now believe I was wrong. They should have stayed at home" (*The Sun*, 18 June 1980).

The Conservative Government, while perhaps wishing to do more on the side of South Africa, is in fact locked into an alliance with states which, like France, have a clear perspective of where their true interests lie. In addition, pressure from Whitehall will continue to be on the side of pragmatism, and will include sober assessments of the prospects for the apartheid regime. In other words, the days when Treasury or Foreign Office knights looked on South Africa as a "bastion of the West" have long since gone (if indeed they ever existed: the notion is largely a creation of South African propaganda, effective only in that the left thinks that the Whitehall establishment has swallowed it). Former US vice-president Mondale is said to have told John Vorster, "You are not part of the solution; you are part of the problem".

Meanwhile, the Labour Party, in the "draft" 1980 manifesto, planned radical policies: "... We will implement a systematic programme of economic disengagement from South Africa. We will work through the UN to implement a mandatory trade ban with South Africa. At home we will immediately close all Anglo-South African trade organisations, end ECGD cover for exporters to South Africa and forbid British banks from operating in Namibia... The RTZ contract will be amended or terminated so that Britain does not receive uranium supplies from Namibia while it is still under South African control... (*Draft Labour Manifesto, 1980*, Labour Party, 1980).

The South African End

South Africa continues to portray herself as a bastion of the West, a bulwark against communism, and a defender of key

Western trade routes. Few influential policy-makers in the West now take such assertions seriously, although some influential British Conservatives, such as Lord Home, would regard the third of the three assertions as valid. In fact the "bastion of the West" line is now mainly aimed at internal white audiences in South Africa, where huge defence expenditure and an oppressive system can be more easily justified if they are represented as part of some global or universal struggle rather than as a local historical imperative. The Soviet Union and many communist parties, however, in effect connive at this line by implying that apartheid is necessarily part of Western capitalism and by also stressing what they represent to be a common interest between white South Africa and the West. The myth to which reference has already been made – that Whitehall and Washington policy-makers actually accept the "bastion of the West" line – is thus perpetuated by the South African and Soviet propaganda machines, though with diametrically opposed aims in mind.

South African government propaganda is extensive and is aimed at the peoples of the Western countries rather than at their governments. The Rhodie affair has illustrated the immense efforts made by the South African government to create a favourable image and ensure favourable treatment in the Western press. Two books have examined these operations: John C. Lawrence's *Race Propaganda and South Africa*, (London, 1979) and the Africa Bureau's *The Great White Hoax*, published in 1977. The Williamson Affair – in which a major Western agency assisting political refugee students, the International University Exchange Fund, largely financed by Nordic and social-democratic governments, was infiltrated at the highest level by a Captain of the South African security police – has shown how seriously the South Africans take the danger to them from the

activities of non-communist Western anti-apartheid forces. But as far as the pro-South African propaganda is concerned, there are some signs that a new, less aggressive policy is emerging.

Instead of buying journalists, politicians and opinion-formers, the South Africans now seem to have correctly perceived that their sympathisers in the West will be better serviced if, rather than making sweeping claims as to the historic correctness of the South African government's philosophy and policies, they are able to argue that changes are in the offing, being made or under consideration.

“Even the South African establishment has perceived that in Britain and in the West generally its cause is no longer defensible.”

In other words, even the South African establishment has perceived that in Britain and in the West generally its cause is no longer defensible: the policy is therefore to buy time. Any planned change in petty apartheid will therefore be given maximum publicity: the work of Commissions, such as the Wiehahn Commission, set up after the Soweto riots in 1976 to look at employment legislation affecting Africans, or the Riekert Commission, which reported in May 1979 on the future of the system of "influx control", are reported when first published as though they had been accepted. The mere fact that proposals have been made is given currency as evidence that the system is evolving in the right direction. This technique was pioneered by Ian Smith in Rhodesia: the planned "internal agreement" was presented as "majority rule" before it had even been negotiated or discussed; plans or proposals were thus made to appear as important overt acts.

The South Africans will, also, rely less

on buying massive coverage in newspapers and other media than on quietly influencing those they consider to be their friends. The policies of the Conservative Party in opposition – and in particular the line taken by that Party in the House of Commons debate in December 1978 – was heavily influenced by the briefing provided by the UK-South Africa Trade Association. Members of Parliament are invited on visits: the present Attorney-General in Mrs Thatcher's government, Sir Michael Havers, went on one such visit to Namibia, at the time of the "internal" elections in 1978. Sir Trevor Lloyd-Hughes, who was Press Secretary to Harold Wilson from 1964-69 and Chief Information Adviser to the Labour Government from 1969-70, has a public relations contract with the Turnhalle internal administration of Namibia. In April 1981 a Parliamentary "all-party group on Namibia" was set up under the Chairmanship of Nicholas Winterton MP and with two Labour MPs, Ben Ford and Ray Fletcher, as members. There were reports in mid-1981 that Lloyd-Hughes had been paid a "six-figure sum" for his efforts.

The Challenge to Britain

As recently as ten years ago, there seemed to be a clear dichotomy between principles and expediency in considering approaches towards British relations with South Africa. The moral arguments have not changed. Indeed as freedoms have been progressively eroded with the introduction of draconian "anti-terrorist" and "anti-communist" legislation, and as South Africa has become more and more a fortress embattled in the defence of white power and privilege, the moral arguments against a close involvement with that country have, if anything, become more compelling.

As for the "pragmatic" arguments, while Anglo-South African trade continues to be profitable, it is no longer as important for the British economy as it once was. As Nigeria (and other states in Africa and the Middle East) move decisively ahead of South Africa as Britain's most important clients, it is becoming increasingly clear that, under certain political circumstances, the trade relationship with South Africa might prove to be incompatible with the relationship with black Africa.

"The experience of Iran has shown what can happen when wishful thinking rather than serious analysis determines the behaviour of businessmen."

The experience of Iran has shown what can happen when wishful thinking rather than serious analysis determines the behaviour of businessmen. The Exports Credits Guarantee Department paid out £264 million in claims to exporters in the year ending 31 March 1980 – nearly double the 1979 level of £134 million, and for the first time had to draw on its reserves. £140 million of the payouts arose from the Iranian revolution. South Africa might well offer a similar scenario. Exporters and investors ought therefore to be questioning the prudence of over-exposure in a market and in an economy in which the risks of major disruption – either through internal unrest and insurrection or through the imposition of international sanctions – must, on any reckoning, be high.

In other words, despite all the propaganda to the contrary, principles and expediency now both point in the same direction. Whitehall concluded in 1978 that British overexposure in South Africa is dangerous. So the first need is to establish beyond any doubt that Britain's interest

does not lie in continuing to underwrite apartheid. No matter what degree of dependence on the South African market the South Africans may be trying to contrive for Britain at a time of recession and unemployment (a powerful South African trade mission visited Britain in October 1980) no one must be under any illusion that the South African political system is based on unacceptable principles, and that Britain's involvement with that system is bad business in terms of Britain's overall economy and world relations.

But recognition of these facts – at present limited to a relatively small number of Whitehall strategists – will not of itself change anything. Difficult facts remain. The most glaring of these is that, through shared history and because of massive British emigration to South Africa, many people in both countries feel a common bond. If South Africa were miraculously to throw off the apartheid system and install overnight a more equitable and just society, Britain and the Commonwealth would certainly wish to have the closest possible relations with her. Though politically a liability now, a democratic and

economically strong South Africa would be a formidable ally in Africa.

Simply to condemn South Africa's whites without taking concrete measures to help them change their society is to ignore the past history of British involvement in South Africa. The challenge is to use those past links constructively by offering white South Africa friendship on one condition – that it genuinely wishes to enter a partnership to dismantle apartheid.

It is not inconceivable that the Conservative Government in London will oppose the tide. They have already used the UN veto against mandatory sanctions and thereby allow those whose trade with South Africa is expanding fastest – Germany and the United States – to shelter behind them. But a different government – far less beholden economically to South Africa than the UK-South Africa Trade Association and its allies would have us believe – could take radical measures. The orchestrated outcry would be great, and many politicians would be tempted to refer to the dangers of electoral unpopularity, but it could be done.

6. *Conclusion*

The fate of South Africa is likely to be sealed within the next ten years. No-one should be under any illusion that by acting now we can pre-empt violence and bitterness; it is becoming increasingly difficult to imagine that a non-racial and democratic state could now emerge peacefully after the removal of exclusive white power. As we have seen in Iran, one tyranny breeds another. The outcome in South Africa is unlikely to be one which will meet with the wholehearted approval of Western socialists and social democrats.

A major change in Britain's relationship with South Africa is long overdue. There are good economic reasons for accelerating the process of economic disengagement from South Africa. But there are above all strong political reasons for a change of policy. To end up supporting racist rule would immensely damage Britain's standing in the world, besides destroying any moral basis for the multiracial society at home.

The success, after many years of frustration and violence, of the transition to majority rule and independence in Zimbabwe has strengthened the case for Namibian independence and for a negotiated sharing of power in South Africa. By excluding blacks from meaningful political power, and then attacking those who take up arms against their oppressors as Marxist terrorists, the South African authorities have to some extent succeeded in preventing serious discussion in the West about the various black political groups competing for power in a future non-racial South Africa. One of the objects of this pamphlet is to present the facts about black South African politics.

Policy towards the liberation movements

The survey in chapter 3 of representative black movements has shown that political divisions among South African blacks are complex. Partly due to the success of apartheid's "divide and rule" policies, and partly due to the highly politicised nature of black society, it is impossible to identify one unifying movement. Black political constituencies are as varied and as polycentred as they are in any country with a variety of experience and access to education. Only by the authoritarian device of defining a pseudo-objective standard for the "true interests of the people" could we

select and support one of the movements.

It is never the business of outside supporters of a liberation process to define the outcome of that process. We have no right to tell the South African people, black or white, who we think best represents them or their interests, now or for the future. If we begin to do that, we will certainly risk allowing our own interests to become involved in the calculation. The leadership of existing political movements were all elected on a limited franchise, many of them a long time ago. This is not their fault – they operate without the benefit of conditions allowing for such elections. But it must influence our action.

Even the best political analysis from outside cannot accurately assess the aspirations of the majority in an authoritarian system – let alone of the minorities or subgroups within the majority. If the outside world had opted to choose one of the Zimbabwe liberation movements as "solely representative" of its people, it is practically certain that the final outcome would have been seriously distorted. There was a time when Bishop Muzorewa, apparently working to the script of Joshua Nkomo, then in prison, might have been so chosen. There was never a time when Robert Mugabe would have been selected as clearly most representative – despite the fact that his guerrillas were acknowledged as taking the major brunt of the fighting. Only free and fair elections in Zimbabwe established his party's dominance. Had the outside world, *in the interests of its own ease of operation*, chosen a political movement through which to channel all support, the people of Zimbabwe might well have felt cheated – and with justification. That mistake must be avoided also in relation to South Africa. Britain must therefore show courage and have the stamina to adopt the harder role of exercising its own judgement as the struggle develops on how best to support the liberation process as a whole. Organisations in Britain must therefore

examine and respond to requests for help from all races as they arise. Support for black trade unions is one obvious example.

In the years to come both the range of activities and the amount of support asked for will increase and multiply, both from within South Africa and from the external movements. It may also become more difficult to infiltrate support to the Republic itself, as the South African government closes off legitimate channels. Ingenuity, as well as commitment and judgement, will be called for. But if we want to help, and if we are convinced these are the channels to use, we will find the ways.

Hard as it may be, we in Britain cannot escape recognising that we have a role to play *vis-a-vis* both the white South African establishment and the black challenge. Both call for a sophisticated approach, because both segments contain many centres of power, opinion and movement. A simplistic approach to either will distort and worsen political conflicts in South Africa and undermine Britain's long-term interests there. There is no escape from the process of exercising fine judgement while constantly updating our understanding of the shifts that occur in a polycentric society.

The British attitude to economic sanctions

There is only one issue of principle over disengagement: whether the United Kingdom should take the initiative in this field, or merely co-operate in a wider international approach. In the former case, the economic costs and benefits are finely balanced but the balance of advantage is likely to move in favour of positive action over time. In the latter, the benefits massively outweigh the cost. Britain should therefore be prepared to participate in an international programme of sanctions against South Africa.

Disengagement from the South African economy has already taken place to a substantial extent. It is possible to take it further at little or no net cost to the United Kingdom (under some circumstances, a positive gain is likely). However, disengagement is unlikely in itself to force political change. Its effects would be largely psychological and thus indirect on the political scene. International sanctions should be designed to be relatively easy to police. Oil is one option, which would have the effect of destroying South Africa's coal export trade (largely to the advantage of Australia and the United Kingdom). Mechanisms exist for restraining exports of various kinds of sophisticated machinery – arising both from the Cold War and from non-proliferation agreements. For such goods, production and quality assurance systems would enable external monitoring at very little cost. But no system of sanctions would provide more than an irritant to the South Africans. It will be internal forces that are decisive.

The need for political courage

The South African authorities have perceived, correctly, that the politicians in this and other Western countries think that their electorates favour white South Africa. We believe that public opinion in this country has a clear idea of the racialism and intolerance of the South African state, and that in this respect the politicians are behind public opinion. But South Africa will continue to do all it can to bolster the assumptions of the politicians and to offer them excuses and pretexts for continuing to prevaricate on such subjects as the ending of apartheid, or the transition of Namibia to independence. It is therefore vital that the facts about South Africa be brought home to British opinion and that those who understand the need for change should speak out clearly. Edward Heath

should be congratulated for his courageous call for "one man, one vote" during his visit to South Africa in September 1981.

Action for a future British government

A change of policy along the following lines is needed:

The British Government should make a statement formally stating that British investors in South Africa do so at their own risk, and announcing that, because the risk of social and economic disruption in South Africa is high, it is reviewing the policy of the Export Credits Guarantee Corporation towards the country.

According to press reports in 1980, 33 British companies were employing 2,000 Africans at below subsistence level. More will, therefore, have to be done to give the EEC Code of Conduct (governing conditions for African employees of EEC companies in South Africa) more teeth.

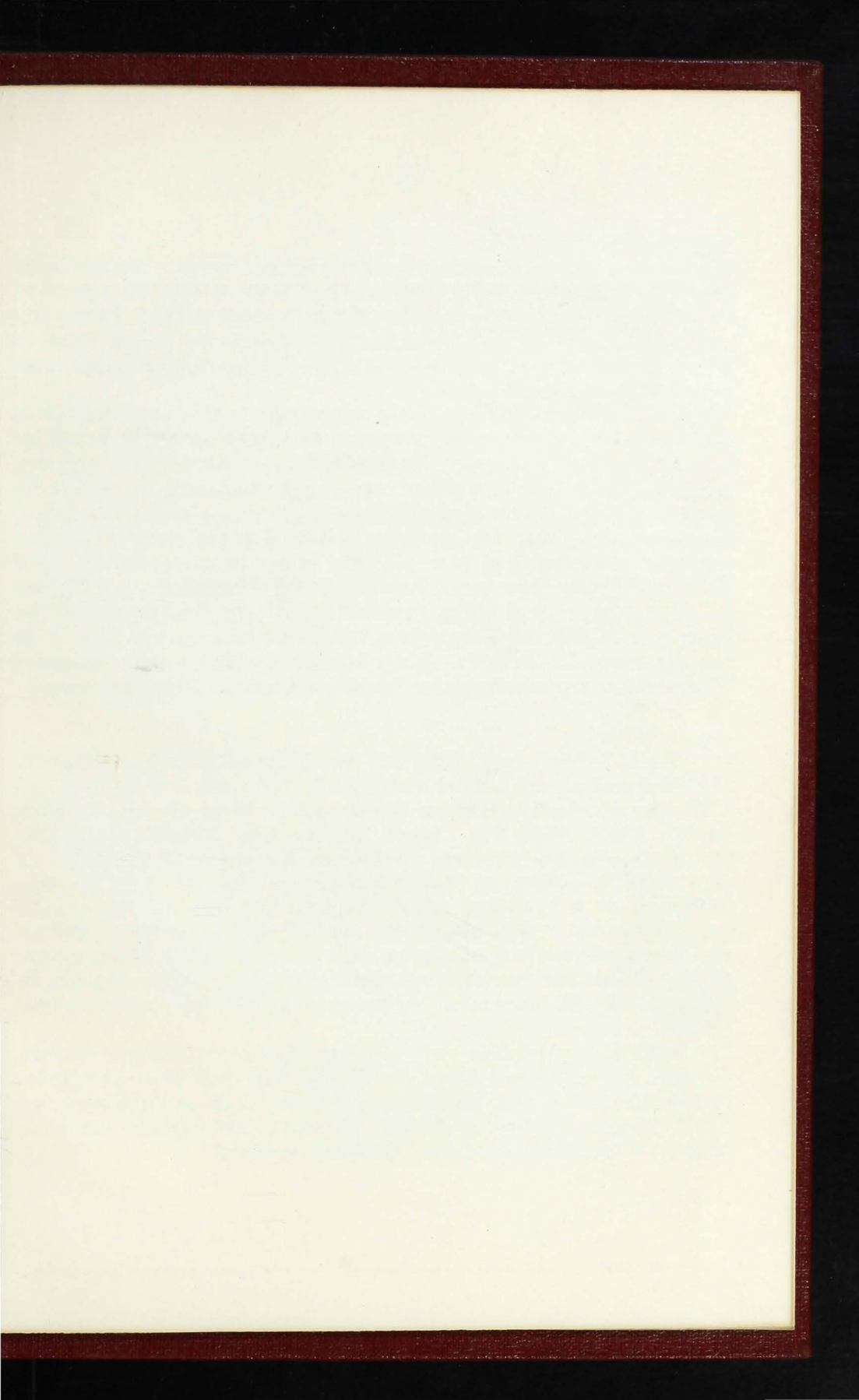
Government support for trade missions to South Africa should be terminated.

The work of the British Council and other bodies in making scholarships available for South African blacks and Coloureds should be expanded, and non-white South Africans, either from South Africa or as refugees, should be brought to Britain on scholarships in far larger numbers.

Relations between British and South African police forces should be very strictly limited to avoid collaboration in political repression.

Britain should follow the French in giving clear backing to the South African Development Co-ordinating Conference, an organisation of "front-line states" set up to promote regional infrastructure projects designed to lessen dependence on South Africa.

The British Government should issue a formal statement advising British citizens against emigrating to South Africa and should consider legislation against the recruitment of mercenaries in this country.



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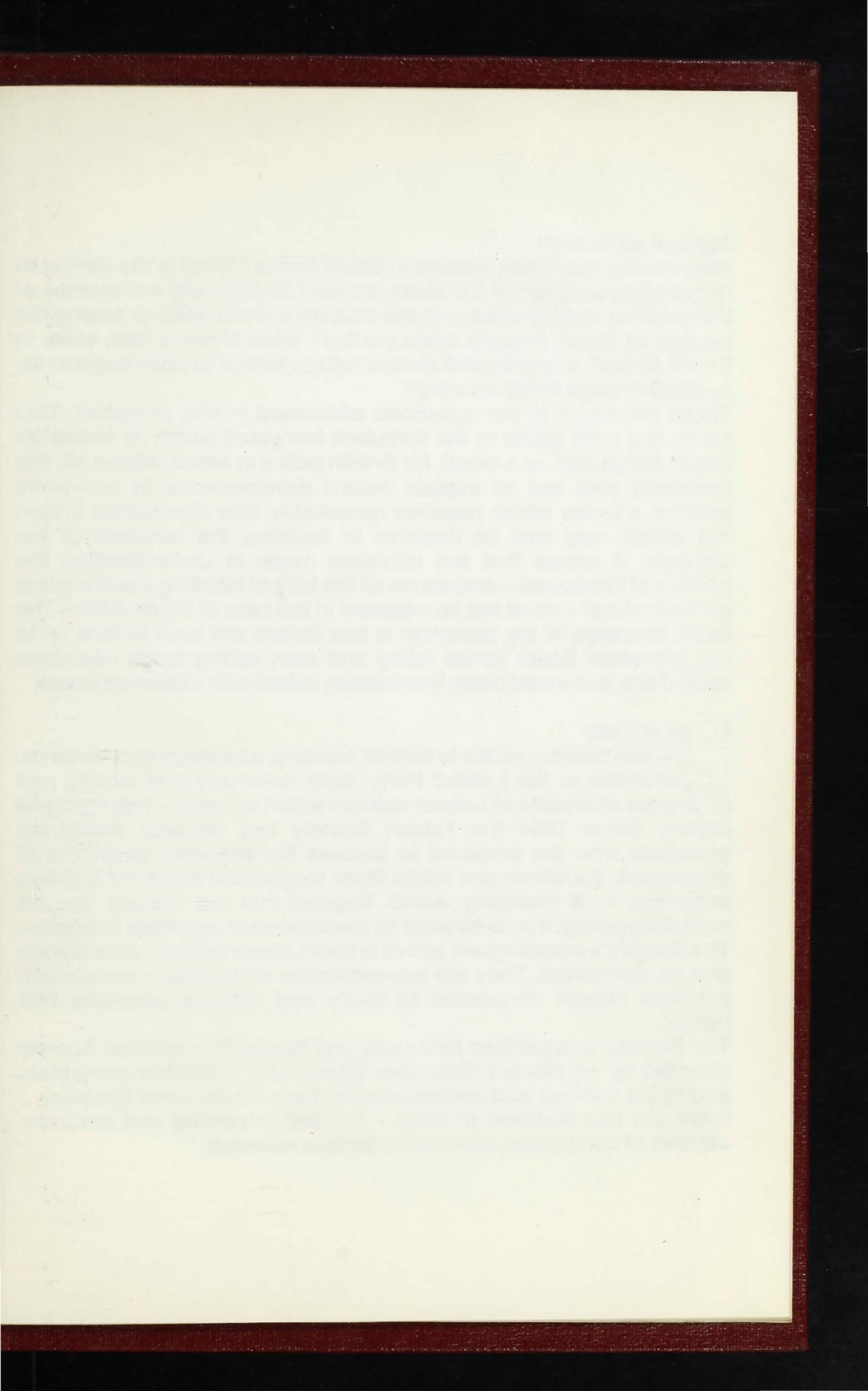
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Against all Reason

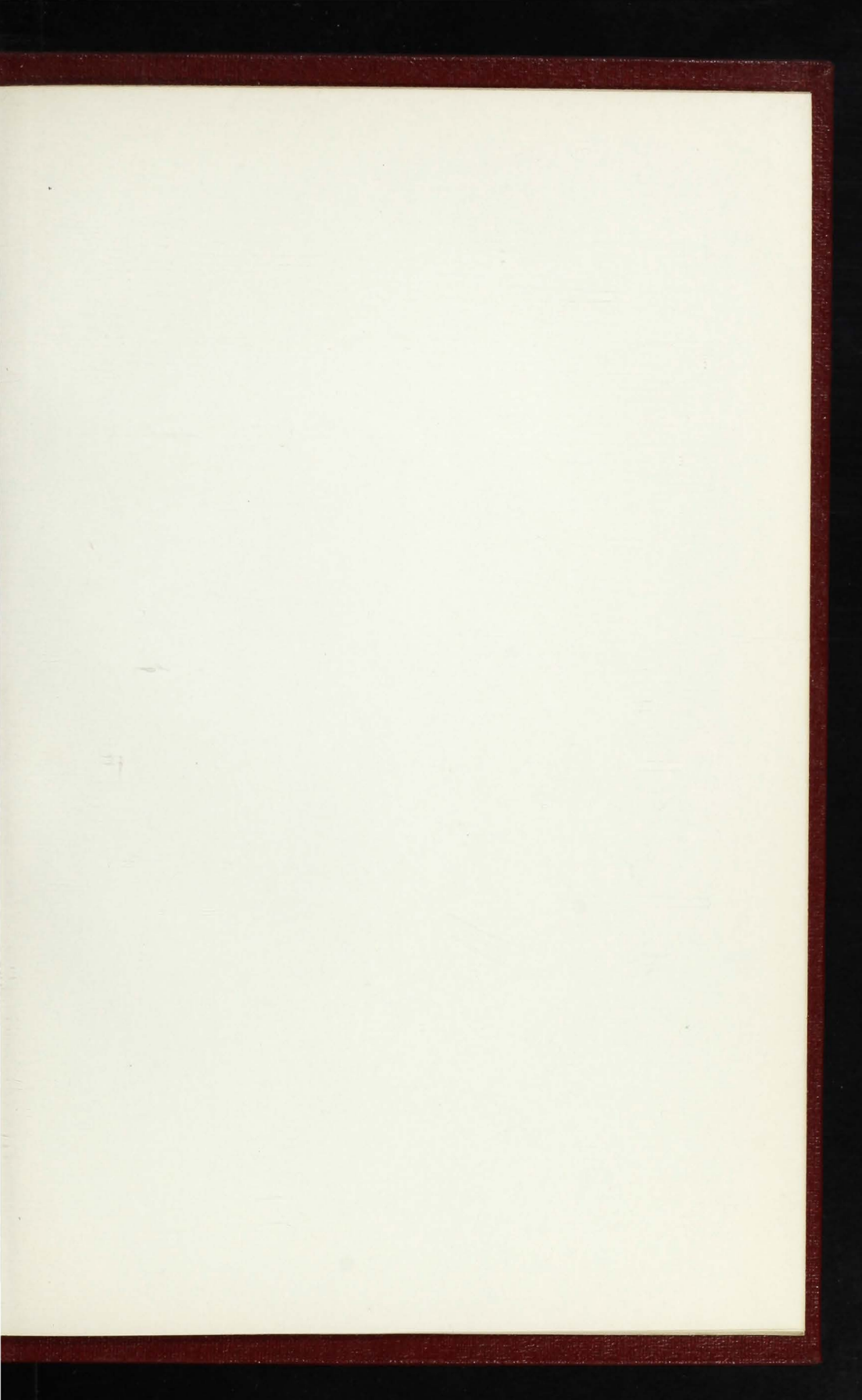
Who are the real black leaders in South Africa? What is the minimum negotiating position of the black parties? Is there any acceptance of the need for radical change in the country's racial policies among the leaders of South Africa's white parties? What is the British stake in South Africa? At what point should Britain switch to open support for political change in the country?

These are some of the questions addressed in this pamphlet. This study is a brief guide to the turbulent few years which lie ahead for South Africa and, as a result, for British policy in Africa. Above all, this pamphlet sets out to explain recent developments in non-white politics, a factor which receives remarkably little attention in Britain but which may well be decisive in deciding the outcome of the struggle. It warns that the mistakes made in understanding the politics of Zimbabwe – and above all the folly of labelling black leaders as “terrorists” – must not be repeated in the case of South Africa. The basic message of the pamphlet is that Britain will have to face up to the pro-white South Africa lobby and start taking tough decisions soon if she is to avoid being inextricably linked with a doomed cause.

fabian society

The Fabian Society exists to further socialist education and research. It is affiliated to the Labour Party, both nationally and locally, and embraces all shades of Labour opinion within its ranks – left, right and centre. Since 1884 the Fabian Society has enrolled thoughtful socialists who are prepared to discuss the essential questions of democratic socialism and relate them to practical plans for building socialism in a changing world. Beyond this the Society has no collective policy. It puts forward no resolutions of a political character. The Society's members are active in their Labour parties, trade unions and co-operatives. They are representative of the labour movement, practical people concerned to study and discuss problems that matter.

The Society is organised nationally and locally. The national Society directed by an elected Executive Committee, publishes pamphlets and holds schools and conferences of many kinds. Local Societies – there are one hundred of them – are self governing and are lively centres of discussion and also undertake research.



Section of Report

The first part of the report deals with the general principles of the subject and the methods used in the investigation. It is divided into two main sections, the first of which deals with the theory and the second with the practice.

The second part of the report deals with the results of the investigation. It is divided into two main sections, the first of which deals with the theory and the second with the practice. The results are presented in a series of tables and diagrams, which are explained in detail in the text.

Section of Report

The third part of the report deals with the conclusions drawn from the investigation. It is divided into two main sections, the first of which deals with the theory and the second with the practice. The conclusions are presented in a series of tables and diagrams, which are explained in detail in the text.

The fourth part of the report deals with the recommendations made for further work. It is divided into two main sections, the first of which deals with the theory and the second with the practice. The recommendations are presented in a series of tables and diagrams, which are explained in detail in the text.

