

in *The Spectator* by Auberon Waugh on July 18, 1988, who said that the elite are elite and rich because they are more intelligent than everyone else). But, on the other side, a visit to Liverpool, or Hull or South Wales, or a walk around Depford in South London convincingly shows that there is another country that is both plundered and ignored by the avaricious, that this is the country where the real culture is created. The new bourgeoisie of Thatcher's world are not the producers of culture: they are the consumers, transmitters, policemen. They create nothing but money. What art they dislike, they shut out. There has not been one single opera, novel, collection of stories, film, TV programme, rock group created by this class which has lasted beyond its first run (unless *Evita* and *The Phantom of the Opera* are seen as celebrations of Thatcherdom).

So what is the hope now? Stuart Hall has said repeatedly over the past two or three years that we are in for the long haul. But that presumably means the long haul if we are to win. Win what? The deep pessimism of the British left is based, I think, on the sense that it has worked hard to change governments and that clearly with the Thatcher dominion it has failed. But if Thatcherism has done nothing else, it has torn away the illusions of the left that nationalization represented socialism or that the "masses" reflected a homogeneous and potentially victorious collective. By showing the radical centralizing focus of the right, Thatcher has compelled the left to rethink itself as the decentred politics of "winning" the here and now where politics really matters: in the institutions where we work, in sexuality and gender, in racial encounters, in the practical knowledge of negotiating ourselves through the make-work technologists who would define our daily lives (doctors, lawyers, accountants) and in learning to make sense of the codes that impose themselves from the media, "politics," religion. The over-arching politics is, of course, not with Thatcher, but with the multinationals, nuclear energy, electronics, international migration, the depopulation/deforestation of the countryside and plundering of the sea, the super-importance of the money-market. Pessimism is based on not understanding these processes. The responsible politics is that of Foucault, not a sclerotic Marx, of Victor Serge and Rosa Luxemburg, not Lenin, of (in the British context) Mary Shelley, not Robert Owen. At this point it is not a question of winning, but of struggle.

Thus a few gleanings from a visit around the sites

of what the British left might think of as cultural wreckage, but which I would like to think of as the habitus of a space that we would all like to inhabit. On these the counter-hegemonies are being built. First, but not least, *Marxism Today*, not censored by the Communist Party as I mistakenly predicted in *Border/Lines* 11, a vibrant journal which marks the ultimate dynamic between theory and practice. Second, the cultural life of London, in spite of Thatcher, is assertive, politically creative: the boroughs and the people that provided the basis for the GLC's power are still there, doing the things for which the GLC was created: Battersea, Islington, Camden, Greenwich (the last report of the *Greater London Arts Council Quarterly* is replete with action and counter-action. *Time Out* and *City Limits* will give anyone the information they need: London cultural life is not based on the so-called West-End, which barely exists anymore, having been chewed up by those impresarios who only cater to tourists and the lure of Broadway, Ed Mirvish and the rich cultural morons). Four Black film collectives, a range of feminist and agit-prop theatres, a range of music which includes perhaps the best collection of African music anywhere in the world, and a self-critical awareness in the fine arts which is unrivalled anywhere. Academically, two centres which we thought were threatened, the Birmingham Centre and Ernesto Laclau's graduate work on the study of discourse at Essex, are now fully-fledged University departments. Although *m/f* may have closed, *Feminist Theory*, a host of other feminist journals, *Virago Press* flourish. And there is, of course, the Virago Workshop, *New Left Review* with its Verso publishing house, and a large selection of music magazines some of which display the very essence of cultural opposition.

What Thatcher attempted was to destroy what she thought were the institutional pillars of a socialist tradition. Instead she has provided the opportunity for that tradition to sharpen its stance, becoming more affirmative in new terms. If radical culture in Britain now adopts something of a *samizdat* status, it also shows a dynamism that is shorn of any vestiges of co-optation. Thatcherism has toughened the cultural grounds of opposition.

Ioan Davies is a member of the Border/Lines collective.

Targeting Canada: Apartheid's Friends on the Offensive

David Galbraith

A video tape distributed to all Canadian MPs; a full page ad in a Calgary newspaper during the Olympics; a series of small public meetings in the Maritimes. Each by itself might be merely another in the seemingly endless barrage of apartheid propaganda which opponents of apartheid have been confronting for years. But cumulatively a more sinister pattern can be discerned: we seem to be

in the midst of a much more coherent initiative to influence key sectors of Canadian public opinion by the South African government and its local supporters than we have witnessed for some time.

Journalistic Sleaze from Washington to Worthington

The centrepiece of the new order of apartheid apolo-

gias is the video "The ANC Method: Violence," allegedly written and directed by the well-known right wing press hack and sometime Tory candidate Peter Worthington. Its timing could hardly have been more carefully contrived. The day before Oliver Tambo's long awaited visit to Ottawa, copies of the tape, and an accompanying booklet, were delivered to all federal MPs. Moreover, its release also coincided with a major series of newspaper ads run by the South African embassy, which were explicitly directed against the Tambo visit (see, eg. *Globe and Mail*, Aug. 28, 1987).

Tambo's reception in Ottawa suggests that this campaign was not entirely ineffective. Many observers were caught off-guard by the chilly climate of his discussions with Clark and Mulroney (see *SAR*, III, 2). Mulroney's earlier visit to the front-line states had, after all, led some to expect that Tambo would receive a rather sympathetic hearing. Instead, he was subjected to a series of tired homilies on "violence" and "communism."

That these are precisely the themes of the video is obviously more than coincidental. The video attempts, with single-minded, almost obsessive insistence, to assimilate the ANC to the twin spectres of "international communism," and its correlative, "terrorism." We are warned at the beginning that "[t]he following video contains material which may offend sensitive viewers." And it would be hard to find anyone who could watch without horror the gruesome sequences of "necklace" killings (igniting a tire round someone's neck), with the tape displays a ghoul's fascination. This is, then, the central rhetorical device of the tape: to equate opposition to the Pretoria regime, from the ANC, the UDF, the churches, and the international community, with a defence of the most shocking violence.

But what of the South African state and its violence, its terror, its denial of the most elementary human rights to its citizens? All of this remains literally invisible, if only because, for Worthington and his backers, apartheid itself no longer exists. "Nothing can justify the inhumanities of apartheid, as it existed, before the process of dismantling it began, or in fact justify the few remaining semblances of it in South African society today" the package piously announces. Apartheid, we're repeatedly assured, has been transformed: to continue to demand sanctions or to call for the release of detainees is merely to be duped by a conspiracy to bring an otherwise peaceful and progressive society under the control of "communism."

But it would be overstating the case to argue that the video was, by itself, responsible for the rather frosty tone of Tambo's reception in Ottawa. The ground had been prepared in advance. Michael Valpy commented recently on the relative success of the South African initiative to delegitimize the ANC among some sections of the Canadian public (*Globe and Mail*, March 5, 1988). Although welcome, Valpy's concerns emerged a bit late in the game, particularly in light of the *Globe's* earlier editorial enthusiasm for Gatsha Buthelezi as "the best hope, if not the only hope, for the emergence of a moderate black leadership from the ashes of apartheid" (in a Dec. 11, 1986 editorial headed "For Chief Buthelezi"!"). As for the Tory right wing, to whom Mulroney and Clark were, in no small measure, responding, they had been primed by even less sophisticated appeals to

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The ANC has more representation in Soviet Front Organisations than any of the other terrorist organisations in the world.

The ANC and the Communist International

Since World War II, the ANC has been closely interlocked with a host of Soviet controlled front organisations, spawned by the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Some examples include the following . . .

- The South African Congress of the Trade Unions (SACTU) the ANC's labour wing, affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in 1953.
- The ANC's women's wing, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), is an affiliate to the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).
- The ANC Youth League is an affiliate to both the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students based in Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- ANC President Oliver Tambo – member of the Helsinki based World Peace Council (WPC).
- Alfred Nzo, ANC Secretary General – a vice president of both the WPC and the Afro Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO).
- Denis Sibeko – member of the WFDY secretariat.
- Ruth Mompati, ANC executive member – a former vice president of the Women's International Democratic Federation.
- Susan Mnumzana – member of the WIDF secretariat.
- Dan Cindi – member of the AAPSO secretariat.

Vietnamese ties

The ANC and the Vietnamese Communist Party have had close ideological ties that go back to the Vietnam War. According to the ANC publication *Sechaba* (January 1987), a high level ANC delegation headed by Oliver Tambo went on a study tour of Vietnam in 1978. In their words, they "wanted to make a detailed examination of the methods that were used by the legendary Vietnamese people in their victorious war against French and later U.S. forces." The ANC had discussions with military leaders including generals Vo Nguen Giap and Van Tien Dung who led the Vietnamese revolution. Summing up the trip the ANC publication *Sechaba* stated that "their (the Vietnamese) experience will forever enrich the living revolutionary tradition of struggle in South Africa. This trip to Vietnam was historic, as subsequent decisions of our national executive was to prove".

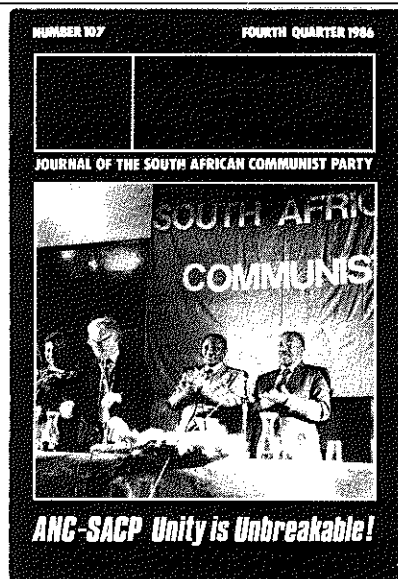
"I do not believe it (The ANC) is a Communist Organization and I do not believe it is an organization controlled by communists."

External Affairs Minister Mr Joe Clark after meeting with Alfred Nzo – ANC Sec. Gen.

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

CONTROL OF THE A.N.C.

- "The ANC has been so thoroughly infiltrated by the SACP that the two are virtually synonymous."
— Jillian Becker, foremost British expert on International terrorism.
- "No major decision could be taken by the ANC without the concurrence and approval of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party. Most major developments were in fact initiated by the Central Committee".
— B. Hlapane, former SACP member giving evidence to the US Senate Sub-committee on Security and Terrorism in 1982.
- The Soviet strategy "to gain control of South Africa has three basic elements. (1) The conquest of South Africa by the national liberation movement known as the ANC. (2) The control of the ANC by the SACP; and (3) The control of the SACP by the Soviet Union . . .
— Yusef Dadoo, former SACP Chairman (*World Marxist Review*, December 1982).



A sample page from an anti-African National Congress publication. Their message is remarkably simple: the struggle against apartheid is a communist-led plot.

visceral anti-communism from commentators such as the *Toronto Sun's* noxious Bob MacDonald, who sometimes seemed simply to insert his own picture atop embassy press releases.

Other recent Canadian propaganda initiatives can be more directly tied to the South African government. During the Calgary Olympics, for example, a full page ad appeared in the *Calgary Herald* (Feb. 20, 1988) over the name of the London-based "Freedom in Sport," calling for the reinstatement of South Africa in the Olympics, and petulantly whining "How much longer must world class South African athletes remain pawns of politicians?" Gordon Legge, an

enterprising *Herald* journalist, was able to demonstrate that the ad had, in fact, been placed by an employee of the South Africa Press Office, whose claims to be acting on his own initiative were lame, even by the usual standards of arms length deniability (see *Calgary Herald*, Feb. 21 and 23, 1988).

This episode suggests an almost comic level of incompetence. But more sinister, particularly in light of recent events, was the false pamphlet recently mailed to a number of Canadian solidarity groups and subsequently exposed by the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa. This document purports to emanate from the Dependants' Conference of the South African

Council of Churches, and, indeed, closely resembles in appearance legitimate materials issued by that body. However, this forgery endorses violence and "necklace" killings, and goes so far as to suggest that donations to the Conference might provide "pocket money for purchasing petrol bombs, tyres for necklaces, [and] sjamboks for People's Courts."

"They're Back": Pretoria's Maple Leafs

What is new in this campaign is the evident importance which the regime attaches to Canada in its propaganda war. In the past, we had been relatively marginal; the real action was going on in London and in Washington. In both of these capitals, South Africa dealt with governments which it could assume would be relatively sympathetic to its agendas. In addition, it had a well-organized network of lobbyists and friends in place, through its carefully orchestrated contacts with the extreme, but nonetheless influential right. In the heady early years of Reagan and Thatcher, Canada got somewhat lost in the shuffle.

In hindsight, the appointment of Glenn Babb as ambassador underlined the heightened importance of Canada in Pretoria's calculations. Babb adopted an aggressively high profile strategy. In the 1985-early '86 period, this consisted in the main of maudlin appeals to "free speech," in the interests of hearing "all points of view." But with the relative success of the Emergency in removing South Africa from network visibility, greater opportunities became available to contest the political terrain. It was in this context that the themes of "black on black violence," "terrorism" and its corollary, "communism," and the promise of "reform" were pushed into the foreground.

Babb himself became probably the most prominent foreign diplomat in the country, especially around his visit to the Peguis Indian Reserve in Manitoba. Although the Canadian impact of this gesture was blunted by the effective response of the Assembly of First Nations and other native spokespeople, it received massive publicity, both in Canada and in South Africa itself. But within Canada, the embassy was less successful in recruiting local skills of Babb's ability. They were forced to fall back on a series of older contacts, whose marginality from the political mainstream reflected, in no small measure, the absence of a highly organized right wing infrastructure in Canada. True, the *Toronto Sun* could be counted on to rise to the occasion out of genuine ideological enthusiasm, but its political weight is less than that of its American or British counterparts.

Why Us?

But why should the South Africans suddenly be so concerned about Canada? The answer probably lies in the increasingly prominent role which Canada has assumed in recent years in international debate around apartheid. Although the solidarity movement has frequently criticized the limitations and the contradictions in the Canadian government's policies on this issue, it remains nonetheless clear that Pretoria regards even these limited responses with concern, particularly when they are compared to the more friendly winds blowing from London and Washington. While it's unlikely that the South African government believes it possible to reverse completely these measures, it clearly believes that a more aggressive propaganda campaign can both inhibit their further expansion, and undermine any possible Canadian

movement towards support or recognition of the ANC.

In order to achieve these goals, specific constituencies have been targeted for attention. Within the business community, the South Africans will probably attempt to undermine the effect of the sanctions campaign by working in cooperation with such right wing organizations as the Fraser Institute to promote the view that sanctions are both ineffective and harmful, and that they inhibit the already existing "reform" policies of the state.

In the more public spheres of Canadian political life, the regime and its supporters will emphasize its "reform" initiatives, and attempt to link any opposition, be it from the ANC or the churches, to the twin shibboleths of "terrorism" and "communism." Here, for the moment, they are likely to target the Conservative Party itself, and its political constituencies, in order to keep up pressure on Mulroney and Clark. This apparent targeting of opinion leaders in smaller communities with substantial Tory support is the most probable explanation for the recent upsurge in pro-apartheid meetings and submissions to local newspapers in the Maritimes (see *What's the Word*, Feb., 1988). As if to underline the point, Glenn Babb's final speaking engagement in Canada was to have been in Sept Isles, the centre of Mulroney's own

constituency, a ploy blocked only by the vigorous response of local trade unionists. Some aspects of this orientation could well change, however, depending on the outcome of the anticipated federal election campaign.

More recently, the issue of media manipulation was central to the meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers, held in Toronto at the beginning of August. In an attempt to deflect attention from renewed demands for tougher sanctions, External Affairs hired consultants to organize an anti-apartheid cultural festival, took out full page ads in newspapers, and pushed questions of censorship and propaganda to the head of the agenda in meetings of the ministers. None of this was very successful in its primary purpose — to convey the impression of activity without undertaking new commitments to further isolate Pretoria. But it did prompt a round of ads from the Embassy and a boast from De Klerk, Babb's successor, of his success in influencing the Tory caucus.

In the future, other groups with consistent anti-apartheid records, such as Canadian churches, may well find themselves on the receiving end of propaganda campaigns of varying sophistication, as augured by the forged South African Council of Churches pamphlet. We shouldn't rule out the possibility that apartheid's defenders will strive to ex-

plot already existing divisions within the churches over a wide spectrum of questions concerning social policy to their own advantage.

What should be clear is that the apartheid regime believes that the State of Emergency has opened up a window of opportunity for it to begin to influence the terrain on which discussion takes place and policy is formed. Clearly, it will not simply seek to "defend" apartheid. That option was written off long ago, except in relation to the most marginal constituencies. Instead, it will continually stress its commitment to "reform." How far it will succeed in this object will depend on a series of factors. Although Canadian opponents of apartheid cannot directly influence the course of events within South Africa, which is, of course, ultimately where these questions will be answered, we can, and should be prepared to respond more aggressively and with greater sophistication to what is, in certain respects, a new situation.

David Galbraith is a Toronto-based graduate student and a member of the Southern African Report collective.

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l e t t e r s

Dear Editors:

I'm writing in response to the bold-type preface to Ingrid Mayrhofer's essay on Nicaraguan pre-Revolutionary art (Fall/Winter 87/88). The editor starts off by announcing:

Several authors — for example, Judith Doyle in *Impulse* — have written of art in contemporary Nicaragua as if revolutionary practice emerges out of a timeless present. As this article indicates, the struggle for a people's art — indeed for any art — goes back to the origins of colonialism...

The snipe is signed "I.D." — Ioan Davies, I presume. If Ioan Davies has actually read the "Culture of Nicaragua" issue of *Impulse* which I edited in 1984, he could hardly have failed to notice that it consisted *entirely* of writing and artworks by Nicaraguan authors and artists: poetry, fiction, critical essays, interviews, drawings and photographs. My only contribution to it as a writer was a half-page introduction in which I said that "We are publishing Nicaraguan work rather than second-hand reports to give a more direct view of the new culture in Nicaragua, following the long dictatorship." The issue included many pre-revolutionary texts by, amongst others, Ruben Dario (who died in 1916), a 1929 short story by Augusto Sandino, and a poem by Leonel Rugama, who died during the insurrectional war. I mention only three names cited in Ingrid Mayrhofer's essay. There are

many more. The issue includes detailed biographical notes for each contributor. An essay by Rosarilo Murillo and an interview with Sergio Ramirez provide historical perspectives on Nicaraguan culture.

The issue is not (and never claimed to be) comprehensive, but myself and my co-editors Jorge Lozano and Adriana Angel spent months in both Nicaragua and Canada, finding, compiling, selecting and translating texts which were previously unavailable in English. Art Director Carolyn White won two international awards for her intelligent design, working entirely with Nicaraguan original artworks. It was a unique project for a Toronto art magazine to undertake, conceived to complement essays like Ingrid Mayrhofer's by providing access to artists' production.

I'm particularly irritated by Ioan Davies' misrepresentation of the Nicaragua issue of *Impulse* because it is out of print and it is therefore rather difficult for the readers of *Border/Lines* to judge the matter for themselves. I've enclosed a copy for the Editorial Board to take a look at. I'm sorry I can't do the same for your readers. I think they'd find it of interest.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Doyle

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