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### **International relations and the pleasures of philosophy**

The discipline of international relations in South Africa, with a few notable exceptions, reflects the inadequacies of orthodox theory and practice that characterise much of local scholarship. Orthodox balance of power theories and a concern with international law in particular, coupled with a tendency to divorce the discipline from major global developments such as a changing world political economy, make for a surprisingly narrow theoretical base.

A matter of profound sadness is that much of local scholarship proceeds without any philosophical underpinning. While the study of philosophy does not offer a panacea of itself, it can at least identify and analyse the criteria whereby claims to absolute truth can be judged. Without such reflection, one cannot be certain just what underlies any discussion of the world system and its problems. For philosophy, in the words of Fred Frohock (1974:ix), is extremely useful 'to locate accurately what may really be at stake below the surface of an argument, and what it will take to reach an agreement if one is possible.'

It is both unthinkable and unrewarding to study international relations without the guiding light of philosophy, for politics by its very nature is about argument — an ongoing argument about differing conceptions of the future. Social and international relations are as much expressions of *ideas* as of reality, since they reflect power configurations.

Another fallacy that needs to be dispelled is that philosophical discourse and science are incompatible. Peter Winch (1960:2) points out that philosophy 'has no business to be anti-scientific'. It must, however, be on its guard against 'the extra-scientific pretensions of science'.

It is perhaps long overdue that we should be reminded that philosophy originally bore an all-inclusive meaning coexistent with that of science. From its classical beginnings, however, unlike science, 'the term philosophy implied a universalistic reference' (Brecht, 1959). Regrettably, this symbiotic relationship is recognised by few local scholars — although one recently made a lasting contribution to international relations scholarship with the publication of an eminently readable and lively work on normative theory and international relations.

Philosophy and history, supported by relevant scientific theory — bearing in mind that relevance itself is a philosophical matter — provide a most useful

avenue for a deeper understanding of issues such as international conflict, alliance formation, national character, and the behaviour of states and other actors in the international system. Thus, it is not a matter of either science or philosophy, but a matter of how *both* can be harnessed to the best advantage. After all, philosophy is to international relations what impressionism is to art—it provides a new pictorial language of stunning originality.

If these comments sound overly didactic, perhaps it should be explained that these observations are supported by initial findings of a research project for the International Studies Association on the state of the discipline of International Relations in South Africa, being undertaken by this Institute. We hope to communicate with scholars and students early in the New Year in furtherance of this research and wish to appeal for your co-operation and support in gathering material.

The contributions to this edition of the *Bulletin* address both domestic political and international issues. In the paper by Kruger and De Wit, the important issue of mineral laws and greater equity in a future South Africa is critically examined. Lourens and Kotzé cast an eye on the recently held white General Election of May 1987 and suggest an alternative interpretation. Chris Gregory explores the relationship between ideology and power politics in Soviet foreign policy, while Hauner examines the role of the Soviet Eurasian empire in the Indo-Persian Corridor, of particular interest in the light of the developing confrontation in the Gulf region.

André du Pisani  
Editor  
October 1987

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## Mineral Laws and Greater Equity in a Future South Africa

### Introduction

In the current speculations about the 'Post Apartheid' or 'New' South Africa, much of the debate is focused on social and political aspects. Scientists and technologists have much to offer in this arena, but their apparent 'apathy' is in part a result of the lack of a popular communication medium. This is very unfortunate and does the future of this country a disservice as, in many respects, South Africa is a rich modern industrial nation whose productivity is directly proportional to the quality and number of its scientists and technologists. This is especially true for earth scientists and mineral engineers as they are closely involved with the mining industry, which is (and will be in the future) the major provider of both jobs and foreign exchange (equivalent of R22 540 million in 1985; Minerals Bureau, 1986). New industrial development will also largely depend on the raw materials made available by this sector of the economy. The role of the earth scientist in South Africa is one of great responsibility as in a sense they are the 'caretakers' of South Africa's mineral wealth. Closely tied to this role is their moral obligation to assess critically the exploitation of the country's exhaustible resource endowment and, where possible, explore new avenues for improving the utilization of these resources, especially because of the inherent uncertainty of undiscovered mineral wealth.

There are two major legal factors that affect the rate of discovery and *future exploitation-management of new mineral deposits in South Africa*. These are (i) the current (inequitable) distribution of mineral rights, and (ii) the plethora of laws that govern these rights. The mineral laws are not uniform in two senses, first because different parts of the country have different regulations, and secondly because different commodities — precious metals, base metals, coal, oil, diamonds, and semi-precious stones — are subjected to different rules (see Coetzee, 1976 and Viljoen & Bosman, 1979 for overviews). It is often heard in South Africa that these regulations — very different from those elsewhere — are a burden rather than a help to explorationists. Clearly, these factors have to be analysed before contemplating the need for a new set of 'more equitable' laws that would govern and optimize mineral exploration and exploitation.

Compared to elsewhere in the world, South Africa is extraordinarily rich in *important* (strategic) mineral resources (for overviews see Van Rensburg & Pretorius, 1977; OECD, 1979; US Senate, 1980; House of Lords, 1982; and Andor, 1985 — the last-mentioned for a comprehensive bibliographic compilation of this subject). Furthermore, in this part of the world these minerals were originally exposed close to surface: the mineral industry in South Africa has had a head start purely because the early prospectors 'fell over' gold and diamonds. The undeniable economic success of the South African mineral development cannot therefore be entirely credited by potential advocates to its legal environment.

*Additionally*, South Africa can no longer be complacent about the all-important political stability factor to lure continued investment in the face of the foreign disinvestment campaign (see Jenkins, 1986) and ensure the continuation of a healthy mineral industry. With increasing scientific knowledge *and* political stabilization elsewhere (Australia, China, Brazil, Argentina, India and even perhaps Antarctica), there is likely to be an increase in the rate of discovery and development of mineral resources worldwide and consequently a switch from South Africa by mineral investors and markets. This unforeseen competition may yet plunge South Africa further into Third World status.

In this contribution we assume at the outset that it would not be in the country's interest to have a (new) law that might stifle mining initiatives or inhibit foreign participation. We also take the view that the mineral wealth is the common heritage of all the inhabitants of South Africa and should be exploited to their common benefit *and* with inter-generational equity.

*Restating the problem in brief:* Will a 'New' South Africa be able to optimize equitably its exhaustible resource exploitation for the present and future generations under the existing mineral laws?

### **Geological Factors and Scientific Mineral Exploration**

Mineral deposits are diverse in size and nature. They range from very small (*one-man shows*) to *extremely large* (requiring very large capital expenditure for economic exploitation). Further, large deposits may not be economic even though their volumes (tonnages) may be adequate: the concentrations of metals in the ores (grade) may be too low or the quality or nature of the ores may cause metallurgical problems during their processing and extraction, all of which may prevent economic exploitation. Small deposits on the other hand may be very profitable to a small operator as overheads may be low and grades or prices high.

Perusal of the two comprehensive compilations of Southern African ore deposits (Coetzee, 1976; Anhaeusser & Maske, 1986), shows that there is a large number of known but currently unexploited deposits (both very large and small) in the country. Some of these deposits may be exploitable under a

new dispensation. Many vital metals, e.g. tungsten (usually found as the mineral scheelite in rocks called 'skarns' produced where there has been a reaction between molten granite and limestone), often occur in small deposits — of the 'pick-and-shovel' variety — which may produce only a few kilograms of ore a day, and have reserves of one to twenty years at that rate of extraction. These small deposits may be a sideline to farming or other activities and not viable otherwise. Clearly, this would be unattractive for a large corporation or government enterprise. It is nevertheless vital that these deposits are mined: if they are not exploited, economic theory tells us that the total mineral resources of South Africa would not be optimally utilized (Dasgupta & Heal, 1979; Hartwick, 1983; Hartwick & Olewiler, 1986). Other examples include alluvial diamonds, small gold deposits, sillimanite, semi-precious stone, optical grade fluorite, good quality coal in Natal and the Cape, and the uranium and molybdenum deposits in the Karoo.

The value of mineral rights in an area is strongly *knowledge-and-time* dependent. For example, the Karoo rocks in the Cape contain a number of deposits (Stratten, 1986) including coal and uranium. The geology of the coal is described in detail by Christie (1986), and the following brief historical summary is culled from that work. The coal in the Molteno area was exploited in the years 1889 to 1948 and constituted a very important resource in the development of the Cape. However, the discovery of the larger and better coalfield in the Witbank area of the Transvaal led to the demise of the coal mining industry in the Cape, despite there being quite large reserves. What were initially valuable mineral rights are now uneconomic despite detailed reinvestigations. Nevertheless, this resource may become important with a change in the status quo.

Subsequently, the discovery of uranium in the Karoo rocks (by SOEKOR in its research drilling for oil in 1967) led to extensive prospecting during the uranium boom of the 1970s. Until this discovery these rocks were generally held to be valueless and not worth prospecting. To date hundreds of deposits have been discovered (Le Roux & Toens, 1986) in a triangular area extending from Ficksburg in the north to Sutherland and Graaff-Reinet in the south. Although the individual finds were relatively small (despite inflated and inaccurate reporting by some newspapers) and subsequently abandoned as uneconomic, this does illustrate the knowledge-and-time dependent nature of the value of mineral rights in the area.

Hence, presently held ideas about the mineral value of a given area are not incontrovertible. Areas now considered barren may in fact contain minerals which could be discovered in the future as *geological knowledge* improves. Mineral potential is dependent on current knowledge and is not simply intrinsic to an area. This knowledge can only be obtained and increased by research to expand the database *and* training of new earth scientists to interpret that database. This can most effectively be achieved if the database is



continuously expanded by all concerned (government, universities and explorationists). Under the current system, however, exploration companies can and do withhold a disproportionate amount of routine information, owing to an often irrational fear of competition, even though some companies which have been more open with such data than others, have experienced no ill effects; in fact the contributions of academic institutions are greatly valued by the mining industry. This reticence on the part of the companies inhibits important fundamental research. A law which specifically encourages more effective cooperative research would be in the national interest.

A scientific search for a mineral deposit proceeds from a base built on some prior knowledge of the area to be prospected and using a combination of empirical and deductive approaches. For example, coal occurs only in sedimentary rocks younger than the first occurrence of plants (< 450 million years). Clearly, this eliminates rocks older than this and those of any age which are not sedimentary. In Southern Africa these would be the Karoo. However, this is a very large area and to reduce the area, more and more knowledge is needed. This can be obtained using available sources (i.e. an open national database and the scientific literature) and eventually by gathering data from the rocks themselves, using a variety of geological tools. These include satellite and airborne remote sensing, airborne geophysics, ground geochemistry and geological mapping. Much of this data may be sorted in data-banks at the Geological Survey and the universities. Once the area of interest is reduced by selection to a reasonable (affordable) size, it is taken out under licence and more detailed work is carried out to locate the deposits, if any are present, after which evaluation of the prospect starts.

However, this exploration process may *not* locate all the deposits in an area, as the search is often commodity specific and not general. A search for uranium (based on geochemistry of the noble gas radon which is a radioactive product of uranium) may miss molybdenum or other deposits in the same rocks, as the latter do not produce radon. On the other hand this does not exclude a 'luck-factor' as in the case of SOEKOR's discovery of uranium in its search for oil.

The whole exploration process is time consuming and expensive, and the results are not certain. Mineral exploration is in fact a very high risk occupation with the chances of successfully finding an exploitable deposit being very low, especially if the preliminary knowledge-level is of the same order. The risk involved in exploring virgin territory is extremely high and the likelihood of success can only be increased by greater knowledge and a better ability to use that knowledge. For example, the Merensky Reef platinum deposits of the Bushveld Complex in the western Transvaal were located deductively without modern geophysical or geochemical tools in 1924 by Dr Hans Merensky, using his knowledge of similar rocks in the

eastern Transvaal. In the western Bushveld Complex, the reef is only some 20 cm thick and is very similar to the surrounding 30 km wide belt of igneous rocks, which are covered by a thick featureless soil layer. This prodigious feat of geological reasoning has made South Africa the largest producer of platinum group elements (PGE) in the world. In 1985, the mines established on this thin inconspicuous reef yielded some R1700 million in foreign exchange (Minerals Bureau, 1986). Recent knowledge acquired through innovative scientific work and newly developed (1980s) technology has resulted in the location of even larger reserves of these metals (see Cawthorn, 1987).

This increase in knowledge is the reason for the 'contagious' nature of mineral discovery. The discovery of one ore deposit (even a small one) in a virgin area or formation often leads to the discovery of others in the same environment (Griffiths, 1966). There are numerous examples of this in South Africa including the Merensky PGE, Wits gold, Bushveld chromium, Transvaal coal, Karoo uranium and Bushmanland lead-zinc deposits. This clustering is a direct result of expanded knowledge and the associated dramatic decrease in speculative risk. This is also one of the reasons why most exploration money is spent on further gold and PGE exploration of known and exploited deposits, which at this stage have much less risk of failure. New scientific methods and ingenuity are increasingly important when virgin formations are tackled or long-range, risky predictions are made by geologists. This knowledge factor has become especially important in recent times as most deposits that were exposed at surface (gold, PGE, chromite) have already been discovered and new deposits have to be sought below surface, using knowledge-based predictive models. A recent example of an extremely successful below-surface find using a predictive scientific model is the huge Roxby Downs copper-uranium-gold deposit in Australia.

In their training of new scientists/explorers, the geology, geophysics and mining departments of our universities and technikons are in effect the 'breeding grounds' for South Africa's mineral finders and conservators. Clearly, the pursuit of excellence, imaginative thinking, and a high professional moral standard at these institutions is vital. An entrepreneurial spirit to make long-range predictions and to take risk is indispensable to finding new deposits in new mineral provinces.

### **The Status Quo**

Mineral exploration and exploitation is governed by a number of acts such as the Mining Rights Act, Precious Stones Act, Nuclear Energy Act, Coal Act, Mineral Laws Supplementary Act, Development Trust and Land Act, Sea Shore Act, Territorial Waters Act, Mines and Works Act and the Mining Titles Registration Act. The following summary of the status quo relevant to this discussion is taken from Viljoen (1976) and Viljoen & Bosman (1979).

Each point — and in our opinion its deleterious aspects — is then briefly dealt with in turn.

(a) *There are different laws for different commodities.* This is obvious from the above legislation, but in addition individual acts differentiate between precious metals (gold and the six platinum group elements [PGE]), base metals, coal and natural oil. This can result in different laws being applied to the same orebody, as in the case of the country's major PGE-producing orebody, the Merensky Reef, which also contains nickel and copper. Furthermore, different explorationists may hold the rights to different commodities in the same ground and even in the same orebody. A case in point is the recent discovery of concentrations of PGE economically extractable as a by-product from chromite deposits. This has resulted in one company unwittingly, for many years, removing and dumping a valuable commodity apparently owned by another company during the beneficiation of their product (chromite).

This fragmentation of the components of an orebody is undesirable, since it is not economically efficient.

(b) *Legislation differs throughout South Africa, which includes for this purpose the 'homelands'.* Excluding the latter, the rest of the country is divided into State Land, Alienated State Land and Private Land. This land is also divided up according to farm boundaries. Potential prospecting areas can cross these artificial boundaries, resulting in numerous complications if exploitation is envisaged or underway. For example, the PGE and chromium deposits which straddle the boundaries between South Africa and Bophuthatswana are subject to potentially different mining, labour and taxation laws. In the case of the Rustenburg Platinum Mine, these anomalies occur within a *single* mine. This strange situation is the result of farms being the basis of land allocation to the 'homelands'.

(c) *The definition of the boundaries of mineral rights has no scientific basis.* Mineral right boundaries are usually historically based on farm boundaries or 'claims'. They do not take into account the three-dimensional nature of ore deposits. This is an historical relic as mineral rights are traded and subdivided separately from the land ownership. This often results in multiple ownership and fragmented holdings. Ownership is usually simply deemed to extend to the centre of the earth. Such anthropological and historical subdivisions are artificial with respect to the natural occurrence of mineral deposits. This has also led to the situation where large, but often fragmentary, areas are held by a few corporations. This fragmentation and the use of farm boundaries, is the underlying cause of the strange shapes of most mine properties which often inhibit optimal exploitation.

For example, there has recently been a merger of four Orange Free State gold mines in the Anglo American Corporation stable. The merits of merging operations are summarized in the circular to shareholders (A.A.C.,

1986) as 'The remaining ore reserves can be exploited in the most effective manner possible *without the constraints of artificial lease boundaries* ... More economical use will be made of the assets in that the hoisting and treatment facilities of all the mines can be fully integrated, thus allowing greater flexibility' (emphasis ours). This specific problem developed over time with the depletion of certain reserves and the accumulation of new scientific knowledge and consequent clarification of the geological structure. A more flexible law would allow mine boundaries to be adjusted as geological constraints become known.

The potential for multiple ore deposits in the same area is also not easily accommodated by the present laws. The current law normally allocates rights on the basis of surface area, and not on specific geological formation, whereas mines are invariably based on the geometry of the orebody. A case in point is the Bushveld Complex, which contains vanadium, PGE and several chromite ore horizons, in the same area, like jam between stacked layers of a cake.

Fragmentation of the mineral rights in this way also often leads to the discovery of an orebody which may extend into land held by others on a freehold or claim basis. This may result in difficulties in locating rights holders who may be deceased or abroad, and who may not want to part with their windfall resulting from somebody else's exploration efforts. This is especially so if the other party is a rival mining corporation who hold the mineral rights in reserve but do not themselves explore (see below).

(d) *Unjustified retention of mineral rights is encouraged.* Often ownership of the mineral rights to private land may have been acquired in the distant past by a mining company and since there is no financial burden in holding the rights ad infinitum, there is no urgency to prospect or evaluate those holdings. The net result is that many small or apparently uneconomic deposits can be held but not used, or remain undiscovered, by large corporations.

Although there are exceptions, it is prudent for a company to acquire options and explore ground *not* held outright by that company. The reason for this is that competition exists to acquire and to explore those rights, hence to expand the company's net worth. Exploration of their own mineral rights is not urgent as it is not subject to competition. Inactivity also does not carry any economic penalty, as no option money need be spent. The tendency is therefore to hold in reserve what they already own and to allocate instead their scarce resources of exploration capital and expertise to privately- or government-held land not in the possession of the company. As stated by Beukes (1986): 'Private ownership of mineral rights of large tracts of land *particularly when held by corporations* effectively sterilizes such land from being explored at all' (emphasis ours).

Furthermore, much of the State Land available for claims (e.g. in the Barberton gold district) is held by speculative prospectors who hold large numbers of claims in the hope that a real explorationist will find a mine for

them. This is made possible by the fact that up to ten claims of 2 000 × 2 000 Cape feet (39,65 ha) may be registered (for 20c on state and 35c on private land per annum) in any one magisterial district by any White person over 18 years old, on payment of two rand for a prospecting permit, which is renewable annually.

Usually no actual exploration work on these 'prospects' is required and the 'inactivity' penalty is limited to five rand per annum, which has to date not been imposed. This type of exploitation of others' initiative and expertise, is a common and almost riskless investment. Such a system of mineral ownership discourages effort by genuine explorationists and entrepreneurs and leads to legal wrangling in which only those with large resources can indulge.

Gaffney (1967) makes a similar point with respect to international mineral boundaries. He states: 'Resources firmly under control may be held in reserve. The preternaturally frantic urgency is to stake out new treasures before those greedy other fellows. The more precarious tenures get priority. Observe oil drilling in the North Sea. The big strikes are almost on the boundaries of the preserves claimed by neighbouring nations. Drilling occurs at the boundaries first. They attract explorers like flies around a pot of honey.'

Thus, internationally too, territory is the name of the game where such natural resources are concerned: we note that (1) after almost two decades of negotiations, the Law of the Sea Treaty is still not ratified, mainly because of disagreements about potential mineral exploitation in international waters; and (2) that international negotiations on mineral rights in Antarctica are seriously undermining the legal status and strength of the Antarctic Treaty (Auburn, 1984; De Wit, 1985).

Similarly, we note the very recent (1987) spat between Greece and Turkey over research in a disputed area of the Aegean sea and similar squabbles between Chile and Argentina over some otherwise useless islands in the Straits of Magellan, and the British-Argentinian war over the Falkland-Malvinas Islands.

Thus both nationally and globally, large tracts may be held in reserve for later exploration by countries and corporations; this must result in non-optimization of resource estimation and utilization. The situation is rather like a cow in a field of high grass stretching its neck through the fence to pluck the last straw in the barren and trampled ground beyond. We suggest removing the fence so that the cow will graze in the patch it previously ignored, as well as allowing other cows to compete with it for the grass.

In summary, besides the unacceptable and outmoded racial aspects of the current dispensation in South Africa, it appears that the present laws do not encourage optimal exploration and exploitation. The minerals industry is operating in a semi-closed market-place, dominated by historical and legal

inequities. Many of the current laws were initially formulated by legal precedent in an era when scientific method and knowledge were minimal, and are now outdated. The *scientific* principles that should govern exploration effort are in some cases inhibited by current legislation.

### **Advantageous aspects of the current South African mineral laws**

Notwithstanding the deleterious aspects of current legislation discussed above, the highly successful South African mineral development occurred under that legislation. It is therefore reasonable to examine that legal environment to discover why there has been successful exploitation despite the disadvantages. The reasons are summarized by Beukes (1986) who states: 'South Africa is generally perceived to have a favourable climate for mineral exploration both geologically and economically. Exploration "incentives" include security of tenure, stable monetary and fiscal regimes, liberal exchange control and exchange rates, exploration tax allowances, and availability of infrastructure. Moreover, no governmental prescriptions exist regarding equity, management, export and repatriation of dividends, as is the case in most other mineral-rich countries with respect to multinational mining corporation investments.'

Mineral exploration is a high risk and long term investment, and these advantages, especially security of tenure and freedom from fear of nationalization, should be maintained with a change in the political system if the minerals industry is to prosper. However, we believe that this security of tenure should be conferred on *discovered and exploitable* reserves only, as is currently the case on state land. This would discourage the unjustified retention of mineral rights.

There are examples of state involvement in mining under the current law that have had no deleterious effects on mineral production. The Precious Metals Act for example has resulted in a partial nationalization in that royalties are exacted, and a levy on part of the profits (in addition to tax), is raised on mines established on state land. Further, the tax laws are relatively flexible and large revenues are obtained in good years, but in bad years there are various forms of state aid to keep the mines operational, and hence to stabilize employment. When the metal prices improve, the mine is again taxed (often stringently). A number of profitable mines were saved in this way. However, the state has not interfered with their running or demanded any equity. There are however also cases where the state has actively started (usually strategic) mineral ventures that initially did not pay, or had extraordinarily high risks associated with their development but turned out to be wise investments later (e.g. SASOL, SOEKOR and ISCOR) and have now been privatized to some extent. The financing and development of the new Mossel Bay gas ventures are a present-day example.

Many of the state institutions such as the Government Mining Engineer

and the Mining Titles Office are also valuable and have a long tradition of service, but their functions would be extended if the proposals made here were adopted.

### **Mineral laws and exploration climates elsewhere**

There are two extreme philosophies with respect to mineral ownership in different countries of the world, depending on their guiding political philosophy. These are (1) total state ownership of both the mineral rights and the means of production, and (2) total private ownership of both. Most countries fall in the middle ground between these extremes, in that the state usually owns some or all mineral rights, and the finding and exploitation thereof is usually left to the private sector. The state in effect exacts royalties in return for security of tenure, infrastructure and political stability.

In the more developed mineral-rich and highly successful mining countries (e.g. Australia, Canada) there is a tendency toward state ownership of mineral rights, but private exploration and exploitation. In these countries, the rights to explore for minerals are not held in perpetuity; they are freely available for prospecting by anybody.

A number of developing countries have quite similar mining codes that have been promulgated after independence, whereas other such countries (e.g. Zimbabwe) have kept their pre-independence codes. Brown (1986) has reviewed the salient features of the new mineral laws of a number of such recently independent countries including Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana and Papua New Guinea, and contrasts them with those of Zimbabwe. In essence, the new mineral codes rest on two guiding principles: (a) the right to prospect and mine is granted (often to multinational corporations) in return for specific commitments which can be assessed and monitored by the state, and (b) the investment is secure within sensible limits in the long term. The state is thus usually a major partner in the mining projects.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that developing countries with similar codes and resource endowments do not necessarily have equally successful mining sectors. The reason for this is apparently that management of the multinational corporations have uneven faith in the cooperation of the governments or the long term stability of some of these developing states. In general, the more democratic and free enterprise oriented states have fared better in the mineral field.

Botswana is a case where a democratic route coupled with planned economic policy has produced outstanding results in the mining sphere. The following summary of the minerals policy of Botswana is paraphrased from Campbell (1980). All mineral rights are owned by the state. The law ensures that concessionaires explore without delay, and when minerals are found, developed in the best interests of the country as a whole. Basically the

Botswana government is concerned with providing a broad assessment of the country's mineral resources and recognizes the need to provide prospecting companies with the base information necessary to any exploration programme. The Department of Mines evaluates proposed mining activities and monitors actual mining to ensure that government policies are fully implemented and mining regulations enforced. It is a general policy to encourage prospecting by various private organizations and, on discovery of minerals, to participate in ownership of mining companies, which affords it the opportunity to share the internal decision-making and derive maximum benefit from mining operations. At present, the Botswana government expects a share grant of 15 to 25 per cent in return for providing some of the infrastructure needed for the mine's success. Every effort is made to achieve widely based minerals production and this includes the development of small mining enterprises which do not require vast investment and which may be feasible to exploit on a small scale. Such enterprises if successful, may well lead to the large organizations taking a more active interest in areas they at present consider uneconomic.

In contrast to the legal environment in Botswana and the other countries mentioned above, Zimbabwe has retained its pre-independence mining code. This code enshrines a system which ensures that the country as a whole is held open to prospecting and mining by the private sector (Brown, 1986). However, no long term mining leases exist and claims are kept alive annually by obtaining inspection certificates from the Mining Commissioner. For larger scale prospecting, there is some limited government involvement with the issuing of Exclusive Prospecting Orders to individuals or corporations. Exclusive rights to a large area are given in return for the obligation to carry out an exploration programme satisfactory to the Mining Affairs Board. The registration of a claim or mining location still does not entail granting of a long term lease, and mining rights are also kept alive annually by the inspection certificate method.

The mining legislation in Canada is also largely based on the concept of state ownership of minerals which are explored and mined by the private sector (Drolet, 1975), and embodies the following main principles: (i) the rights and obligations of the investor and the state are clear and precise, (ii) the discoverer of the minerals has a preferential and possibly assured right to develop and exploit the discovery with security of tenure, (iii) the entrepreneur and the state both receive fair returns, and (iv) the state as sovereign owner of the minerals must ensure that the interests of the state are protected: this includes environmental, health, farming and other interests, protected by very stringent regulations.

In Australia the legislation is similar to that of Canada in that the state owns the mineral rights and private investors find and exploit the minerals. In Western Australia small, often family-based mines, extract gold ore from



small deposits and the ore is taken to central reduction works operated by larger companies who do the processing (extracting) for part of the gold.

### **The Future: a fresh approach?**

We envisage a more egalitarian system with more rational laws based on the following principles, some of which are only partly taken into account in current South African mineral legislation:

(a) All undiscovered and unprospected rights to be vested in the state or state minerals corporation.

(b) The right to prospect an area should be granted to companies and individuals, at a price per unit area which would confer the right to exploit any discoveries subject to certain conditions. Registration of a mining lease should guarantee security of tenure. Discoveries that are not viable for the discoverer should revert to the state, unless the discoverer would want to hold them in reserve at some realistic economic cost. If the state is anxious that a mine be established for some political or social reason, provision could be made by way of incentives for the discoverer to open a mine. For example, if the deposit occurs as a set of small deposits a type of cooperative could be set up with state aid.

(c) There should be a mechanism to discourage unjustified retention of land and encourage nation-wide use of up-to-date scientific methods in the mineral exploration industry. To ensure the attainment of this objective, all data gathered by the prospector must be deposited in the national data-banks within a specific time-frame, so that it is available for research purposes to all interested parties including the universities. In this connection it is undesirable that the state set 'minimum expenditure' conditions or give specific directives as to how the prospecting should be done (e.g. as in Namibia). Exploration philosophies are very diverse and the most effective are not necessarily the most expensive. The problems associated with monitoring the expenditure could possibly lead to inefficiency and corruption. Administratively the easiest and most effective method is simply to charge an arithmetically or geometrically escalating annual option fee per unit area already held under option. The prospecting company would have to reduce the area under option annually to keep the costs reasonable, and thus the use of efficient scientific methods would be encouraged and unjustified retention of options would be impossible. The state would benefit from the rental of options and would have a minimal supervisory role. Should a deposit be discovered, rental escalation could be halted on that specific area to enable evaluation of the prospect to proceed, as the escalation clause would have served its purpose.

(d) Prospecting areas should be defined using Trigonometrical Survey beacons and geological/scientific parameters such as rock-formations or faults, and not farm boundaries. If minerals are discovered, the mining lease

areas should be defined using such geological parameters as the thickness and extent of the geological units. For example, discovery and mining of coal should not necessarily confer all the mineral rights in that area as older strata below the coal measures may contain other undiscovered commodities (in the Evander area 250-million-year-old coal-bearing strata overlie the *ca* 2700 million-year-old gold deposits which are owned separately). Ultra-laterally extensive deposits such as the stratiform coal, gold or platinum deposits would have to be treated in a special way to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of reserves. How this could be done is not clear at present, but one suggestion is that resources could be 'leased' so that there is an economic cost attached to 'strategic resources' which would be retained longer than say ten or twenty years without exploitation.

(c) The people's surface, water and environmental rights must be rigorously protected and extended. To maintain a reasonable living environment, the 'cleaning-up' operations needed today in the industrialized nations to deal with acid rain, lead and toxic waste pollution as well as the recently recognized and dangerous ozone depletion threatening the entire globe, are extremely costly and prevention would have been cheaper than cure. Such costs are never subtracted from the profits of modern industries (and in particular those exploiting natural resources), nor are they taken into account in any of the leading economic models of intergenerational equity and the allocation of natural resources (i.e. Solow, 1978 & 1986; Hartwick, 1977, 1978a & b; Dasgupta & Mitra, 1983). This short-sighted philosophy should be avoided through innovative legislation in the new South Africa.

(f) As mineral discovery and exploitation are knowledge-dependent, there should be a mechanism to fund reliably both research and training of mineral scientists, technicians and economists from the whole population. This should be on a steady basis to avoid the 'boom or bust' character of the geological profession, which is often out of step with demand because there is a three to four year lag in the training of new geoscientists; also the rate of prospecting depends on the vagaries of the world mineral market. The option fees could be channelled to this end.

These principles could be implemented in the following way: as people should not be discriminated against by historical and geological accident, all privately held mineral rights should be purchased by the state at a flat rate per hectare and paid to the holders. Private holders could, for example, be given equity on the basis of their holdings in a state minerals corporation which could be tradeable on the stock exchange; in such a case the average value of the mineral rights of South Africa would be determined by the market. If one unit of stock was equivalent to one hectare of the surface area of the country including the territorial waters, the state would be the major stockholder, but the populace would also have a significant private share. The initial price per unit area (hectare) could be a function of the total estimated value of minerals over the entire country.

Such a process would immediately eliminate a number of historical inequities such as the excessive and unjustified mineral holdings of the large mining houses. It would also remove many impediments to prospecting such as unjustified retention of rights, fragmented holdings and the uneven application of the law in different parts of the country, as all would be classed as state land. It would also enable the state to release many small deposits to the community and would enable a system of potentially viable small minerals cooperatives to be set up, with Small Business Development Corporation or state minerals corporation aid to exploit scattered small deposits in poor rural areas (e.g. the gold deposits of the eastern Transvaal).

If prospecting licence fees and economic rents from mineral deposits could be more effectively recycled into R&D (research and development) in the universities, technikons, Minerals Bureau, Geological Survey, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Council for Mineral Technology (MINTeK), the system would create a self-sustaining production of capable earth scientists, mineral engineers and ecologists as well as a steadily increasing pool of valuable knowledge.

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## **The South African White General Election of 1987: Shifting deck-chairs or burning boats?**

It has been remarked that, viewed within the context of South African parliamentary politics, reform is analogous to a shifting of the deck-chairs on the ill-fated SS Titanic. Although the image may not be entirely apt, in that the passengers in steerage might sooner sink the ship of state than would some chance encounter with an extraneous iceberg, it poses clear challenges to political scientists and other psephologists in their attempts at evaluating the recent white parliamentary election.

If Parliament were totally irrelevant to political continuity and change in this country, any endeavour at psephology would be self-indulgent and nonsensical. Most observers would, however, concede that parliament still has some relevance *vis-à-vis* the apportionment of resources, even in an era characterized by covert decision-making structures like the National Security Management System. It must also be borne in mind that Parliament, through its legislation, to a large extent dictates the terms of everyday living in South Africa. Parliamentary elections are, of course, also indicators of public opinion. In the South African context election results may currently be used as a basis for speculation on the prospects of reform, although chances are that white<sup>1</sup> electoral change may well be of diminishing importance in a state with definite corporatist traits.<sup>2</sup>

The results of the 1987 election defy facile conclusions. Various political analysts claimed to deduce shifts to various quarters of the political spectrum on scrutinizing the results. These claims underestimate the complexities of the social forces at work in the election, as will be shown. Before we attempt our own analysis of the results, a brief review of the context of the election and an overview of the election campaign is provided.

### **The Context of the Election**

By the late Seventies, thirty-odd years of National Party rule had seen the removal of the last vestiges of non-white representation in Parliament, the

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deployment of a homeland policy that promised to strip the majority of the population of their citizenship, and the imposition of a plethora of laws impinging on the civil rights of the so-called non-white section of the population. This had precipitated large-scale resentment, both locally and abroad, that translated into spiralling internal turmoil and foreign pressure respectively. At that time it had become obvious that some form of constitutional change had to be implemented in South Africa, if a cataclysm was to be averted. Yet the very policies that led to this state of affairs, also happened to be the base of National Party electoral support. The party thus faced a dilemma — it somehow had to defuse internal and foreign pressures without substantially alienating its support base.

In 1977 the National Party unveiled its blueprint for constitutional reform. The proposed constitution was similar to that finally adopted in 1983, in that it provided for the establishment of separate parliaments for 'Coloureds' and 'Indians', an executive head of state and a multi racial advisory President's Council. Blacks were specifically excluded from the new dispensation. The constitutional proposals did not figure too prominently in the elections held later that year, although early elections were called to seek the electorate's approval of the matter among other things. The governing party fought a campaign that was based on a call for unity against the twin 'onslaughts' of international opinion and internal dissent. In the process, the viability of its constitutional proposals had all but ceased to be a key issue in the election. Prime Minister Vorster's timing of the election was perfect, in that the National Party at that juncture faced a weak right wing and hopelessly divided and disordered moderate opposition. Not surprisingly, the National Party was returned to power with an overwhelming majority, simultaneously getting a mandate of sorts for its proposed constitution.

Mr P W Botha thus inherited a blue print for change when he succeeded Mr Vorster as leader of the National Party and Prime Minister in 1978. A year later, in November 1979, Mr Botha met with business leaders at Johannesburg's Carlton Hotel for mutual consultation on socio-economic policy. Some observers have seen this conference as a landmark in the transformation of the National Party from the torch-bearer of Afrikaner exclusivism to the partner of local free marketeers.<sup>3</sup> It became clear that the government's commitment to the survival of capitalism in the country would lead it to reconsider legal arrangements detrimental to free enterprise. Two commissions of inquiry had tabled reports before Parliament shortly before the Carlton Conference, that presaged this shift in National Party policy. The Wiehahn Commission into labour legislation recommended the scrapping of job reservation and the extension of trade union rights to Blacks, while the Riekert Commission on the utilization of manpower, recommended that the permanent status of urban Blacks be recognized.<sup>4</sup>

These two commissions largely justified their findings in terms of the survival of the free enterprise ethos in South Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Where the National Party had traditionally functioned as the protector of white, especially Afrikaans working-class interests, it was now prepared to sacrifice the support of this numerically dwindling group, in order to foster its new relationship with financial capital. This state of affairs, coupled with the first hesitant signs of change, rustled up quite a few votes for the extreme reactionary (*and overwhelmingly white proletarian*) *Herstigste Nasionale Party* in the various by-elections held in 1979/80, while members of the white working-class openly opposed the government on the shop-floor. (The extent of right-wing reaction was still very limited, however. The HNP did not get close to winning a seat, while the strikes held by white miners to protest the Wichahn proposals were ineffectual.)

Steps were also initiated to bring the National Party's constitutional plans to fruition. A select committee of Parliament, under the chairmanship of Alwyn Schlebusch, was appointed to investigate the feasibility of these proposals. The committee tabled its preliminary report in May 1980. It recommended the scrapping of the prevailing Westminster parliamentary system, in effect giving the go-ahead for the implementation of a new constitution. In October 1980, the first stage of the National Party's constitutional proposals was put into practice, with the appointment of the members of the President's Council. This body started its proceedings in February 1981.

Just before the President's Council's first session, the government again called an early election. Although the point of the election should have been to plumb public opinion on the scope and pace of reform, the National Party campaign soon degenerated into the regulation call for white unity in the face of various threats. The idea of a 'total onslaught' by the Soviet Union and various proxies on South Africa, was milked to death in the NP campaign, as Lemon has pointed out.<sup>6</sup> Predictably, the National Party scored another decisive victory, polling almost 56 per cent of the vote and winning just on 80 per cent of the seats. The party, however, lost votes both to the extreme right-wing HNP and the moderate Progressive Federal Party. The HNP couldn't manage to win a single seat, but increased its share of the vote from 3,21 per cent to 13,84 per cent, while the PFP increased its percentage of the vote from 16,7 per cent to 19,09 per cent in adding nine seats to its previously held seventeen. The moderate right-wing New Republic Party, consisting in the main of English-speaking ex-United Party supporters, lost two seats and saw its share of the vote shrink from 11,96 per cent to 7,68 per cent.

The HNP almost certainly gained through working-class defections from the NP, while there was a discernible drift from the ranks of English-speaking NRP supporters to the government. Charney summarized the

import of this election quite neatly: 'Though power did not change hands, the 1981 election traced the outline of a possible class realignment of white political forces, with potentially far-reaching consequences. In the aftermath, nothing seemed to have changed, but nothing would every be quite the same.'<sup>7</sup>

In any event, at least part of Charney's prediction was realized soon enough for him to add a postscript to the article from which the above quote was taken. Less than a year later, some of the more reactionary members of the National Party caucus balked at further constitutional change.<sup>8</sup> These by no means working-class Afrikaners formed themselves into the Conservative Party — and suddenly the National Party was faced with a radical right-wing opposition party in Parliament for the first time in its three and a half decades in power.

During the course of 1982, the President's Council completed yet another investigation on constitutional reform. The findings of the President's Council were presented to and accepted by the National Party in July of that year. In May 1983 the National Party presented the President's Council's recommendations to Parliament as the Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill. Thus it seemed as if the constitutional change that the National Party had somewhat gingerly nurtured for half a decade, was about to be effected.

The Bill was duly passed as the *Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, No 110 of 1983*. In the face of strong opposition from both the parliamentary parties and from various extra-parliamentary groupings, Prime Minister Botha decided on a referendum for white voters, to give the new constitution the stamp of legitimacy.

Voters had to indicate their reaction to the question: 'Are you in favour of the implementation of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983, as approved by Parliament?' By political sleight of hand and overkill the government's propagandists managed to link those against the Act on the grounds that it was too liberal, with those who thought it didn't go far enough. The result was a landslide. Nearly two-thirds of those that voted indicated their satisfaction with the Act, while 33,53 per cent rejected it. For the purposes of the referendum, the country had been divided into fifteen statistical areas. In only one of these areas, Pietersburg, did those who opposed the new constitution outnumber its advocates.<sup>9</sup>

In retrospect the referendum probably bolstered the Conservative Party, while it seriously affected the PFP. While most right-wing supporters voted against the constitution, a large proportion of PFP supporters ignored the calls of their party leadership for a 'no' vote.<sup>10</sup> The far right emerged with the realization that in all probability it could bargain on more than twice the votes the HNP polled in 1981, and that it would be guaranteed a number of seats in future elections. The PFP on the other hand, lost a number of voters to the NP, as indicated by polls it conducted before and after the referendum.<sup>11</sup> In all



probability a large proportion of these voters never came back. The NRP's decision to support the NP in the referendum, prompted some to question its very *raison d'être*, as few differences were seen to exist between the two parties.

The adoption of the new constitution heralded a new era in South African political history, but not in the way its architects imagined. Black resistance to the constitution reached almost unprecedented levels. The formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983 signalled what was arguably the biggest organized opposition to the hegemony of the state in South African history. By August 1984 dissatisfaction with various aspects of government policy, coupled with escalating consumer prices, had seen an upsurge in violent resistance, culminating in two states of emergency, the latter one seemingly *ad perpetuum*.

Simultaneously the country's economy went into a downturn. As the rate of inflation soared, the value of the rand in relation to foreign currencies plummeted. Rampant unemployment and a protracted drought affecting most of the country added to the woes. The failure of the new constitution to satisfy domestic political aspirations, led to a substantial flight of capital from South Africa and the gradual imposition of sanctions.

Meanwhile the nascent trade union movement, specifically fostered by a revamped industrial relations code to prevent the intrusion of the 'wrong' politics onto the shop floor, had developed into a formidable, if divided, political force.

Thus were the architects of the new constitution confounded. The turmoil it was meant to reduce actually increased, the foreign pressures it was meant to alleviate changed into outright animosity, while the favourable conditions it sought to create for free enterprise<sup>12</sup> never emerged. This clear evidence of policy failure<sup>13</sup> formed the background to the 1987 election. The following section demonstrates just how peripheral the background became, as a result of the tactics employed in the conduct of white parliamentary elections in South Africa.

### **The Election Campaign**

By-election results in the period following the referendum and the implementation of the new constitution,<sup>14</sup> clearly indicated that the ultra-right-wing parties were rapidly gaining ground on the government. At the end of 1984 the Conservative Party reduced the National Party majority in the previously 'safe' East Rand constituency of Primrose to a mere 748. This represented an enormous swing<sup>15</sup> of 20,33 per cent to the far right. Worse was to follow for the National Party in the 'mini-elections'<sup>16</sup> held on 30 October 1985. Huge swings to the far right were recorded in the farming constituencies of Vryburg (14,96 %) and Bethlehem (18,16 %), while in Sasolburg a swing of 17,27 per cent saw the Herstigte Nasionale Party, in the

absence of the Conservative Party, defeating the government for the first time in umpteen attempts. The Conservative Party furthermore managed a credible 1924 votes in the overwhelmingly English-speaking Durban constituency of Port Natal, while it lost to the National Party by only 749 votes in Springs, on the East Rand. In the latter constituency the far right had never opposed the National Party before.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of South Africa's previous constitution, general elections were due in April 1986. It seemed, however, that in terms of the new constitution, the next elections would only be held in 1989. After the expiry of the term of the Legislative Assembly elected in 1981, there was an outcry from the far right. The National Party was accused of governing without a mandate and the validity of legislation passed by the over-due assembly was questioned.

Mr Botha's announcement, made on 13 August 1986 in his capacity as executive State President, that he was considering consulting the electorate on possible changes to the constitution, should be seen in this context. The failure of the 1984 constitution to defuse internal conflict and to secure foreign approval had to be addressed in some fashion. The solution mooted by the National Party was to adjust the constitution to allow for the participation of at least some Blacks. (It is widely accepted that the 1983 constitution's inadequacy can be traced to its explicit and total exclusion of 70 per cent of South Africans from the political process.) Obviously the government had no mandate for altering the constitution, since its term in office had expired, while the result of the 1983 referendum only legitimized the stipulations of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983.

The widely expected election was finally announced by Mr Botha in his televised 1987 New Year's Message to the nation. Later in January the election was set for 6 May. This meant that the election campaign was in the end stretched over a period of nineteen weeks. Even by South African standards, where election campaigns have on occasion been protracted affairs, this was exceptionally long. The 1981 election, for instance, covered the relatively short time span of thirteen weeks.

The tide went very much against the National Party during the first two months of the campaign. In January the PFP and the NRP announced that they were entering into an alliance in Natal. The basis for the alliance was the PFP's support of the NRP-initiated KwaNatal Indaba. Although the NRP in the Transvaal and the Cape initially opposed cooperation with the PFP, the alliance was extended there by the end of January. As the National Party had won a number of seats in 1981 on the split of 'liberal' opposition votes, it was expected that the Alliance could wrest substantial gains from the NP. A further setback for National Party prospects was the resignation from the party of its member of parliament for Randburg, Wynand Malan, during the January parliamentary session. Malan, who indicated that he would thenceforth sit as an independent, resigned because of his dissatisfaction with

the pace of reform. According to press reports he felt especially despondent at the government's failure to address African constitutional participation. When the South African Ambassador to Britain, Dr Denis Worrall, resigned soon afterwards to enter the electoral fray, it seemed as if the National Party would have to deal with a full-scale rebellion in its ranks.

Although there was some speculation on Dr Worrall joining forces with the Alliance, he in the end supported Mr Malan. Their new movement, popularly called the 'Independents', soon gained substantial support from a number of disaffected National Party supporters. The vein of support tapped by the Independents was by no means a cross-section of National Party support and seemed limited to intellectuals and young upwardly mobile professionals. Scores of academics pledged their support to the new movement<sup>18</sup>, while even some liberal members of the establishment, like Professor Sampie Terreblanche (a deputy chairman of the SABC and economic adviser to the government) and Dawid de Villiers (chairman of *Nasionale Pers*), resigned from the National Party to join it.

In the end the Independents put all their eggs in a rather small basket. Malan was to defend his Randburg seat, while Dr Worrall was to oppose the member of the Cabinet responsible for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Chris Heunis, in the Cape seat of Helderberg. The latter seat, comprising Somerset West, Gordon's Bay, some Stellenbosch suburbs and rural areas in the vicinity of Kuils River and Stellenbosch, abuts on the Stellenbosch constituency where the Independents put up their only other candidate, Dr Esther Lategan.<sup>19</sup> Lack of a national organizational framework precluded an Independent presence in other seats, although three other independent candidates subsequently identified themselves with the Malan-Worrall group.

By the middle of March it seemed as if the National Party was set to lose support to the Alliance and the Independents, while gaining votes from the far right. A poll published by *Rapport* on 15 March, indicated that the National Party would get 49,9 per cent of the votes to the 22,3 per cent of the Alliance. According to this poll the far right would gain only 18,0 per cent of the vote.

Two weeks later *Rapport* indicated that the Conservative Party was still losing support, while there was a swing away from the National Party to the Alliance and the Independents. The paper's psephologists predicted that the National Party would poll 54,2 per cent of the vote, the Alliance 24 per cent and the far right only 21 per cent.

The National Party responded to this with an intensive media campaign that completely changed the tone of the election. Whereas the election was initially called to measure support for continued political reform, it now degenerated into a plebiscite on security. The old and tried 'total onslaught' line was trotted out once again as the National Party sought to consolidate its

support at the expense of the Alliance. The PFP was accused of being soft on security and of advancing the cause of the ANC and various other bogeymen.<sup>21</sup> Its opposition to the State of Emergency and its pleas that a peaceful future for South Africa could only be achieved by negotiating with all interested parties, were among the points that the National Party propagandists used against the PFP. Shortly before the election, the government announced that it had uncovered an African National Congress plot to disrupt the election by violent means. In the light of this putative plot, elaborate measures were taken to ensure security, including the presence of scores of armed uniformed members of the security forces at the various polling stations on election day.<sup>22</sup> The election thus suddenly acquired a new aspect — that of a 'khaki' election.<sup>23</sup>

Since the Independents favoured the retention of the State of Emergency and took a fairly hard line on security, the National Party had to look elsewhere for tactical tools to use against the still embryonic movement. It subsequently questioned the Independents' funding, insinuating that foreign entities with sinister motives were fuelling their campaigns.

The Conservative Party and the Herstigte Nasionale Party in the interim were unable to reach an agreement on an election pact. Several attempts at such a pact floundered between January and nomination day at the end of March. The leader of the para-military Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, Eugene Terre'Blanche, acted as the mediator in most of these attempts. Negotiations finally broke down when the Conservative Party and the HNP failed to agree on the apportionment of their election candidates. The CP insisted that, as the stronger party, it had the first choice of seats, while the HNP advanced their seniority in the struggle against the NP as the reason for claiming a fairly large proportion of the seats. Although some thought that the far right's failure to secure a kind of pact presaged an electoral disaster, one observer, Dr Dirk Laurie, predicted that this state of affairs would favour the CP.<sup>24</sup> Working from a mathematical model, Dr Laurie predicted that even if the HNP were to oppose the CP in all seats, the latter party would still almost certainly win more than 20 seats in the election. By not cooperating with their ultra-right rivals, the CP was only putting its chance of becoming the official opposition on the line, while it had an excellent chance of reducing the HNP to also-rans in the race for right-wing support.

Where the events of January and February had got the NP campaign off to a shaky start, its security-based media campaign snatched the initiative right back from the Alliance. Initially the Alliance campaign had been based on criticism of National Party failures, but the NP's security campaign put the former on the defensive for the month preceding the election. The NP's election position was neatly captured by the 'Reform Yes, Surrender No' on one of its slogan posters. Although this position was obviously meant to

attract as wide a range of support as possible, the reform aspect was eventually obscured by the massive emphasis on security.

In contrast to the accusatory tone of that part of the National Party campaign geared to the more liberal voter, the party was very much on the defensive in its dealings with the ultra-right. The right-wing leg of the National Party campaign focused on the integrity of the Conservative Party and its leadership. The National Party media attacked the impracticality of its policies, while pointing out that several prominent CP leaders had been involved in the deployment of the very NP policies they now vehemently attacked. The close relationship between the CP and the AWB, claimed by some to be no less than neo-Nazis, was also criticized by the National Party media.

### **The Result and its Implications**

Before the election, the National Party held 116 seats (including seven vacancies), the Alliance thirty seats (the PFP twenty five and the NRP five), the Conservative Party seventeen seats (including one vacancy) and the HNP a single seat. There were also two independents — Malan in Randburg and former PFP member Horace van Rensburg in the adjoining seat of Bryanston.<sup>25</sup>

Soon after the first election results came in, it was evident that there was a substantial swing away from the Alliance. It also became clear that support for the ultra-right had been vastly underrated. By dusk on 7 May, South Africa had a non-liberal official opposition for the first time in nearly forty years.

The National Party had gained eleven seats from the Alliance and ten from the far right, while losing Durban North to the PFP<sup>24</sup> and surrendering thirteen seats to the CP. The Alliance gained Durban North and Bryanston, while it lost eleven seats to the NP. The far right lost ten seats, including the HNP's solitary representative in Sasolburg, but gained fifteen NP seats for a net gain of four. Wynand Malan managed to retain his Randburg seat — the only Independent to be elected. The state of the parties after the election was as follows: the NP had 123 seats, the Alliance twenty (PFP nineteen and NRP one), and the CP twenty-two. The solitary Independent made up the numbers.

A feature of the election was that the NP nominated candidates in every constituency in the country except for the two Cape Town seats of Groote Schuur and Claremont. In these two seats the PFP candidates were returned unopposed. These seats were also the only instances in the entire country where no elections were fought — an almost unprecedented event in South African electoral history.<sup>26</sup>

The NP emerged from the election with slightly more than half the votes

cast nationally (52,45 per cent). The far right garnered roughly a third of votes (29,51 per cent — the CP gained 26,37 per cent and the HNP 3,14 per cent), while the Alliance could muster the support of only 16,03 per cent of the electorate. Because of the extent of the NP's involvement in the election these percentages are slightly deceptive since the CP only contested 75 per cent and the Alliance 57 per cent of all seats. If all the opposition parties had contested the same number of seats as the NP, the latter could conceivably have emerged from the fray with slightly less than half of the votes polled. As the NP's support dropped by nearly three and a half per cent from 55,94 per cent in the 1981 elections and the far right's share of the vote increased from 13,84 per cent to nearly thirty per cent, it is only too obvious that a substantial movement to the right had manifested itself in the election. This rightward trend is underscored by the fact that support for the Alliance dropped by 10 per cent compared to the 1981 result.

One should not, however, overestimate the movement to the right. Potchefstroom-based British political analyst Donald Simpson has for instance asserted that the right-wing trend almost certainly signals the end of NP rule, with the CP set to win the next election.<sup>27</sup> According to Simpson this eventuality can only be precluded by changes to the system of voting, the electorate, or both. He further claims that even extensive gerrymandering cannot save the NP as the party has lost touch with the 'grass-roots' political intelligence which is needed to accomplish such an exercise.

Three aspects of Simpson's argument are highly doubtful. First, his prediction is based on what he terms '... the almost ideal distribution of Conservative voters in the Republic'. It will be shown that the distribution of Conservative voters is in fact the very antithesis of ideal.

Secondly, Simpson assumes that the significant swing to the right in the period 1981–1987 will retain its momentum until the next election. This is a questionable assumption for a variety of reasons. In the first instance it is doubtful validity to calculate a swing to the Conservative Party based on the percentage of votes gained by the HNP in 1981. The *Herstigste Nasionale Party* has always had severe problems with its image because of the extreme nature of some of its policies. For instance, it insists that it would abolish English as an official language if it got into power, while membership is barred to atheists, Roman Catholics and Jews.<sup>28</sup> Since the party has never really been able to muster any support from the Afrikaner establishment, its leaders have tended to be mavericks rather than heroes. Many Afrikaners who probably had sympathy for the HNP's radical policies thus refrained from supporting the party at the polls. The rise of the more acceptable, less dogmatic CP enabled these closet *verkramptes* to break their ties with the NP.

Thirdly, Simpson omitted to incorporate the by-election results in the period 1981–1987 into his analysis. Had he done so he would have noticed the

astounding swing to the Conservative Party in the so-called 'Battle of the Bergs'<sup>29</sup> of 1983, and at Soutpansberg and Primrose in 1984. In the 1987 election there was actually a swing away from the right in all these seats. The reasons for this turn of events will be examined in subsequent paragraphs. The point is that the majority of defections to the Conservatives seem to have occurred some time ago, in fact in the period immediately after the split from the NP. Electoral support for the far right seems to have reached some kind of plateau at present. The swing detected by Simpson is merely an indication of the rupture of 1982. The flood of defections to the right at that time seems to have slowed down to a trickle. One should grant him the point that some kind of catastrophe might well turn the trickle into a torrent. For the nonce, however, it would seem that the South African voter hasn't yet set fire to the boats of reform.

Exponents of another train of thought contend that the election results should be interpreted as indicative of a swing to the left. Lawrence Schlemmer<sup>30</sup> bases his argument in support of this view on the fact, mentioned above, that if by-election results in the period 1981-1986 were compared to the results of the 1987 election, it is actually possible to detect a swing away from the far right.

One should remember, however, that by-elections are not necessarily analogous to full-scale general elections. During a general election the resources of smaller, poorer parties are often stretched to the limit, whereas by-elections enable such parties to focus all their energies onto a single 'target'. In most of the by-elections alluded to by Schlemmer there was a substantially lower voter turnout than in the subsequent general election. Since low turnouts tend to favour smaller, more extreme parties, the 'swing' away from the far right evident in the 1987 elections has to be viewed with some caution. A more valid inference would be that the Conservatives managed to retain the support they built up since their inception in the 1987 elections, if due consideration is given to the basic differences between general elections and by-elections.

Schlemmer falls into an interesting trap of his own making when he presents the progress made by the Independents in the elections as further evidence of a swing to the left. Although the Malan-Worrall group achieved some outstanding results in the elections, it must be remembered that they didn't really contest a full-scale general election. In limiting their participation in the election to three seats, the Independents in effect fought the kind of campaign usually associated with key by-elections. Any claims of a swing to the left based on the performance of the Independents must thus be viewed with some scepticism.

Similarly Mark Swilling's<sup>31</sup> discovery of a swing to the left elicits some doubts. Swilling's contention can be summarized as follows: the 'white' South African political spectrum *à la* 1987 is circumscribed as covering

political opinion from a right-liberal view (PFP/NRP) through to an ultra-conservative standpoint (HNP). A 'right' (Independent/NP) and 'conservative' (CP) position can be discerned between these two extremes. The 1981 spectrum was, according to Swilling, substantially different. Although the PFP, then as now, covered the liberal-right extreme, as did the HNP the ultra-conservative end, the 'right' position was occupied by the NRP and the 'conservative' position by the NP. One of the CP's precursors, Connie Mulder's National Conservative Party, was grouped with the HNP on the extreme right. To sum up: The 1987 election results therefore indicated (i) the annihilation of the ultra-conservatives, (ii) the halving of support for the conservative group, and (iii) the burgeoning of the 'right' group as the 'centre stage of white politics' moved leftwards.<sup>32</sup> This argument is based on the mistaken assumption that '[The] policies of the CP in 1987 are virtually identical to those of the NP in 1981'. Even the briefest of glimpses at current CP policy will demolish this fallacy. Among other things a CP government would prohibit all black trade unions (the Wichahn report was tabled in 1979), remove all Blacks from 'white' South Africa (the Rieckert report was tabled in 1979-1980) and dismantle the tricameral constitution, instead resettling the 'Coloured' and 'Indian' sections of the population in their 'own' political areas (the current constitution was mooted as long ago as 1977).<sup>33</sup> The CP's relationship with the AWB (if anything, too right wing to figure on Swilling's spectrum) is conveniently forgotten.

In reality the 'ultra-conservative' group (and note that we only use Swilling's categories with the greatest hesitation) nearly doubled in size, while the bulk of the NP still occupied the 'conservative' slot in spite of various legislative changes meant to foster reform in recent years. Swilling did get it right where he indicated that the Independents still occupy a position somewhere between the centre of the NP and the Alliance. The fact remains though (to pursue the metaphor) that another large section of the white electorate hasn't yet been able to burn the boats that would preclude apartheid as a variable in the future of this country.

### **Towards an Alternative Interpretation of the Election Results**

Although it is plain that, on the surface at least, the election results show a rightward trend, this assertion should not be taken at face value. For one thing, the swing to the far right is more than a simple rejection of the government's 'reform' initiatives or a knee-jerk reaction to the key role security came to play in the election campaign. Part of the problem surely lies in the increasing complexity of the far right in this country. While the HNP has always found the working-class Afrikaner to be its mainspring, the CP has made great strides in setting up a counter-establishment. Where the HNP only challenged the National Party's hegemony over the Afrikaner



rhetorically, the CP has launched tangible steps, indeed almost a programme, to secure itself the position of true guardian of the Afrikaner holy grail.<sup>34</sup>

Yet the ultra-right trend evident in the election results is not entirely devoid of meaning in terms of class conflict. The recent downturn in the South African economy has been felt particularly hard by the working-classes of all races. The political response of the vast majority of black workers has been a heightened commitment to the resistance movement. The white working-class, a privileged co-opted group, on the other hand has no immediate tradition of working-class resistance to turn to. This group, for the greater part Afrikaans-speaking, has traditionally supported the National Party which it perceived as being protective of its interests. The latter party has displayed an increasing commitment to an erosion of this protection, with the resultant alienation of white workers.

The sudden surge in working-class support for the far right can be only partially attributed to the racist appeal of its policies. Although both the HNP and the CP promise the maintenance of white 'supremacy', mere promises do not secure electoral support. One should perhaps consider the famous dictum penned by Karl Marx '... all the great events and characters of world history occur to speak twice... the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce'.<sup>35</sup>

The point then is that classes, in their struggle for supremacy, return to strategies that had proved successful in their earlier history.<sup>36</sup> The 1922 strike was followed by the gradual formation of a symbiosis between the National Party (at that stage mindful of working-class interests, if only as a power-base) and the Afrikaner worker. The 1979 strike saw the beginning of the end of this symbiosis, and the realignment of Afrikaner labour and the far right.<sup>37</sup>

The 1987 election then saw a majority of the Afrikaans working-class supporting a party promising to pay special attention to their interests, just as parliamentary elections in the period 1948-1977 were marked by the symbiosis between the working class and the NP. The CP presented voters with visions that hearkened back to the days of grand apartheid, a period which the white working-class could well look back to as a golden age. Although most of these visions may verge on farce (and in their earlier execution had indeed been tragedies), they are the only political options that promise the white worker a perceived positive solution to a problematic future — the tried and trusted remedy for their ills.

Similarly farmers in the northern provinces have started to abandon the NP. The Afrikaans farming community had also developed a symbiotic relationship with the Nationalists — a relationship that is of even longer standing than that between the governing party and Afrikaner labour. The downturn in the economy plus the farmers' perceived vulnerability to insurgents have soured this special relationship to the point of open hostility. Like their working-class brethren, the farmers have sought a return to the

political strategies that brought them affluence and guaranteed them security. This has translated into extensive support for the Conservative Party and its policies.

The CP in fact effected its major breakthroughs in the Transvaal countryside, capturing sixteen out of twenty-two seats at stake. The party polled 48,88 per cent of the vote in these seats to the 44,97 per cent of the NP. If the 4,8 per cent the HNP polled is added to the CP tally the far right polled a plurality of votes (53,68 per cent) in the area. The electoral map appended in this article clearly shows the full extent of the right's electoral success in rural Transvaal (see Map 1). The National Party in fact only managed to defeat the far right outright in three of these constituencies (Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Nelspruit — the former two constituencies are not even rural constituencies in the true sense of the word as they include mostly urban areas, as is evident on the map).

The far right won the rest of their seats (six) in the highly urbanized Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area — three on the West and Far West Rand, two on the East Rand and the Vanderbijlpark constituency of Overvaal. Pretoria and Johannesburg failed to yield any gains to the CP. In terms of votes polled expressed as a percentage of the total vote, the far right's best effort was in the Vaal Triangle where it gained 45,86 per cent of the vote (the CP 39,87 per cent and the HNP 5,99 per cent) as opposed to the 50,74 per cent of the NP.

The urban seats won by the CP are mostly on the periphery of the PWV area. Seats like Nigel, Brakpan, Carletonville and Randfontein include a mixture of small farmers, mineworkers and other members of the working classes. The only non-peripheral Witwatersrand seat won by the party, Roodepoort, comprises mainly blue-collar workers. The accompanying map (Map 2) of the election results in the Pretoria area clearly illustrates the peripheral nature of far-right support relative to urban areas. It would appear that the parties of the far-right have only limited support in inner-city areas: again an indication of class voting, as South African inner-cities are mostly inhabited by pensioners, students, civil servants and white-collar and service workers.

The bulk of Afrikaans National Party support seems to have come from the ranks of the civil service, the young professionals and the business community. The party drew its largest number of votes in the country in the Pretoria East constituency — a mainly Afrikaans-oriented seat largely inhabited by the three groups mentioned above.

The party furthermore won every English-speaking working-class seat at stake in the election plus a fair number of middle- to upper-class English-oriented seats. It is quite possible that the National Party was supported by more English-speaking voters in the election than the PFP-NRP alliance. Dawie, the notoriously partisan National Party political columnist,

commented that the unprecedented English-speaking vote mustered by his party at long last signalled the end of the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>38</sup>

Where Peelc and Morse could as recently as 1974 still remark that ethnicity was the most salient characteristic of white South African elections<sup>39</sup>, with Afrikaners supporting the NP and English-speakers the 'liberal parties', it is now evident that particular mould has at last been broken

One of the reasons that can be advanced for this turn of events is the development of new hegemonic patterns in the white community over the last decade. Recognizing the need to overhaul the system, in order to facilitate its preservation, the NP has entered into various interesting partnerships over the past few years.

According to Keyan and Ruth Tomaselli a white 'national culture' is emerging.<sup>40</sup> This culture (or perhaps hegemony) supplants the formerly dominant Afrikaner hegemony, as the latter has become dysfunctional in terms of the continued existence of the state.

But can class analysis alone explain these new voting patterns? A strong geographical trend cutting across class cleavages was an obvious feature of the 1987 election. Where the far right did exceptionally well in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State (polling 37,8 per cent and 42,04 per cent of the votes in the respective areas), its impact on the other two provinces was less marked. While its fairly poor performance (11,45 per cent of the votes cast) in overwhelmingly English-speaking Natal was to be expected, its inability to make headway in the Cape Province (polling only 17,73 per cent of all votes) needs to be considered.

In the Western Cape the CP and the HNP failed to make an impact, despite the presence of extensive Afrikaans-speaking working-class areas. In the Tygerberg area of Greater Cape Town, an overwhelmingly Afrikaans-speaking area, the far right polled only 13,74 per cent of the votes. They did somewhat better in the Cape countryside, especially in the Karoo, North Western Cape and Griqualand West regions. (A detailed regional breakdown of voting in the 1987 election is attached to this article.)

The reason for the far right's relatively weak support in the Cape Province can perhaps be traced to the provincial distribution of those National Party MPs who established the CP in 1982. These, for the most part respected Nationalists (including two cabinet ministers), were all based in the northern parts of the country. Commanding personal respect, they had substantial support in their own and neighbouring constituencies, whilst they also managed to hijack large segments of the National Party organizational structure. As no leaders of any stature joined the rebels in the south, the new party struggled to get its organization deployed in these parts. The lack of working-class support for the far right outside the PWV is, incidentally, indicative of the lack of a nationwide white working-class consciousness. Cape-based blue-collar workers may still support the National Party because

of its perceived protection of their class interests. The lack of a right-wing working-class leadership, however, seems a more plausible reason for the far right's failure to make inroads in the Cape.

Another reason for the patchy geographical distribution of right-wing support can be traced to differing perspectives of the black 'threat'. Embattled Transvaal border farmers and mineworkers threatened by the abolition of the colour bar may find radical solutions more attractive than do their relatively secure brethren in the southern areas of the country.

### Conclusion

In an analysis published some weeks after the election, the NP mouth-piece *Rapport*<sup>41</sup> concluded that the CP would have to conquer a number of obstacles, before they could count on the eighty-four seats necessary to win an election. The paper noted that in order to achieve this aim, the party first had to win its eighty-fourth strongest seat — the Natal seat of Kliprivier, where it only managed to poll 22,40 per cent of the votes. (The HNP polled 5,74 per cent, giving the far right 28,19 per cent of the tally.) To win this seat a monumental swing of more than 20 per cent nationally would have to be maintained — a tall order indeed.

Various factors militate against a surprise victory by the far right in a further election in the near future. The most salient factor is the changing class composition of the white population. In the last half-century the white working class has been dwindling in numbers. White-collar workers, technicians and members of the civil service now form a majority of the white population.

Traditionally blue-collar occupations in the white sector of the population have either disappeared (think of the virtual extinction of the white labourer) or have been transformed into supervisory posts. Simultaneously the material position of all white South Africans has improved since the Second World War, leading to a dimming working-class consciousness (or even any 'false' working-class consciousness) and the obsolescence of traditional political strategies.

The blue-collar worker who voted the NP into power in 1948 is thus no longer able directly to affect the outcome of elections. Those blue-collar workers that remain (and the growing number of unemployed) largely supported the far right in the 1987 election, as did struggling farmers in the northern provinces. It would, however, be foolish to regard the far right, especially the CP, as a monolith of dead-end classes. The party has a lot of support in certain Afrikaner establishment circles — especially in education and in the church. It would also be foolish to regard the CP's racism as its only source of voter appeal. At the moment the party consists of a broad front of largely Afrikaans-speaking opponents of the government. This opposition is not only rooted in racial policy, but includes moralists anguished at the

government's 'liberal' trends (especially its application of the censorship laws), distressed consumers and old-style Afrikaner Nationalists.

All in all, it would seem that the NP has the edge over the far right. Simpson's claims that the NP would not be able to implement effective gerrymandering do not stand up to closer scrutiny. Detailed returns of voting patterns are kept by the Department of Home Affairs and will undoubtedly be consulted by NP intelligence. The well-developed research apparatus at the disposal of the governing party must also not be underestimated — the Department of Constitutional Development for instance, ran an extensive socio-political monitor survey during the last few years. The following factors could also favour the NP in a future electoral showdown:

- the party has a monopoly of Afrikaans print media, while its dominance of the South African Broadcasting Corporation is well documented;
- the NP has in the past refined the 'security through unity' strategy to the point of perfection. Paradoxically, South Africa's increasing isolation could be used to foster the party's future election prospects and
- it was very evident in the last election, that in terms of resources, both financial and material, the NP outstripped its far right rivals with ease. Where the CP, for instance, has very little hope of being backed by the bulk of organized capital, the NP has been able to extract more from this quarter than even the PFP, the supposed pet project of monopoly capital.

The far right on the other hand could be favoured by:

- the possible resolution of the hegemonic struggle for Afrikaner symbols in its favour;
- the breakdown of traditional NP recruiting mechanisms;<sup>42</sup> and
- the further deterioration of the South African economy with a concomitant deterioration in white standards of living and increasing unemployment.

If the NP is really committed to reform, certain aspects of its current policy, like the *Group Areas Act*, will have to be reconsidered. At the moment the far right's impressive electoral showing seems to preclude drastic reform. The NP is thus to some extent prevented from embarking on substantial change, by the prospect of an electoral clash with the Conservatives.

It may therefore be in the best interests of the NP to stick to its originally mooted election date of August 1989, instead of riding out its recently-achieved five years mandate to April 1992 as the State President has indicated recently. In terms of the 1983 Constitution an election is due at the former date, but requires only a simple parliamentary majority vote to be changed. The security and economic situation is however likely to deteriorate between 1989 and 1992, improving the far right's electoral prospects somewhat. As the NP is likely to win the 1989 election, it could embark on a more substantial reform programme than has been the case up to the present. A

decision to postpone the election will put reform on hold, resulting in economic deterioration and a right-wing backlash in 1992.

The next few years are going to be crucial for the minor parties and groupings which contested the recent election. For the HNP and the New Republic Party, the crisis has indeed already passed, with both parties now surely on the brink of extinction. In an outstanding display of rational voting, supporters of the far right plumped for the CP on an overwhelming scale, in the wake of the failure of the two ultra-right parties to reach an election pact. The HNP lost its only seat, and retained its deposit (polled more than 20 per cent of the victors' share of the vote) in only eight of the seats it contested.

The PFP/NRP Alliance was a failure. The Alliance existed only in name, as the NRP had been reduced to a small core of supporters clustered around the party leadership. Up to eighty per cent of voters who supported the NRP in 1981 voted for the NP this time around. This turn of events was to some extent predicted by a survey conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Studies at the University of Natal some time ago, in which it was shown that English-speaking NRP supporters were more conservative politically than their NP counterparts!<sup>43</sup>

The PFP and the Independents seem to have a similar constituency, a situation that can lead to internecine strife. It is doubtful, for instance, if Wynand Malan could have retained his seat without PFP support, while the intervention of Independent candidates would have seen the PFP lose several additional seats to the NP. Although Schlemmer<sup>44</sup> indicates that the Independents could probably muster half the PFP's current support plus an additional twenty-five per cent of NP support (the much vaunted but intangible 'New Nats'), it would probably have been in the interest of both 'liberal' parties to reach some kind of understanding.

The national municipal elections due in October 1988, may well indicate the future course of white South African electoral politics. Should a further swing to the right become evident, the general elections may well be postponed to 1992, which seems to be the State President's preferred option at the time of writing. Such an eventuality would of course rob the NP of any last claims it still may have of being a legitimate government. On the other hand, a government of the far right would almost certainly take steps to ensure that it remains in power, in order to carry through its extensive social engineering programmes. All in all then, South African parliamentarism may well be on its last legs, unless the white electorate can commit itself to further reform. Failure to do so, whether under an NP or a far right government, would indeed be the final burning of the boats.

#### Notes

1. The House of Representatives and the House of Delegates (the 'Coloured' and 'Indian' components of South Africa's Parliament) largely function as adjuncts to the 'white' House of Assembly. Since these two bodies have up to the present for the

- greater part complied with the constitutional vision laid down by the National Party, it follows that 'white' elections have a substantial bearing on their functioning. On the other hand the 'Coloured' and 'Indian' elections of 1984 seem to have had little effect on the House of Assembly.
2. For an elaboration of this point see Prinsloo, M W 'Political restructuring, capital accumulation and the coming corporatism in South Africa: some theoretical considerations', *Politikon*, vol. 11 (1) 1984 and Maré, G 'The New Constitution: Extending Democracy or Decentralizing Control' in *South Africa Review III*, South African Research Service/Ravan, Johannesburg, 1986.
  3. See Charney, C R 'Towards Rupture or Stasis? An Analysis of the 1981 South African General Election', *African Affairs*, vol. 81 (325), 1982, p. 528.
  4. Wiehahn for instance contended that the granting of trade union rights could win Black workers over to the capitalist cause.
  5. See Luckhardt K & Wall B, *Working for Freedom*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1981, pp. 41-65.
  6. Lemon, A 'Issues and Campaigns in the South African General Election of 1981', *African Affairs*, vol. 81 (325), 1982.
  7. Charney, 1982, p. 527.
  8. The participation of coloured schoolboys in an annual school rugby tournament, the Craven Week, in fact triggered the split.
  9. By 52,58 % to 47,42 % of the vote. For a full summary and breakdown of the referendum result, see Cooper, C (et al.) (compilers), *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, SA Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1984, p. 88.
  10. According to mathematician and psephologist Dr Dirk Laurie, more than half of the PFP supporters voted 'yes'. 40 % of PFP supporters abstained, while every five 'no' PFP votes were countered by seven 'yes' votes (ibid).
  11. At a PFP presentation, attended by one of the authors at Boksburg in February 1987, party general secretary Robin Carlisle indicated that the referendum was one of two events in the last 5 years that cost the party substantial support, the other being the resignation of party leader Van Zyl Slabbert early in 1986.
  12. Posel is probably right when she states that 'free enterprise' has become an ideological theme for legitimizing state interference in the economy on the one hand and the interference of capital in state affairs on the other. See Charney, C R 'Restructuring White Politics: The Transformation of the National Party', *South African Review One*, South Africa Research Service, Johannesburg, 1983.
  13. Willem van Vuuren gives a penetrating analysis of the inability of the South African electorate to punish the NP's consistent policy failures in a forthcoming article. See Van Vuuren, W J 'Symbolic Politics and the electoral success of policy failure in South Africa', *Politikon*, vol. 14 (1), 1987.
  14. The implementation of the new constitution started off disastrously for the Government with violent, low-turnout elections for the 'Coloured' and 'Indian' Houses of Parliament.
  15. The swing was calculated after the method employed by Heard in his landmark study on South African elections. See Heard, K A *General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970*, Oxford University Press, London, 1974, p. xix.
  16. It can be accepted that this series of by-elections was timed to monitor the strength of opposition parties.
  17. More specifically the PFP vote in Springs dropped from 1 491 between 1981 and the 1985 by-elections. In 1981 the PFP polled 35 % of the vote, compared to 14,77 % four years later. By 1987 this had decreased to only 9,77 %.
  18. *The Sunday Times*, 1 March 1987.
  19. It was at Stellenbosch where the biggest group of academics expressed their support for the Independents. About 300 staff members of the local university signed a petition that, among other things, implied a call for more substantial reform (*The Argus*, 28 March 1987).
  20. *Rapport*, 29 March 1987.
  21. For an analysis of the various advertising and media campaigns in the election, see

- Phillips, D 'Advertising and the Election', *The South Africa Foundation News*, vol. 13 (6), June 1987.
22. Although members of the police usually are in attendance at polling booths, this election saw large numbers of riot police, and even the military, guarding polling stations.
  23. According to members of opposition parties, the presence of the military certainly cost them votes. Whether this presence was a deliberate ploy or whether the security establishment acted in good faith is unclear.
  24. *Finansies en Tegniek*, 20 March 1987.
  25. Van Rensburg resigned after it became obvious that he was on the verge of losing a nomination battle in his constituency. He afterwards bitterly attacked the PFP, accusing them of being anti-Afrikaner. He subsequently stood in the election as an independent, but failed to make the grade.
  26. Uncontested seats have in fact become something of a South African tradition. In elections since the Second World War the number of uncontested seats have been: 1948 — 12, 1953 — 19, 1958 — 24, 1961 — 70 (nearly half the seats), 1966 — 19, 1970 — 11, 1974 — 43, 1977 — 41, 1981 — 14. (From: Schoeman, B M: *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika 1910-1976*, Aktuele Publikasies, Pretoria, 1977, and Uys, JF (compiler) *Parliamentary election results 1977-1987*, Juridata, Johannesburg, 1987.
  27. *The Sunday Star*, 24 May 1987.
  28. Heard, 1974, p. 200.
  29. By-elections in the Waterberg and Soutpansberg constituencies held after Fanie Botha, at that stage the Tvl leader of the NP, chided CP leader Andries Treurnicht for lacking the courage to test his party's support in a by-election. Treurnicht took up the challenge and subsequently both men resigned their seats. A second member of the CP resigned his seat to challenge Botha in his Soutpansberg seat. Eventually Treurnicht won Waterberg quite comfortably against NP and HNP opponents, while Botha scraped home against the CP. When Botha was forced to retire from politics for personal reasons in 1984, the CP won the subsequent by-election.
  30. *Rapport*, 10 May 1987.
  31. *The Weekly Mail*, 15-21 May 1987.
  32. Swilling's ideas at a glance:

1981 Percentage of votes	Liberal-Right PFP	Right NRP	Conservative NP	Ultra- Conservative HNP & NCP
	19,4	7,8	57,0	14,1 & 1,4
1987 Percentage of votes	PFP & NRP	Inds & NP	CP	HNP
	14,1 & 1,9	1,3 & 52,4	26,3	3,1

33. *CP facts for Victory*, April 1987.
34. The programme includes the creation of the *Afrikaner Volkswag*, a cultural organization intended to counteract the Broederbond-dominated *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge*.
35. From Marx, K 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' in Fernbach, D (editor): *Surveys from Exile*, Random House, New York, 1983, p. 146.
36. The point was first made by Martin Legassick. See Legassick, M 'The Struggle for Workers' Democracy', *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, 4, Winter 1985, p. 26.
37. The 1922 Strike was precipitated by, among other things, white reaction to the lowering of the colour bar on the mines. Similarly the 1979 strike was a reaction to some of the recommendations at the Wiehahn Commission implying the elimination of job reservation.
38. *Die Burger*, 10 May 1987.
39. Peel, S & Morse, S J 'Ethnic Voting and Political Change in South Africa', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 68, 1974.



40. Tomaselli, K & Tomaselli R 'Change and Continuity at the SABC', *Indicator SA*, vol. 3 (3), Summer 1986.
41. *Rapport*, 24 May 1987.
42. The seeming dissolution of the National Party student body (the Afrikaanse Studentebond) in the period 1986-1987 is a case in point.
43. Schlemmer, L 'South African Politics and the English Speakers', *Leadership—South Africa*, vol. 2 (3), 1983, p. 27.
44. *The Argus*, 10 August 1987.

## SUPPLEMENT

### Regional Breakdown of Voting in the 1987 Parliamentary Election

Area	Constituent seats	No of seats by party	% of vote by party
Northern Tvl	Waterberg, Brits, Potgietersrus, Soutpansberg, Pietersburg	CP 5	CP 51,88 } HNP 5,06 } 56,94 NP 42,69 Spoilt 0,3
Western Tvl	Ventersdorp, Schweizer-Reneke, Rustenburg, Potchefstroom, Losberg, Lichtenburg, Klerksdorp, Stilfontein	CP NP 4	CP 48,61 } HNP 5,06 } 54,34 NP 46,07 Spoilt 0,65
Eastern Tvl	Barberton, Bethal, Delmas, Ermelo, Lydenburg, Middelburg, Nelpruit, Standerton, Witbank	CP 7 NP 2	CP 47,5 } HNP 5,14 } 52,64 NP 45,32 PFP 1,51 Spoilt 0,59
Pretoria	Gezina, Hercules, Innesdale, Koedoespoort, Pret. Central, Pret. E, Pret. W, Rissik, Roodeplaat, Sunnyside, Verwoerdburg, Waterkloof, Wonderboom	NP 13	NP 51,88 } CP 33,34 } 39,16 HNP 5,82 } PFP 8,10 Spoilt 0,86
Johannesburg	Bezuidenhout, Hillbrow, Houghton, Jeppe, Jo'burg N, Jo'burg W, Langlaagte, Parktown, Rosettenville, Turfontein, Westdene, Yeoville	NP 8 PFP 4	NP 48,94 } PFP/NRP 37,03 } CP 10,75 } 12,25 HNP 1,5 } Spoilt 0,89
Randburg/ Sandton/ Halfway House	Randburg, Sandton, Bryanston, North Rand	PFP 2 Indep. 1 NP 1	PFP 38,92 } NP 36,28 } Indep. 14,88 } CP 9,2 } Spoilt 0,71
East Rand	Alberton, Benoni, Boksburg, Brakpan, Brentwood, Edenvale, Geduld, Germiston, Germiston Distr., Kempton Park, Modderfontein, Nigel, Primrose, Springs	NP 12 CP 2	NP 52,30 } CP 35,26 } 37,02 HNP 1,76 } PFP/NRP 9,78 } Spoilt 0,91

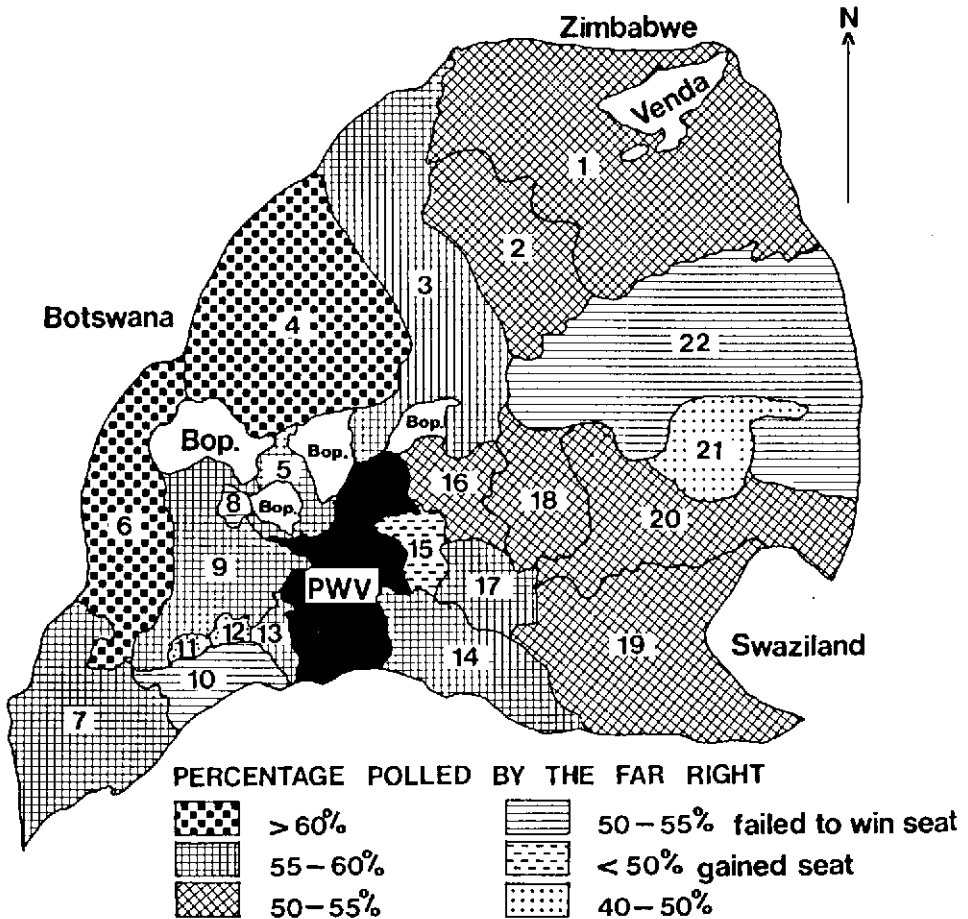
West and Far West Rand	Carletonville, Florida, Helderkruin, Krugersdorp, Maraisburg, Randfontein, Roodepoort	NP 4 CP 3	NP 47,99 CP 40,80 HNP 1,24 PFP 8,51 Ind. 0,83 Spoilt 0,63	42,04
Vaal Triangle	Meyerton, Overvaal, Sasolburg, Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging	NP 4 CP 1	NP 50,74 CP 39,87 HNP 5,99 PFP 1,46 Spoilt 0,49	45,86
OFS Goldfields	Virginia, Welkom	NP 2	NP 53,56 CP 33,91 HNP 7,98 PFP 5,0 Spoilt 0,17	41,89
Bloemfontein	Bloemfontein East, Bloemfontein North, Bloemfontein West	NP 3	NP 62,71 CP 32,41 PFP 4,17 Spoilt 0,70	
Free State Country	Bethlehem, Fauresmith, Heilbron, Kroonstad, Ladybrand, Parys, Smithfield, Winburg	NP 8	NP 54,29 CP 41,0 HNP 4,11 Spoilt 0,60	45,11
Durban	Berea, Umbilo, Point, D'ban Central, D'ban N, Pinetown, Umhlatuzana Umlazi, Port Natal	NP 5 PFP 4	PFP/NRP 48,98 NP 46,62 CP 2,91 HNP 0,90 Spoilt 0,62	3,81
Natal Coast	Umhlanga, South Coast, Amanzimtoti	NP 3	NP 50,86 PFP/NRP 40,17 CP 8,49 Spoilt 0,47	
Pietermaritzburg & Natal Midlands	P'Maritzburg N, Greytown, P'Maritzburg S, Mooi River	NP 2 NRP 1 PFP 1	NP 47,02 PFP/NRP 46,74 CP 4,80 HNP 1,45 Spoilt 0,37	6,25
Northern Natal	Kliprivier, Vryheid, Newcastle, Umfolozi	NP 4	NP 52,29 CP 28,64 HNP 6,16 PFP 6,43 Ind. 5,74 Spoilt 0,73	34,8
Cape Town	Constantia, Gardens, Greenpoint, Maitland, Pinelands, Sea Point, Simonstown, Wynberg (PFP unopposed in Claremont and Grootte Schuur)	PFP 7 NP 3	PFP 52,74 NP 45,26 CP 0,87 HNP 0,16 Spoilt 0,96	1,03

Tygerberg	Bellville, Durbanville, Parow, Tygervallei, Vasco	NP 5	NP 72,53 CP 11,62 HNP 2,12 PFP/NRP 13,06 Spoilt 0,67	13,74
Cape Flats/ Stellenbosch/ Somerset West	De Kuilen, Helderberg, Stellenbosch, False Bay	NP 4	NP 59,91 Ind. 23,08 CP 6,21 HNP 5,44 PFP 4,96 Spoilt 0,48	11,65
Port Eliza- beth/Uitenhage	Algoa, Newton Park, PE Central, PE North, Uitenhage, Walmer	NP 5 PFP 1	NP 56,17 PFP 24,02 CP 12,99 HNP 5,70 Spoilt 1,12	18,69
East London	East London City, East London North	NP 2	NP 65,90 PFP 31,36 Ind. 2,1 Spoilt 0,63	
Eastern Cape Country	Albany, Aliwal, Cradock, King William's Town, Queenstown, Sunday's River	NP 6	NP 57,36 PFP/NRP 23,88 CP 15,20 HNP 2,91 Spoilt 0,65	18,11
Boland/West Coast/Hantam	Ceres, Malmesbury, Paarl, Piketberg, Wellington, Worcester	NP 6	NP 72,04 CP 17,19 HNP 5,07 PFP 5,11 Spoilt 0,73	22,09
Southern Cape Coast	Caledon, George, Humansdorp, Mossel Bay, Swellendam	NP 5	NP 63,47 CP 20,19 HNP 1,63 PFP/NRP 13,95 Spoilt 0,75	21,82
Karoo	Beaufort West, De Aar, Graaff-Reinet, Oudts- hoorn, Prieska	NP 5	NP 58,55 CP 35,38 HNP 3,01 Ind. 2,70 Spoilt 0,37	38,39
Northwestern Cape	Gordonia, Namaqualand	NP 2	NP 61,34 CP 34,17 HNP 4,00 Spoilt 0,49	38,17
Griqualand West	Kuruman, Vryburg, Kimberley North, Kimberley South	NP 4	NP 57,08 CP 34,12 HNP 3,44 PFP 4,94 Spoilt 0,41	37,56

Note: Regional breakdown of seats is rather arbitrary since some seats (e.g. Greytown) can conceivably fall in two different regions. In such instances the location of the bulk of the seat's area, rather than the demographical make-up of its electorate, has determined a seat's classification.

# MAP 1

## THE CORDONNED HEARTLAND: THE PWV AREA ENCIRCLED BY SEATS WHERE THE FAR RIGHT POLLED A MAJORITY OF THE VOTES



### NORTHERN TRANSSVAAL

- 1. Soutpansberg
- 2. Pietersburg
- 3. Potgietersrus
- 4. Waterberg
- 5. Brits

### WESTERN TRANSSVAAL

- 6. Lichtenburg

### 7. Schweizer-Reneke

- 8. Rustenburg
- 9. Ventersdorp
- 10. Stilfontein
- 11. Klerksdorp
- 12. Potchefstroom
- 13. Losberg

### EASTERN TRANSSVAAL

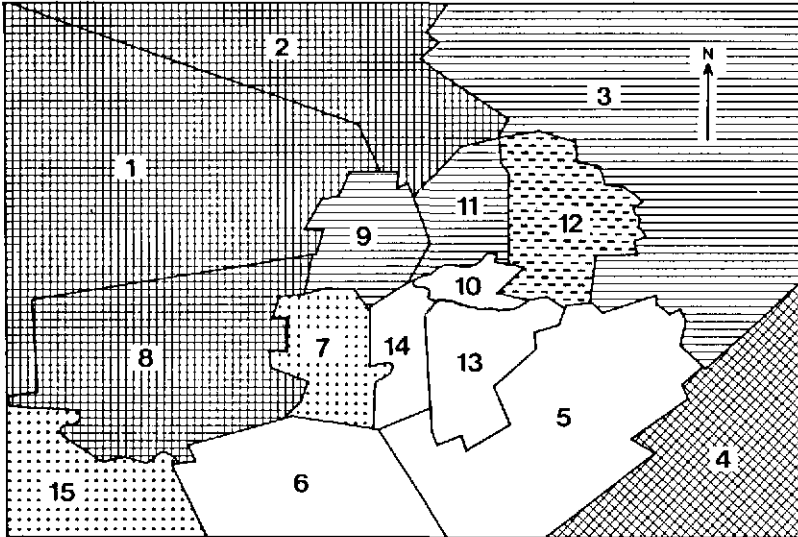
- 14. Standerton
- 15. Delmas
- 16. Witbank
- 17. Bethal
- 18. Middelburg
- 19. Ermelo

### 20. Barberton

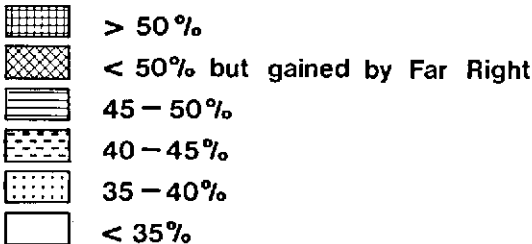
- 21. Nelspruit
- 22. Lydenburg

## MAP 2

### THE 1987 ELECTION – TRENDS TOWARDS THE FAR RIGHT IN PRETORIA AND ENVIRONS



#### PERCENTAGE POLLED BY THE FAR RIGHT



- |                  |                     |                  |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Hercules      | 6. Verwoerdburg     | 11. Innesdal     |
| 2. Wonderboom    | 7. Pretoria Central | 12. Koedoespoort |
| 3. Roodeplaat    | 8. Pretoria West    | 13. Waterkloof   |
| 4. Delmas        | 9. Gezina           | 14. Sunnyside    |
| 5. Pretoria East | 10. Rissik          | 15. North Rand   |

CHRISTOPHER GREGORY

## **Soviet Foreign Policy: Ideology or Power Politics?**

The question of the relationship between thought and action is one which has plagued philosopher and politician alike for centuries. In the political sphere, the impact of ideology on politics remains a central issue.<sup>1</sup> It is one on which consensus is far from being reached, notwithstanding the intense, even acrimonious, debate which has raged on and off since the establishment of the first Bolshevik regime in 1917. For it is the Soviet Union which, by and large, has formed the focus of discussion: a state whose ruling party had a long pre-revolution familiarity with Marxist thought and which, from the outset, proclaimed its fealty to Marxism-Leninism.

There is, however, a considerable body of opinion which holds that there is little, if any, ideological influence in Soviet foreign policy. Indeed, many extend this argument to the sources of foreign policy behaviour in general. Thus it is that the question of the relationship between ideology and foreign policy is of considerable relevance, not only for those specifically concerned with Soviet foreign policy, but for those interested in other states as well. The question is of particular importance for those involved with southern Africa, a region dominated by South Africa, whose political and socio-economic life has been considerably influenced for several decades by apartheid, a doctrine of not inconsiderable sophistication. South Africa, for its part, is opposed by at least three states in the region whose governments proclaim fealty to Marxism-Leninism — Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

It is not the intention of this article to examine the impact of ideology on foreign policy in general. Rather, it will focus on the Soviet Union as the largest state (and the first) consistently to proclaim that ideology has a major impact on its foreign policy. For it is surely this superpower, of all the self-styled Marxist-Leninist states, which continues to exert the most influence on international relations.

Much of the writing on the sources of Soviet conduct in global politics proceeds from the assumptions, implicit in the title of this essay, that ideology and power politics are at opposite poles, and that they can therefore

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be analysed in isolation from one another. The question is often implied, if not explicitly posed: is Soviet foreign policy ideological or power political in nature? This is a fundamental but, it will be argued, false dichotomy. It frequently rests upon the following line of thought. Most analysts accept that the first Bolshevik government entertained beliefs of a strongly ideological nature. These beliefs, it is generally accepted, coloured the Soviet Union's initial attempts at foreign policy formulation; hence Lenin's establishment of the Communist International in 1919 and the Soviet government's allocation of two million roubles for the needs of the international revolutionary movement. However, the argument goes, the Soviet Union has been forced by the realities of the world situation to reappraise its position. More particularly, it has been forced to choose *between* ideology and power politics. Ideology has come to play an ever-diminishing role in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy, so much so that Marxism-Leninism is now used only as an *ex post facto* rationalisation and justification of Soviet actions.

Several hypotheses purport to explain this alleged diminution of the role of ideology. This essay will examine some of them before considering alternative sources which, it is claimed, now motivate Soviet foreign policy. Various conclusions will then be assessed, paying particular attention to their role in the analysis of international relations in general and events in southern Africa.

### **'Manipulation' of the ideology**

The 'evidence' most often cited for Soviet disbelief in Marxism-Leninism is the perceived cynical manipulation of the ideology. This, it is argued, shows that communist ideology has become no more than an *ex post facto* rationalisation. Doctrinal revisions reflect the pragmatic, power political view of the Soviet leaders. It is national interest, not ideology, which motivates Soviet foreign policy. For example, Lenin argued — as did Marx before him — that world proletarian revolution would occur in the so-called developed nations. When it failed to materialise, the USSR turned towards the less developed countries for the revolutionary lead. However, the proletariat was still regarded as the revolutionary vanguard. Efforts to arouse this class having failed, the USSR switched its attention with equal lack of success to that other hitherto ignored class, the bourgeoisie. It was suggested that sections of this group would ally themselves with the proletariat. Soviet ideologues then turned to the concept of a party of ideologically committed cadres, the so-called 'vanguard party'.

Such doctrinal convolutions, most analysts would declare, are clear evidence of the cynical manipulation of Marxist-Leninist ideology to suit the USSR's power political ends. Such revolutionary 'inconsistency' must reflect a Soviet loss of belief. As Marxism-Leninism fails to live up to its revolutionary predictions, it loses credibility accordingly. Soviet leaders

have been forced to abandon a failed doctrine in favour of conformity to the power political nature of the existing global status quo.

Such an argument can be questioned on several grounds: first, consider the element of 'cynical manipulation' or revisionism in the ideology. Marxism-Leninism, as Soviet ideologues frequently emphasise, is not a dogma to be accepted in its entirety and without amendment. Nikita Khrushchev merely paraphrased Marx and Lenin when he described it as 'a guide to political revolutionary action'.<sup>2</sup> He went on to stress a 'creative approach to theory, the ability to develop and advance the science of Marxism-Leninism'.<sup>3</sup> According to Stalin, Marxism is not

... a collection of dogmas that 'never' change despite changes in the conditions of the development of society ... Marxism as a science cannot stand still, it develops and improves. In its development Marxism cannot but be enriched by new experience, new knowledge — consequently some of its formulae and conclusions cannot but change with the passage of time, cannot but be replaced by new formulae and conclusions, corresponding to new historical tasks. Marxism does not recognise invariable conclusions and formulae obligatory for all epochs and periods.<sup>4</sup>

More recently, Pyotr Fedoseyev, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, has elaborated on this theme:

The CPSU, the Party of creative Marxism founded by Lenin, has always, in all of its activities, combined undeviating fidelity to the principles of Marxism-Leninism with its uninterrupted creative and innovative development. The history of the CPSU is Marxism-Leninism in action. Its contribution, as that of other Marxist-Leninist parties, to the theory of scientific communism, is based on generalization of world socialism. The constructive effort of the masses is thus given a theoretical interpretation.<sup>5</sup>

The point is that *creative* Marxism as a concept is far from taboo. Reinterpretation is not only permissible, but actually deemed essential in keeping pace with changing circumstances. However — and this is the crucial point — it must always be within the framework of the *general principles* of Marxism-Leninism.

To be sure, Marxism-Leninism, as a constituent part of Soviet foreign policy, has suffered many setbacks. But to see this as grounds for a growing disbelief in Communism, on the part of the CPSU, is fallacious. As early as 1929, the then Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov explained that

... in examining the development of foreign policy we have to deal with a number of factors that are scarcely subject to calculation, with a number of elements outside our control and the scope of our action. International affairs are composed not only of our own aspirations and actions, but of those of a large number of countries ... pursuing other aims than ours, and using other means to achieve those aims than we allow.<sup>6</sup>

One may suffer setbacks, one may entertain doubts about a particular aspect of the ideology. But this is not to disavow Marxism-Leninism in its entirety, for the doctrine explicitly admits the inevitability of setbacks. Besides, as Carew Hunt has pointed out, 'between total commitment and



total disillusionment there are many intermediate positions'.<sup>7</sup> Marxists have long been aware of the difficulties of translating theory into practice. Lenin himself emphasised that history 'is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes'.<sup>8</sup> On more than one occasion he reminded his followers that Marxism 'is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement'.<sup>9</sup>

Most critics point to the manifest failures of Marxism-Leninism as evidence to support their contention that belief in the ideology can no longer be sustained. The many successes of Marxism-Leninism are simply ignored. The ideology contributed in no insignificant manner to Lenin's success in 1917, and has played no small part in sustaining the regime in subsequent years.<sup>10</sup> The organisational aspects of the doctrine, the Leninist contribution, have been of cardinal importance in the accession to and/or maintenance of power of states in Eastern Europe and the Third World alike. In 1983 there were 117 communist parties (Moscow-recognised) world-wide, with over 80 million members of which some 49 million lived outside the USSR and the Eastern bloc<sup>10a</sup>.

### **Pragmatism versus doctrinal fidelity**

Evidence of Soviet pragmatism is taken as proof of a disbelief in Marxism. Samuel Sharp cites 'the degree to which the pursuit of ultimate goals has been circumscribed in time and scope by considerations of *the feasible*'.<sup>11</sup> He quotes W. W. Rostow in support of his thesis. Rostow characterises Soviet foreign policy as a series of responses to the outside world which, especially before 1939, 'took the form of such actions as were judged most likely, *on a short-range basis*, to maintain or expand the national power of the Soviet regime'.<sup>12</sup> What both writers appear to fail to appreciate is that pragmatism and ideology are far from being mutually exclusive. Indeed, Marxist doctrine actively advocates the pragmatic approach. As Lenin put it in what is arguably the most famous — and most frequently read — of his pamphlets, "Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder!':

It is necessary to link the strictest devotion to the ideas of communism with the ability to effect all the necessary practical compromises, tacks, conciliatory manoeuvres, zigzags, retreats and so on . . .<sup>13</sup>

Unlike Christianity, Marxism-Leninism holds to no conception of objective morality. In *Anti-Dühring*, Engels asserts that 'morality was always a class morality . . . A really human morality . . . becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class contradictions but has even forgotten them in practical life'.<sup>14</sup> Pragmatism reigns supreme for, says Lenin, 'our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat . . . We say: morality is what serves to destroy the

old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new communist society . . . We do not believe in an eternal morality.<sup>15</sup>

A focus on short-term goals does not in the least imply the renunciation of long-term objectives. What is essential, however, is that those long-term goals be kept continually in mind. Having realised, in 1920, that global proletarian revolution was unlikely to materialise in the near future, Lenin proceeded to consolidate and defend the Soviet state as a base for global revolution. Far from renouncing his revolutionary aims, Lenin merely adapted to the perceived realities of the situation. Khrushchev's elaboration of peaceful coexistence in 1956 and his elevation of the concept from a tactic to a communist strategy, demonstrated a similar adaptation to the prevailing state of affairs. The invention and deployment of nuclear weapons necessitated the upgrading of peaceful coexistence. But it did not, and does not, imply the renunciation of the overriding objective of global revolution. Fedoseyev stated that:

Communist theoretical thought is orientated on finding the most effective ways of utilizing the new objective opportunities for revolutionary change, of how to adapt our tactics to the changing conditions in one or another country. It need hardly be said that the best answers come not from hasty, inadequately thought out conclusions, but, as we know, in the end the communist and working-class movement always puts everything in its proper place.<sup>16</sup>

What is seldom understood is that Soviet leaders do not have to evince a total and all-embracing belief in Marxist doctrine for them to be guided by ideology. What is required is an adherence to the *basic tenets*: class as the primary unit of analysis; a materialist philosophy; the law of the dialectic; and, arising out of these, the belief that history is linear and that the triumph of communism over capitalism is therefore inevitable; a view of international relations as essentially class-conflictual and a zero-sum game, and that therefore there is no room for *ultimate* compromise; and so on. These are the fundamental ingredients, the doctrinal base. All else is merely the superstructure. After all, nowhere does capitalism exist in its unadulterated theoretical form. However, even those who advocate 'capitalism with a human face' vigorously claim allegiance to that mode of production. Capitalism essentially means free markets, free mobilisation of the factors of production and private ownership. Those represent the fundamental, all-important base.

### **Marxism-Leninism and the dialectic**

Many 'realist school' misconceptions arise out of a singular failure to comprehend the nature of the dialectical relationship between theory and practice in Marxist-Leninist philosophy. A recent article published in *World Marxist Review*, written by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Alexander Lilov, is worth quoting at length.

Lilov points out that, with the increasing international nature of the communist movement,

'it is ever more important for the communists to consider what is indisputable and what is controversial in our theory; in which spheres of social life and struggle concessions and compromises can and cannot be made; how, on the basis of what has been achieved in the course of the whole history of our doctrine and movement, one has to cope with the unusually great complex of new contemporary phenomena, processes, trends, etc.'<sup>17</sup>

The dialectical relationship of theory to politics is of invaluable assistance in this regard. Marxism-Leninism preaches that 'priority goes to practice [for] it is practice which shows where — in the light of the eventual result and goal of the movement — we are right, and where we are not, both in the sphere of theory and our daily political actions'.<sup>18</sup> However, this is not to underestimate the key role played by ideology. Lilov explains the dialectical nature of the relationship:

On the one hand, theory opens up for politics a field of action. On the other, without politics, theory cannot reach the masses, take possession of them and become a material force, and however correct and brilliant theoretical and other ideas and intentions may be, they remain no more than an intellectual product which cannot be translated into the practice of life without politics. In other words, the limits opened up by theory do not at all signify an underestimation or limitation of the role of politics.<sup>19</sup>

A balance must be maintained. Lilov cautions against 'two of the greatest dangers connected with opportunism: blind worship of theory, on the one hand, and of politics, on the other'.<sup>20</sup>

Far from being proof of the power-political nature of the Bolshevik regime, Soviet foreign policy 'is a continuation, concretization and specification of general principles with an account of the specific features of the social and political reality'.<sup>21</sup> For, while each party and nation will 'introduce into the theory and practice of socialism something of their own, enriching and developing them . . . scientific socialism has been and will continue to be an integral theory of the scientific explanation and revolutionary socialist construction of society'.<sup>22</sup>

Johnson's identification of three levels of political ideas found in communist ideology usefully illustrates Lilov's point. These are (a) general philosophical assumptions, such as dialectical materialism; (b) doctrinal elements, which serve to indicate the general direction of political action in a given historical period — for example, the dictatorship of the proletariat; and (c) action programmes, which Johnson defines as 'programs of political action specifically tied to *particular* historical and socio-economic conditions'.<sup>23</sup> Examples include Stalin's 'socialism in one country' and Mao Tse-Tung's 'modern revisionism'. Johnson explains this differentiation:

Programs of political action are always subject to revision by the political leaders, and such revision is considered to be both positive and necessary. 'Action programs' are often indistinguishable from 'policies' in a Communist political system; they differ from 'policies' in a pragmatic political system in

terms of their continuous and conscious derivation from and justification in terms of especially the doctrinal but also the philosophical elements of the ideology. Doctrine is thus the politically crucial link between dogmatic assumptions and pragmatic action.<sup>24</sup>

### **Marxism-Leninism: An unbelievable world view?**

Many observers reject the assumption that Marxism-Leninism can provide a sustainable world view different from that enjoyed by the realists. Reality, they imply, is all-pervasive. Accordingly, Sharp claims that:

The concept of national interest, by focusing attention on the *objective sources of conflict* — i.e. those which *can* be explained rationally as issues between nations — permits us to view the international scene in terms of a global problem of power relations rather than a cops-and-robbers melodrama. We then can perceive which are the *tractable* elements in the total equation of conflict, and devote our energies to reducing or altering these factors.<sup>25</sup>

'Objective' and 'rationally' are terms which are frequently bandied about, but seldom explained or understood. Just what *are* the 'objective sources of conflict' — are they the clash of interests between nation-states, as the realists would have us believe; opposition between the bourgeois and proletarian classes, as the Marxists proclaim; or are they more fundamental still — the Manichean clash between God and Satan — as Christianity preaches?

The notion of rationality is no less problematic, given the existing multiplicity of human values and objectives. Even Anthony Downs, the scholar who is usually credited with the reintroduction to political science of the 'rational man' method, has recognised the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory definition of rational behaviour. Downs accepts that 'no unique course can be charted for a rational decision-maker to follow'.<sup>26</sup> Given that a feature of post-1945 global politics is an increasingly heterogeneous state system, and a concomitantly more varied array of political systems, values, and objectives, any attempt today to define rational behaviour satisfactorily can only be more complicated.

And what of this oft-cited 'reality'? Does it indeed exist? A considerable number of philosophers have argued that there is no such thing as an objective reality. Those who admit of an objective reality, arguing that *physical objects do exist independently of being perceived, must realise that such objects are perceived differently by different people. As such, each human being, to a greater or lesser extent, perceives and interprets reality in his or her own way.*<sup>27</sup> Even proponents of an 'exact' or hard science such as nuclear physics have suggested this: the Heisenberg Principle maintains that the act of observing a particle alters its behaviour. Surely the fundamental dynamic underlying international relations is an unending clash of 'realities'? For one political scientist '... politics can best be seen and understood as dispute over claims to authority concerning the nature of reality'.<sup>28</sup> For an illustration of this, one need only recall the fact that it has taken the US Congress some seven years to reach a degree of consensus on *one* foreign

policy issue: the political character of the Sandenista government in Nicaragua. Generally, one of the first lessons learnt by a formulator of foreign policy is that perceptions are what ultimately matter. There is considerable truth in the maxim that a state is as powerful as its peers perceive it to be.

To deny the possibility of the existence of a Soviet *Weltanschauung* of a fundamentally different nature from the Western liberal one is naïve in the extreme. The world view of the non-socialist world is by no means as monolithic as is commonly assumed. The Burmese, for example, believe that material success actually diminishes one's chances of attaining spiritual salvation. A far cry indeed from those American evangelical movements which declare material wealth to be a concrete manifestation of God's blessing! Note also the differing attitudes to death as held by the occidental and oriental worlds. What are Westerners, with their 'conventional' notion of what is real and what is rational, to make of the willingness of Japanese kamikaze pilots to die in battle as they did during the Second World War or, more recently, the apparent desire of ordinary Arabs to fight and die in the Iran-Iraq conflict — now in its seventh year — in the belief that death in a Jihad (or holy war) ensures automatic entry to Paradise?

Old Testament teachings professed a belief in the existence of God, and in Man's basic sinful nature. There was little hope of salvation, and this pessimism is reflected in the tone of the writings. In the New Testament, however, the premises change. Now there is the belief in Man's salvation as a consequence of the death of Christ at Calvary. The tone of New Testament writings reflects the altered *Weltanschauung*. It is now one of hope, in direct contrast to that of the Old. Again, it is the basic premises which are of primary importance.

Marxism-Leninism parallels Christianity in another aspect — belief in the millenium, and in ultimate triumph. All else is secondary, all else may even be, to some degree, mere *ex post facto* rationalisations. However, this does not detract from the reality of the belief. Rationalisation does not imply disbelief, as will be argued later.

### **National interest**

Notwithstanding the above, the realists may ask: what of national interest? Surely states act in terms of those interests which they perceive to be of benefit to them? Samuel Sharp suggests that 'Kremlin moves can best be understood in terms of what the leaders consider advantageous to the Soviet state'.<sup>29</sup> Winston Churchill, likewise, declared the 'key' to Soviet foreign policy to be that of national interest.<sup>30</sup> However, such statements beg the question of what are the sources of national interest. A great power does not *find* its interests. It *chooses* them. National interest is not conceived in a vacuum, but out of the perceptions and motivations of the leadership

concerned. If, as this writer argues, the perceptions and motivations of the CPSU are *fundamentally* Marxist-Leninist, then it follows that Soviet national interest, and thus foreign policy, must be at base Marxist-Leninist in orientation.

### **Geopolitical considerations**

The historical continuity of Tsarist and Soviet Russian geopolitical objectives has been cited as indicative of the USSR's preoccupation with security. Hence the Soviet Union's maintenance of traditional Tsarist Russian interests in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. It is posited that, under a façade of change, there exists an 'eternal Russia'. Soviet aspirations in the area of the Mediterranean have been described as merely a continuation of the Tsarist 'urge to the sea'. But historical continuity does not necessarily preclude ideological considerations. After all, while political regimes come and go, the Soviet Union retains its geographical position. The CPSU is forced to face this geopolitical fact. However, a 'coincidental starting place does not mean coincidental motivations'.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike its Tsarist Russian predecessor, the USSR has chosen a global policy. Moreover, Soviet diplomacy has tended to be hostile to traditional European diplomacy. Tsarist foreign policy, unlike that of its Soviet successor, was never conducted on the premise that its opponents had no right to exist.

The contest is no longer simply one of who will dominate the existing international system. It now centres on the nature itself of the international system. Soviet policy is thus essentially revisionist. Moreover, the West is regarded not as the *justus hostis* — the just opponent accepted as an equal — but as the *injustus hostis* — the absolute foe — to be vanquished and annihilated in pursuit of a *justa causa*,<sup>32</sup> the Communist millennium.

### **Doctrinal faith or mere rationalisation?**

The question is often posed: *Weltanschauung* or *ex post facto* rationalisation? Cannot both be possible? Marxism-Leninism is regarded by its proponents as no more than a guide to revolutionary action, to be developed in accordance with the advancing stages of historical development — and exemplified in the articulation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, that served to justify the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia following the Prague Spring of 1968. But it also reflected Soviet perceptions of the altering of the world correlation of forces in favour of the socialist bloc. Hence its use for the first time *outside* the socialist bloc in Afghanistan in 1979.

Such policy reformulations are a function both of power politics — the USSR flexing its new-found muscles — and of ideology, for the USSR regards this strength as proof of the success and veracity of Marxism-Leninism. In such circumstances the major premises and goals of the

ideology remain intact, and what starts out as an *a posteriori* justification may well become an *a priori* guideline. In a brief review of Soviet policy with regard to the European Economic Community, David Forte shows how, in the vast majority of instances, a prior shift in ideology preceded a change of policy, so as to establish the philosophical premises for such changes.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the relationship is dialectical: while ideology moulds politics, politics shapes the ideology. Unity of theory and praxis is paramount. Labeledz comments:

Ideology may be manipulated to suit policy, but it is still there, not merely reflecting the needs of the rulers but shaping their mentalities as well.<sup>34</sup>

Evidence of rationalisation is not, in itself, proof of the doctrinal cynicism of the Soviet leadership. Rationalisation is not an uncommon psychological phenomenon. It is something we all indulge in, consciously or unconsciously, to a greater or lesser extent. It is used to *strengthen* beliefs, not to weaken them. Seweryn Bialer recently elaborated on this process:

The constant reinforcing link that makes Soviet ideology the mode of thinking of the elites and leadership is its interconnection with their interests. It provides justification for the system and for the self-replicating, dominant role of the political elite. These interests make ideology viable from generation to generation, and ideology justifies and provides a higher meaning for these interests. It would be foolish, however, to think that acceptance of ideology is cynical. It is rather a process of internalization that provides the congruence between material power and status interests of the elite and their conscience and feeling of self-esteem.<sup>35</sup>

Carew Hunt usefully distinguishes between the *function* of the Soviet ideology and the peculiar *form* it has assumed. While in the last analysis its *function* 'is to provide a rationalisation of the one-party system of government and of the policies to which the Soviet rulers are committed',<sup>36</sup> the *form* it has taken derives primarily from Marxism. Hence the insistence upon conflict as the main-spring of history, the division of the world into two ultimately irreconcilable camps and the chiliastic faith in the eventual victory of communism.

### **The status of power within Marxist-Leninist ideology**

As mentioned earlier, much thinking concerning the impact of ideology on foreign policy proceeds on the false assumption of a dichotomy between Marxism-Leninism and power politics. However, as already demonstrated, ideology and power politics are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Indeed, Marxist-Leninist theory regards power as of paramount importance. As evidence of this, one need only look to the sophistication of the Soviet concept of the 'correlation of forces'.<sup>37</sup> This concept takes into account not only military might, but social, economic and political factors as well. Where ideology comes in, is the manner in which it affects the power political game. Or, in Carew Hunt's words: 'An ideology is significant only if it makes those who profess it act in a way they would not otherwise do.'<sup>38</sup> Solzhenitsyn describes the Soviet conception of power politics from first-hand experience:

You have to understand the nature of Communism. The very ideology of Communism, all of Lenin's teachings, are that anyone who doesn't take what's lying in front of him is considered a fool. If you can take it, do so. If you can attack, strike. But if there is a wall, they retreat. The Communist leaders respect only firmness and have contempt for persons who continually give in to them.<sup>39</sup>

The last word on the subject goes to Lilov: 'For us, power is the means of attaining the ideals and goals of scientific socialism'.<sup>40</sup>

### **Doctrinal orthodoxy: its role within the Soviet élite**

All this, however, cannot be understood in isolation. Knowledge of the nature of Soviet society assists in an appreciation of the role and strength of Marxism-Leninism among the Soviet leadership. In Soviet society ideology is of paramount importance; ideology, and doctrinal orthodoxy as well. The population progresses through a troika of Party organisations: from the Young Pioneers (at age 8 years), to the Comsomol (in the teenage years), to becoming fully-fledged adult members of the Communist Party proper. Membership of these groups is a prerequisite for social, political and economic advancement.<sup>41</sup> Ideological orthodoxy and loyalty are themes which are continually stressed. Only the best (defined as those most ideologically committed) progress up the Party's hierarchy. Along the way, as in most organisations, one has to defend one's right to that position constantly. Moreover, informers are everywhere. Only the most powerful — by virtue of their ideological orthodoxy — make it to the top, to the Central Committee and the Politburo of the CPSU. Throughout this process little, if any, access to alternative thought is permitted. It is worth remembering that, at the time of his death at sixty-nine years of age, Yuri Andropov had never ventured outside the socialist bloc. In the Western world, even with our freer access to information and right to question openly, absolute objectivity is an unattainable ideal. Indeed, many Westerners become committed Marxists. How then can the self-declared realists hope for 'objectivity' — Western-style — *in the leadership of the USSR?* Would it not be more unlikely than having an agnostic in the Papacy?

Sociologists have noted, frequently with alarm, the often deleterious effects of army life. Recruits are subjected to regimentation, with an accompanying loss of individuality, and to strong discipline. A common result is a disinclination to question and an increased acceptance of the utterances of one's superiors. Uniformity of thought predominates. However, most armies permit a considerable degree of self-expression, excursions into civilian society, foreign vacations, and so on. Imagine an institution with few such privileges, very restricted access to and encouragement of dissenting opinions. Such an institution would only approximate the CPSU.

There may indeed be evidence of differing levels of doctrinal knowledge among the members of the Soviet Politburo. Suslov would appear to have



been more ideologically oriented than, say, Chernenko. But it was no more than a matter of degree. If Chernenko had not believed, he would not have been there. It is as simple as that. Suslov's position was that of Party ideologue, and thus his level of doctrinal sophistication would have been higher. But that is not to refute Chernenko's espousal of the ideology.

Arkady Shevchenko, a protégé of the then Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, and, in 1978, the highest-ranking Soviet diplomat to defect since World War II, has declared that:

One cannot over-emphasize that there is no disagreement among Soviet leaders — political or military, young or old — on ultimate goals. They view world development in terms of the continuing struggle between two opposing social and political systems. They believe in the inevitable, if long-forthcoming, victory of Soviet-style socialism.<sup>42</sup>

### **Gorbachev, 'glasnost', and the reform of the Soviet system**

Many observers view Gorbachev's accession to power, and his subsequent domestic and international initiatives, as evidence of the diminution of the importance of Marxist-Leninist ideology for the Kremlin. That Gorbachev is different from his predecessors seems evident; for one thing, he is perhaps the most intelligent and dynamic Soviet leader since Lenin, and clearly determined to shake up the system. The question is: how is he different? And what ultimately motivates his reformist zeal?

To regard *glasnost* as indicative of the end of ideology in the USSR is to ignore seventy years of Soviet communist theory and practice. Liberalisation, democratisation, reform, or however one terms it, of the Soviet system, is not novel in and of itself. The ideological and historical roots are traceable back to the New Economic Policy (NEP) of Lenin himself. Significantly, Gorbachev has himself frequently invoked the NEP in support of his measures. Moreover, as we have seen in this paper, Marxist-Leninist ideology explicitly encourages the tactical and opportunistic use of retreat under pressure in order to gain a breathing space (*peredyshka*).

What is called for is a careful assessment of the nature and extent of the reformist measures. To what extent do they go against the central tenets of Marxism and Leninism? As Gail Lapidus points out, the new Soviet leader 'has not called into question the fundamental economic and political arrangements or the overarching values of the Soviet system'<sup>43</sup>. Final judgement of Gorbachev and *glasnost* must be suspended for the present. While it may be premature to label Gorbachev as another Lenin, as yet there is little evidence to suggest that he is not.

### **The respective contribution of ideology and power politics to the formulation of Soviet foreign policy**

In the light of the above discussion, it cannot be concluded that ideology plays little or no role in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy. Ideology, by

its very nature, is the most pervasive, most significant determinant of Soviet foreign policy. For the Bolshevik, *Weltanschauung*, by definition, must affect every aspect of decision-making, on every level — albeit perhaps in a very subtle way. It is essential that Western analysts, if they are to have any success at deciphering Soviet actions, appreciate the importance of doctrine for the Soviet élite. Failure to perceive this results in great misconceptions on the part of Western writers as to the nature of Soviet foreign policy.

It is evident from the preceding discussion that any consideration of Soviet policy formulation must take into account the element of ideology. However, to what degree is the USSR ideologically oriented? How does it equate ideology with power politics? To start with the premise that the Soviet élite retains a belief in Marxism-Leninism is to be confronted with innumerable problems of both a practical and a philosophical nature.

To answer the first question: Marxism-Leninism does not provide a ready-made book of rules for any and every situation. Nor is it something to which the Soviet leaders pay no more than lip service in their 'pragmatic' pursuit of foreign goals. As Richard Lowenthal has so plainly put it, '... empirical 'Realpolitik' without ideological conceptions can exist as little as can 'empirical science' without categories and hypotheses based on theoretical speculation'.<sup>44</sup> How then do the practitioners of such a world view cope with the international system of which their state is such a major part?

The debate on the contribution of ideology to Soviet foreign policy has ranged from a complete denial of any motivational impact of ideology to views verging on ideological determinism. This essay explicitly rejects both these extremes. Ideology is neither pure deception nor the sole determinant of foreign policy behaviour. The same may be said for both domestic and foreign policy, and for ideologically motivated states other than the Soviet Union. James Mittelman correctly observes that in analysing ideology one is dealing with propensities.<sup>45</sup> Would one then be correct in asserting that ideologists sometimes employ non-ideological thinking? The writer argues that seldom if ever is this so when dealing with the political realm. Ideology is in such circumstances always present — albeit sometimes less evidently so than at others — in the form of basic philosophical and epistemological assumptions and premises. In understanding this point, Alain Besancon's 'dual system' conception of the Soviet Union in world politics is useful.<sup>46</sup>

Besancon conceives of the Soviet Union as having two faces with regard to foreign policy: it is, at one and the same time, a state in the conventional sense of the word, and a state based on an ideology in direct contrast to that of the existing international system. However, ideology shapes only the *broad outlines* of Soviet foreign policy, for the USSR must also react to stimuli in the international system.

Thus foreign policy is a combination of:

- 'Raison d'état', characterised by efforts in the medium term to maintain the security of the USSR as the nucleus of world revolution,

and a desire for imperial expansion into Europe. The state is the primary unit of analysis.

- '*Raison de la révolution*'<sup>47</sup>, in the form of moves towards the long-term goal of global revolution. Class is the basic unit of analysis.

Accordingly, Besancon suggests that Soviet foreign policy is characterised by two 'systems of action'<sup>48</sup>:

- ideological pseudo-reality (that 'reality' created and sustained by Marxism-Leninism);
- ordinary reality (that 'reality' shared by a large community of non-Marxist-Leninist states; an inter-state reality).<sup>49</sup>

Hereafter these will be referred to as systems A and B respectively.

Within system A, states are not regarded as permanent institutions, but rather as transitory products of a particular period of historical development. The notions of 'imperialism', 'proletarian internationalism' and 'proletarian revolution' constitute the language of this sphere. 'National liberation movements', not national military or diplomatic forces, are used to further the Marxist cause. Within system B, however, the USSR is forced to face the ordinary reality of the existing traditional system of 150 or so competing states.<sup>50</sup> Inter-state policy now comes into its own. The doctrinal dictionary comprises concepts drawn from traditional diplomacy — 'foreign policy' 'peace', 'coexistence', 'national sovereignty', 'national interest' — and the means are military, economic and diplomatic.<sup>51</sup>

While the two systems exert tension on each other, they are at the same time connected. Universal missionary and chiliastic objectives guide the USSR. Thus ideology links the two systems. However, system A will, according to doctrinal belief, eventually absorb system B. All inter-state relations, indeed all human interactions, are regarded as essentially conflictual. This can only end with the destruction of the opponent, i.e. the state system and, along with it, system B. It is the law of the dialectic: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Thus, in Article 28 of the 1977 Brezhnev Constitution, the need to advance communism on an international scale is placed above that of securing the Soviet Union.

Of course, as A and B exert pressure on each other, so the distinction between the two must blur as each acquires some of the characteristics of the other. For, as we have seen, Marxism-Leninism is regarded by its Soviet followers not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. By such dialectical process does the ideology develop. It is this ability to apply the basic assumptions of the ideology to the prevailing situation that accounts for much of the Soviet Union's foreign policy advances in the post-1945 period.

### **Concluding remarks**

If Marxism-Leninism does continue to play a key role in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy insofar as it provides both epistemological tools for the assessment of the external environment and a broad programmatic basis

for action, then it is clear that many Western policy-makers need to rethink some of their most basic assumptions.

US foreign policy, to take but one example — albeit an extremely important one — has long proceeded from the assumption of shared or even universal values. For many, a shared vocabulary translates into common values. However, as Stanley Hoffman has observed:

A community of vocabulary is not the same thing as a community of values. When people with very different values use the same vocabulary, it debases both the vocabulary and the values hidden behind the vocabulary. This is what has been happening to notions like self-determination, non-intervention, etc. Behind the common grammar are competing ideological logics.<sup>52</sup>

The October Revolution accelerated the disintegration of the community of values which, by and large, had characterised the Eurocentric state system of the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The post-colonial era has further hastened this process. Bozeman informs us that the world in which foreign policies mingle is now 'a manifold of nations that is not held together by a common language, a common religion, and a common history; that does not adhere to uniform social customs and traditions of political association; and that has not brought forth identical ideals of life. Their guiding norms of what is right and wrong can therefore hardly be presumed to be alike'.<sup>53</sup> It is questionable whether the world has ever been otherwise. What is beyond question however, is the fact that the international community is far more heterogeneous than ever before. Eurocentricity is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

On the superpower level, the divergence in values and attitudes is both fundamental and profound. The American *contrat politique* carries over into its foreign policy conduct an understanding that conflict, an unnatural and undesirable phenomenon, finds its solution as the outcome of rational debate, and amid concern for the common good. Conflict culminates in an agreement which, respecting the mutual interest, produces a shared balance. Soviet Marxism-Leninism, for its part, is an ideology that was constructed for the express purpose of overturning the West's legal and political orders and of undermining the West's cultural infrastructure of values and concerns. The aim from the start has been nothing short of eventual total victory. The Soviet revisionist challenge is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in its subversion of the traditional Western conception of sovereignty — the so-called 'Brezhnev Doctrine of 1968'. If, as Sergei Kovalov declared in that year, 'The sovereignty of individual socialist countries cannot be counterposed to the interests of world socialism and the world revolutionary movement',<sup>54</sup> then the implication for the West of this doctrine is profound. A fundamental threat to the existence of the state system as we know it is posed.

US foreign policy continues on the basis of misperception about the nature and content of Soviet political culture, of Soviet foreign policy, even of

ideology itself. This may be attributed to what Besancon has identified as 'democracy's difficulty in imagining anything different from itself, and behaving in any but its own ways'.<sup>55</sup> American diplomats find it difficult to entertain the idea of a world in which some, perhaps many, conflicts cannot ultimately be solved.

These misperceptions continue to have impact on US policies, not only towards the USSR, but also other regions of the globe in which the Americans have an interest. Southern Africa is no exception.

Thus much of current US policy towards the Southern African region seems to imply the existence amongst the states of Southern Africa of a substantial array of common values. Racial issues in South Africa have been allowed to obfuscate the very real clash of social, political and economic values which exists between states as diverse as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Angola and Malawi.<sup>56</sup> Further, a belief that most, if not all states in the region, given sufficient encouragement, can be 'won over' to the American cause, appears to dominate the current Administration's thinking on the Mozambican question.<sup>57</sup> Such attitudes may again be traced back to fundamental and traditional US misconceptions: the illusion of congruent values<sup>57</sup> and, concomitantly, an underestimation of the enduring impact of ideology on the USSR in particular, and on international relations in general.

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**The author would welcome comment and reaction from readers on this and related topics.**

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## Soviet Eurasian Empire and the Indo-Persian Corridor

Does the Indo-Persian Corridor — those territories lying between the USSR and the waters of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean — occupy a significant place in Soviet global strategy? This question cannot be answered from a survey of the bilateral relationship between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and India, the strongest South Asian power, on the other. Even adding other regional powers (for example, Pakistan) or transregional powers (such as China) with impact on South Asia to the equation does not provide us with a fully adequate picture of the factors bearing on Soviet strategic thinking about this part of the world. This is due to the fact that the Indo-Persian Corridor constitutes but one component in a Soviet decision-making perspective that takes account of the global 'correlation of forces' (*sootnosheniye sil*).

According to Seweryn Bialer, the 'correlation of forces' assesses both static and dynamic aspects of all the multiple elements that ultimately bear on the relative strength of the two superpowers, including 'variables as diverse as the geopolitical situation, economic and technological performance, the military balance, projected global image, costs and contributions of alliances, and psychological and ideological sources of social instability worldwide'.<sup>1</sup> Western analysts have noted that the concept of 'correlation of forces' has no equivalent in the decision-making processes of the Western powers.<sup>2</sup> It differs from the 'balance of power' in that it contains an important teleological dimension, namely the belief in an 'objective course of History' that has allegedly preordained the ultimate victory of the progressive system of socialism over the reactionary forces of capitalism. This is particularly important for understanding the dynamic approach to the Third World demonstrated by Moscow during the post-Stalin era. It is much more flexible than the rigidly dichotomous Islamic view of the world as one divided between *Dar ul-Islam* and *Dar ul-Harb*. The closest approximation to the concept of the 'correlation of forces' in the West was perhaps the 'grand strategy' conceived by the Anglo-American Allies during World War II. 'Grand strategy' was concerned not only with military potential, but also

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with all other important factors contributing to the nation's strength and willpower.

To comprehend where the Indo-Persian Corridor fits into present and future Soviet 'correlation of forces' calculations, it is useful to track the history of Russian/Soviet strategy toward the region. A good starting point is to clarify some basic questions of geographic definition.

### **Geographic terms and concepts**

The terms and concepts applied to the region generally lack precision and must be viewed in historical context. For example, the area under investigation here might be referred to as 'South Asia', but this should not be confused with the geographic concept identified with the post-1947 independent Indian sub-continent. It might be useful, then, to review briefly some of the terms that various actors have applied to this vast region over the years.

At the outset, one should note the substantial differences between Western and Russian traditions of cartographic projection. For the last 400 years, the Western view has been conditioned by the prevailing type of cylindrical maps, derived from the 16th-century Mercator projection of the Earth, which creates considerable distortion in the higher latitudes above the Equator, i.e., those along which the Russian Eurasian Empire has expanded. Since the Russians are looking 'down' from the north, an azimuthal (polar) projection based on the northern hemisphere would reflect more accurately the Russian point of view.

More recently, the West muddied the lines delimiting Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, when for reasons of temporary military convenience during World War II, the British set up a 'Middle East Command', lumping together not only all countries of the Maghreb and of Arabia proper, but also Iran, the Persian Gulf, Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus in the north, as well as Sudan and East Africa in the south. Moreover, this new Command overlapped clumsily with the already established defence perimeter of the India Command, which claimed responsibility over the entire vast area stretching from Hong Kong to Egypt, including the whole of the Indian Ocean.

Although the British had to relinquish their key position in India after World War II, they continued to play the role of international policeman in the Persian Gulf with relative success until 1971, preventing Soviet involvement and the spread of regional upheavals. For instance, British naval and air forces thwarted the Iraqi attempt to annex Kuwait in 1961; the British were also behind preemptive coups in Abu Dhabi (1966) and Oman (1970).

When Britain abandoned the Gulf for good, the United States became the only major Western power capable of competing with the growing Soviet military and naval presence in the region. The Truman and Eisenhower

doctrines (of 1947 and 1957 respectively) aimed at creating a defensive belt along the rimlands of the Soviet 'Southern Tier'. The US policy of containing communism led in 1955 to the formation of the defence alliance called the Baghdad Pact, which comprised Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Great Britain (the name changed to CENTO — Central Treaty Organization — in 1959, after Iraq's withdrawal).

Another important state absent from the defence of what the West perceived as the 'Northern Tier' (corresponding to the Soviet 'Southern Tier') was Afghanistan, in whose friendship US foreign policy seemed less interested than in that of Pakistan. The absence of Iraq and Afghanistan from defence arrangements constituted a serious strategic handicap for the West, which was compounded by the gradually increasing pro-Soviet stand of non-aligned India, especially after 1971, which saw the Indo-Pakistani war and the signing of a friendship treaty between Moscow and New Delhi.

The revolution in Iran inflicted the final blow on CENTO. In its place there have emerged two mutually incongruous substitutes: The Gulf Cooperation Council, which is an alliance of the oil-producing emirates, and the US Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF, or simply RDF). Creation of the RDF (since January 1983 known as the US Central Command, or USCENTCOM) further confused the dividing line between geographic reality and strategic purpose. Although the new area to be defended has been referred to as 'Southwest Asia', it actually covers northeast Africa (Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya), and Arabia proper (Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf emirates, Oman, and both Yemens), as well as Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Although this scope seems almost identical with the British Mideast Command of World War II, it does introduce a new kind of discriminatory delimitation on the regional level, dictated by Washington's geopolitical expedience — e.g., Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey have been left out intentionally.<sup>3</sup>

For their part, the Russians tended to view the region in question as the 'Middle East' (*Sredniy Vostok*) — the middle piece between the Near East (*Blizhniy Vostok*), stretching from the Maghreb to the head of the Persian Gulf, and the Far East (*Dal'nyy Vostok*), which meant the regions facing the Pacific Ocean. If viewed southward and eastward from the Kremlin's observation platform, this triple division of the Orient made, and still makes, perfect sense. For Moscow, the 'Middle East' began, in the west, at the great divide between the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf, which separated geographically not only the Black and the Mediterranean seas from the Caspian Sea and the Indian Ocean, but also served as the great divide between the former Ottoman realm and those of Persia (Iran) and India. The eastern limit was demarcated less precisely.

Only after the emergence of the 'Central Asian Question' — as the late 19th-century Anglo-Russian rivalry over the approaches to the Indo-Persian

Corridor was called (a competition better known under its romanticized name of the 'Great Game') — did the Russian usage coincide with the British. Thus, the preeminent Russian military geographer, General Andrey Snetsarev (1865–1937), defined 'Central Asia' in his seminal work, *India as the Main Factor in the Central Asian Question*, as consisting of the following territories: 'our' Turkestan, Khiva, Bukhara, India (northern), Kashgaria, the Pamirs, Tibet, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and eastern Persia.<sup>4</sup>

### Elements of Russian/Soviet strategy

Three elements seemed to have characterized Russian and Soviet military strategy vis-à-vis the Indo-Persian Corridor in the 100 years since the conquest of Turkestan: diversion, subversion, and the drive to gain access to warm-water ports.

*Diversion.* The essence of strategic diversion, as exemplified in the plans of Russian military leaders Nikolay Chikhachev, A.O. Duhamel, Stepan Khrulev, Mikhail Skobelev, Aleksey Kuropatkin, and others, was to foster fears in the British that a Russian invasion of India was imminent, and thereby diminish British pressure on or attention to other theatres of war where Russia felt threatened or was preparing to attack (e.g. the Balkans, the Turkish Straits, the Caucasus, the Far East). 'The Russian object,' George Nathaniel Curzon, the future viceroy of India, declared in 1889, 'is not Calcutta, but Constantinople . . . To keep England quiet in Europe by keeping her employed in Asia, that, briefly put, is the sum and substance of Russian policy.'<sup>5</sup>

That Curzon read well the Russian mind can be documented by the instruction from St. Petersburg to the Russian consul in Bombay received in 1900:

*The fundamental meaning of India to us is that she represents Great Britain's most vulnerable point, a sensitive nerve on which one touch may perhaps easily induce [Britain] . . . to alter its hostile policy toward us, and to show the desired compliance on all those questions where our . . . interest may collide.<sup>6</sup>*

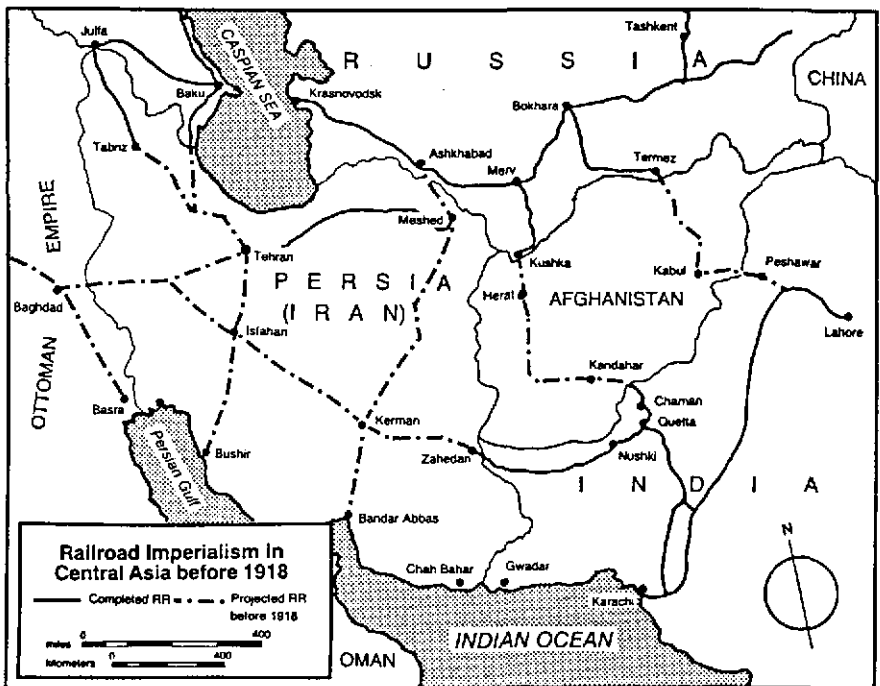
*Subversion.* The second strategic element — subversion — was collateral to diversion in most Russian schemes. General Skobelev's plan of 1877, for instance, was one of the most ambitious. As he saw things, a Russian invasion of India via Afghanistan might not only incite a wave of simultaneous insurrections in the subcontinent, but might even produce a social revolution in England.<sup>7</sup>

However, the most accomplished and elaborate subversive schemes were concocted on the eve of World War I, not in Russia or England, but in Germany. The German planners hoped to awaken and skilfully manipulate the fanaticism of Islam throughout the crescent of Muslim territories from Lahore to Casablanca.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, it was the Bolsheviks who ultimately put to use the expertise and groundwork of subversion laid down by the Berlin-

sponsored Indian agents. Diversion and subversion became important factors in the Bolsheviks' new 'Eastern Strategy', which was intended to set the Orient ablaze. In August 1919, Trotsky wrote that 'the road to Paris and London lies via the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab, and Bengal'.<sup>9</sup> He appointed the ex-tsarist General Snesev as director of the General Staff Academy in Moscow. In his first course of lectures, delivered in the autumn of 1919, Snesev focused on the military geography of Central Asia and discussed the topic of invasion of British India via Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

*Drive to warm waters.* Unlike diversion and subversion, which have been more or less accepted as irrefutable components of Russian/Soviet imperialist policy, the 'drive to warm waters' continues to arouse great controversy since it is branded with the stigma of historical forgery, namely the fraudulent 'testament' of Peter the Great. Yet the testament, which fuelled Russophobia well into the 1940s, does provide, in the words of one observer, a rather 'good synopsis of Russia's past and potential territorial expansion'.<sup>11</sup>

At least one contemporary Soviet strategist has taken Tsar Peter's putative geopolitical ambitions as a given. This is Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, architect of the present Soviet naval expansion. Commenting on Peter's Azov campaign (1695-1696), Gorshkov wrote: 'Further development of the



—Map courtesy of the author.

state and its economy could have proceeded only with the establishment of outlets to the sea.<sup>12</sup>

Tsar Peter's name is also associated with two military expeditions that attempted to gain access to the Indian Ocean through the Indo-Persian Corridor in order to establish trade links with Persia, India, and China. These expeditions, and numerous others that followed under Peter's successors, scored no success until the conquest of the intermediate zone — Transcaucasia (in the 1840–1850s) and Turkestan (1860–1880s).

Even then, the essential logistical prerequisites for a successful penetration to the Persian Gulf did not exist until the completion of Russia's three strategic railheads at the entrance to the Indo-Persian Corridor. These were: (1) in Azerbaijan, the Julfa railhead at the Iranian border (1907) and an extension of this line to Tabriz (1916); (2) the Transcaspian Railway (1880–1888), with its branch line to Kushka (1900) opposite Herat; and (3) the second railhead on the Afghan border at Termez (1916), connected with the Transcaspian as well as with the Orenburg–Tashkent line (1905).

Critical to Russia's long-term aspirations to project her power and influence to the Persian Gulf ports were numerous schemes connected with the Trans-Persian Railway, which was to provide the vital nexus for an alternative land route from Europe to India. The optimal alignment from the viewpoint of Russian military surveyors was a straight north/south line across Khorasan and Seistan to Bandar Abbas or Chah Bahar.<sup>13</sup>

The British, determined to remain the dominant power in the Indian Ocean area, succeeded in thwarting these plans — and thus the realization of Russian designs for a 'second Port Arthur', on the Persian Gulf. The agreement of 1907 delimited new spheres of interest between the two rivals in Central Asia, and in the same year, Britain's Committee of Imperial Defence established a secret policy making any Russian attempt to invade Afghanistan a *casus belli*.<sup>14</sup> British determination and adverse geopolitical circumstances prevented the Russians from expanding their logistical infrastructure closer to the Gulf. Meanwhile, the Russians directed their activities toward the 'peaceful penetration' of northern Iran, of Sinkiang, and of Mongolia.

Most important in Russia's relative neglect of the Southern Tier was the fact that Russian/Soviet planners never really accorded to this region the same priority as they did to the potential theatres of war in Europe or in the Far East. Only a radical shift in the political and military balance, affecting the whole of Eurasia, could have changed what Moscow must have judged an unfavourable 'correlation of forces' in the Southern Tier. Such a moment did occur, briefly, after the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, when Great Britain, engaged single-handedly in a life-and-death struggle against Germany and Italy, had to appease Japan in the Far East and consequently could not pursue an effective defence of Central Asia. Between 1939 and

1941, there was thus a strong possibility that the Soviet Union, since August 1939 Germany's 'junior partner', would join the Axis Powers, if it agreed, according to the formula proposed by Hitler and his foreign minister Ribbentrop, to 'centre her territorial aspirations . . . in the direction of the Indian Ocean'.<sup>15</sup> But Stalin procrastinated. He was not at all anxious to give up claims on Finland, the Balkans, and the Turkish Straits, where Nazi and Soviet interests clashed, in exchange for the questionable privilege of attacking the British position in India as Hitler's vassal.

Nevertheless, Soviet policy in Afghanistan and Iran at that time was far from passive. The Afghan government regarded the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939 as a green light for an imminent Soviet invasion of its country.<sup>16</sup> As for Iran, there is evidence that several months before the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop negotiations in Berlin (November 1940), the Soviets had pressed Teheran to permit them to station troops and air forces in important strategic locations inside Iran, and to grant transit rights on the Trans-Iranian Railway together with free zones in the Gulf ports.<sup>17</sup> A captured Soviet contingency plan for the military invasion of Iran, redrafted probably in early 1941, i.e., just before the German attack on the Soviet Union, reveals that the Soviets were primarily interested in overcoming the anticipated resistance of the Iranian and British Imperial troops along the main avenues of invasion, rather than in seizing the Gulf ports, since the USSR then had no naval forces that could utilize them.<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, shortly thereafter, in August 1941, Soviet forces actually did invade Iran, but now the USSR was a partner of the British imperialists. The Soviets must have been immensely pleased that the great Trans-Iranian Railway, Reza Shah's most ambitious modernization project (1927-1938), became immediately available to ferry vital American Lend-Lease supplies to the hard-pressed Red Army. Compared with other convoy routes to the Soviet Union, the 'Persian Corridor' was the safest, since the Indian Ocean was not infested by German or Japanese submarines. This link could operate year-round and offered the shortest route to Stalingrad, where the decisive battle of the Russian Front was about to begin. Almost eight million tons of supplies were shipped to Russia via this route — a lesson in logistical efficiency and in the paramount importance of the 'sea lane of communication' (SLOC) through the Indian Ocean unlikely to have been forgotten in Moscow.

Today, the 1 400-kilometre-long Trans-Iranian Railway, featuring more than 220 tunnels totalling eighty-four kilometres in length, with countless bridges and heavy gradients, and rivalling the best even Switzerland can claim, remains the single most impressive technological achievement in Central Asia. It is still the only rail link across the Indo-Persian Corridor in the north-south direction. It was intentionally designed to avoid direct

connection with either the Russian or the British/Indian rail systems with regard to gauge and location of terminals.

In the 1970s, Reza Shah's son wanted to link up the Iranian and Pakistani rail systems. A spur from Qom via Yazd reached Kerman in 1977, whence a branch line was to be extended to Bandar Abbas. The main line was to continue from Kerman to Zahedan, the old terminal of the Quetta-Nushki Extension Railway built by the British during World War I. The three principal cities of Afghanistan — Herat, Qandahar and Kabul — were to be connected to this new 'Trans-Persian Railway'. For this purpose, the Shah offered a US\$2 billion credit to Afghan President Sardar Mohammad Daoud in 1975. Once completed, the Shah's new railway system would have redirected the flow of Afghanistan's trade away from the Soviet border back to the traditional markets of South Asia and the Middle East.

In the absence of verifiable evidence, all speculation about the actual Soviet role in thwarting the Shah's new 'Trans-Persian Railway' scheme must remain conjecture. But, one assumes that the Shah's ambitious dream of establishing a Teheran-Kabul-Islamabad alliance welded together by this important transportation link was viewed in Moscow with little pleasure, especially as the new lateral axis would soon connect to China, which was close to completing the 1200-kilometre-long Karakoram Highway across the Himalayas from Kashgar to Islamabad.

There have been recent indications that the former Shah's railway schemes have been resumed, albeit on a less ambitious scale. Because of the Gulf War, port facilities at Bandar Abbas and Chah Bahar are being expanded. Teheran is interested in establishing a rail link to Bandar Abbas, either from Kerman or Bafq, which is a distance of about 750 kilometres. Work has apparently also been resumed along the Kerman-Bam-Shur Gaz alignment in the direction of Zahedan.

### **A dual strategy toward the region**

Can one discern a certain logic in Soviet strategic penetration of the Indo-Persian Corridor in the light of recent history? How does one reconcile the apparent strategic caution displayed by Moscow on the Southern Tier with other manifestations of Soviet great power behaviour in the same region, such as the systematic build-up of the transportation infrastructure and extension of support to subversive activities.

• What seems to emerge from an examination of these questions is a picture of two interlocking Soviet strategies. The first is the long-term projection of influence, an approach that avoids the application of direct force and combines diplomatic with economic pressure to gain control over the transportation infrastructure. One can track this long-range policy on the part of the Soviet Union back to as early as 1921, when bilateral treaties of

'friendship' were signed between Moscow on the one hand, and Kabul and Teheran on the other. In the Afghan case, it took the Kremlin more than thirty years to achieve the important breakthrough in influence during the 1950s.

The second strategy consists of seizing sudden opportunities and exploiting effervescent chances as they arise along the unstable frontier in Central Asia. This policy combines limited cross-border military intervention with political subversion and support of separatist movements (e.g., Soviet-sponsored propaganda and subversion vis-à-vis British India through Afghanistan in 1919–1922; attempts to set up the 'Soviet Republic of Gilan' in northern Iran 1920–1921; a brief armed incursion into northern Afghanistan May 1929; preparations for the invasion of Iran and northern Afghanistan 1940–1941; and creation of the Soviet-backed 'autonomous republics' of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in Iran 1945–1946).

In the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, these two seemingly contradictory strategies seemed to merge, even if the timing was not necessarily to Moscow's liking. Capitalizing upon factional strife within Afghanistan, Moscow invested its troops in the country, simultaneously putting itself in a position to further its movement toward 'warm-water' ports through the systematic build-up of transportation infrastructure. Roads and railways are the sinews of political and economic penetration, particularly of the Russian/Soviet type of imperialism, in which expansion has generally been into contiguous areas and so has been inseparable from railway transport. Today, a modern transport infrastructure is being expanded from the southern USSR into Afghanistan, which until recently had been the last remaining hiatus between the infrastructures of Soviet Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Iran, and the vast railway network of former British India. Hitherto impassable mountains, like the Hindu Kush or Karakoram, no longer represent technologically insurmountable obstacles. Even before 1979, the Soviets had pierced the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan with the Salang Tunnel (completed in 1965); indeed without this tunnel they would not have been capable of carrying out the 1979 invasion and staying in Kabul today.<sup>19</sup>

It remains to be seen whether the present reported extension of Soviet rail lines into Afghanistan — one south from Kushka and the other south from Termez across the new Amu Darya bridge (completed in 1982) — are to be eventually linked up with the still incomplete Iranian and Pakistani networks, both of which, of course, operate on a different gauge from the Soviet system. If and when the Soviet intention in this regard becomes clear and a link-up is made, it could certainly constitute an event of major geostrategic significance. However, it will take many years for Iran to complete the Bandar Abbas–Zahedan link (almost 1 000 kilometres long), and it would appear most plausible that the Soviets would like to avoid any violent move



against Iran and Pakistan for the time being, that is, until the strategic rail link is completed 'peacefully', probably by the Iranians themselves with the assistance of foreign (non-Soviet) companies.

Other opportunities, such as insurrections and military coups stimulated or caused by Kurdish, Baluch, or Pashtun separatism, combined with serious political upheavals in Iran and Pakistan, or a new crisis brought about by an Iranian victory in the Gulf War, might tempt Moscow to seek a more forceful solution. But, given Moscow's bitter experience in Afghanistan, where the bitter conflict drags on year after year in what must be rated as a definite setback for long-range Soviet political plans in the region, the USSR might prefer to wait for a convenient *fait accompli*, that is, until the 'correlation of forces' is in their favour.

### **Broader strategic context**

The geostrategic significance of Central Asia cannot be determined in isolation from other security concerns of the Soviet Eurasian Empire. Historically, Central Asia dominated Russia's Asian strategy infrequently. It was most salient during the 1860-1880s, but thereafter the Far East became the focus of Russian expansionism in Asia.

Nonetheless, the Southern Tier had assumed at the beginning of the 20th century an important dual function. First, it was a convenient platform, perfectly sheltered on the southern edge of the Eurasian heartland from any attack by hostile sea powers (this observation, incidentally, must have been one of the major inspirations for Lord Halford John Mackinder's 1904 concept of a Eurasian 'heartland'<sup>20</sup>), from which diversionary operations through the Indo-Persian Corridor could be launched to threaten British India. The second function was to back up the vulnerable lifeline connecting the two extremities of the Empire, along what Winston Churchill would have called 'the soft underbelly' of Russian Eurasia.

This west-east lifeline is epitomized in the construction and further improvement of the Trans-Siberian Railway (the line was completed in 1904, but it is still being upgraded to this day, with double tracking and electrification). Russia's decision to complete the Trans-Siberian Railway must be understood as a sign of irrevocable determination to hold on to the Far Eastern territories, come what may. The vital importance of this west-east lifeline created by the new transcontinental railway was underlined during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, when the Russian Eurasian Empire was confronted with a new factor that henceforth haunted the minds of Russian strategists: the nightmare of a two-front war contested simultaneously at the two extremities of Eurasia.

Today, the Trans-Siberian 'land-bridge' links the two largest military complexes in the world, separated by a distance of more than 13 000 kilometres; in comparison, the Soviet Union's Southern Theatre of Military

Action (*teatr voyennykh deystviy* — TVD) ranks a 'poor third' (see Table 1). Notwithstanding the continuous overriding importance of the Main Theatre of Military Action (*glavnyy teatr voyennykh deystviy* — GTVD) against NATO in Europe, the Far Eastern TVD (itself a possible GTVD) has during the last 20 years experienced a phenomenal expansion.

After the Sino-Soviet split, Moscow doubled, then tripled the number of units in the Far East to an estimated current strength of fifty-six divisions. The USSR also installed an entire logistical infrastructure, including new roads and rail spurs, ammunition and fuel depots, barracks, and hospitals, at the other end of the world. The strenuous effort to complete the Baikal-Amur-Mainline (BAM), totalling over 4 000 kilometres and designed to alleviate the burden on the Trans-Siberian, must be seen as part of this enormous military build-up. Apart from ground and air forces, the USSR effected a massive expansion of its Pacific Fleet, which has become the largest among the four separate fleets of the Soviet Navy. Moscow also deploys smaller detachments in the South China Sea (from Cam Ranh Bay) and in the Indian Ocean (from Aden and the Dahlak Islands).

By contrast, no comparable build-up has been observed along the Southern Tier, where an independent TVD has been in existence since 1969. The present thirty-two Soviet divisions there are estimated to be at lower combat readiness than the average units from the two GTVD's. Until the invasion of Afghanistan, about three-quarters of the units from the Southern

**Table 1: Deployment of Soviet Armed Forces, 1986**

Force component	Western GTVD						Far-Eastern GTVD	Strategic Reserve
	North-western TVD	Central European TVD <sup>1</sup>	Southwestern TVD <sup>1</sup>	NSWP <sup>2</sup>	Southern TVD			
Divisions <sup>3</sup>	10	63 (31)	27 (24)	55	32	56	18	
Tanks	1 400	19 460 <sup>6</sup> (9 800)	6 850 (5 300)	15 100	5 400	14 900	4 590	
APCs <sup>4</sup>	3 130	20 400 (11 800)	5 400 (5 400)	17 200	9 100	17 300	3 600	
Artillery	2 000	15 000 (5 800)	5 900 (3 850)	9 650	5 600	13 400	4 175	
Tactical SSMs <sup>5</sup>	100	580 (230)	200 (155)	385	185	375	120	
Aircraft	225	2 320 (1 600)	910 (750)	2 350	965	1 730	150	

<sup>1</sup> Figures in parentheses belong to the Non-Soviet Warsaw Pact member states; they are totalled under the NSWP heading.

<sup>2</sup> Total forces of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact member states (sums of numbers shown in parentheses under Central European and Southwestern TVD's).

<sup>3</sup> Figures include motor-rifle, tank, airborne, and artillery divisions. Soviet divisional strength varies from 7 000 men (airborne) to 11 000 (armoured), and 14 000 (mechanized).

<sup>4</sup> Armoured personnel carriers.

<sup>5</sup> Surface-to-surface missiles.

<sup>6</sup> The IISS (see below) gives a smaller figure — 10 500 — which excludes those in reserve.

SOURCE: Compiled from US Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power 1986*, Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 1986; and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1984-1985*, London, IISS, 1984.

TVD had been deployed in the North Caucasus and Trans-Caucasus military districts, whereas the Turkestan military district has never had more than six divisions.

Even the quality of the Fortieth Army, with its estimated six–seven divisions operating inside Afghanistan, has been uneven. (At the same time, Afghanistan has been the only ‘active front’ for the Soviet military over the last seven years, providing invaluable combat experience for troops and officers rotated into the country.)

There are at present no signs of a Soviet military build-up along the Southern Tier of sufficient scale to go beyond the requirements for routine support of the 120 000–man contingent inside Afghanistan (believed to be the maximum the Soviets can afford to maintain due to the inadequate supply system) and provide the logistical wherewithal for some more ambitious military operation against Iran and/or Pakistan, let alone for the seizure of the oil terminals in the Persian Gulf.

### **Break-out to the Indian Ocean?**

Most of what has been said treats the Soviet Eurasian Empire as a land-based entity *not* overly concerned with ‘breaking out’ from the Central Asian heartland to the Indian Ocean. But is this focus changing? Has the invasion of Afghanistan activated Moscow’s interest in this objective and/or brought it nearer to realization?

As already noted, the Sino–Soviet split forced the Kremlin leadership to rethink the function of the west–east nexus between metropolitan Russia and the Far East. It became imperative to close the growing security gap between the western and eastern defence complexes along the ‘soft underbelly’ of the Southern Tier. Unable and unwilling to pour enormous resources into the Southern TVD, the Soviet leadership found a solution in the promotion of a ‘collective security’ network across the broad belt of Asia’s southern rimlands.

As evidenced in the trip of Nikolay Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev to South Asia in 1955 and in Leonid Brezhnev’s speech of August 1969,<sup>21</sup> Moscow has been seeking to construct a new subsystem of ‘collective security’, linking the periphery of the Eastern Mediterranean — where Egypt occupied the key position until the mid-1970s — via the Indian Ocean to the Far East. The dual objectives of the new Soviet policy were soon apparent: to erode the US naval predominance in the coastal waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans, and to encircle China.<sup>22</sup> In this arch, India remains the keystone (a role highlighted by the 1971 Indo–Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation).

In building this interlinked subsystem, Moscow has extended military assistance and logistical support. In exchange for military advisers and arms deliveries on attractive terms, the USSR has sought access to basing facilities

in order to exercise, if need be, its strategy of 'hemispheric denial'. This ultimately implies the threat to interrupt Western access to South African minerals and to block oil traffic in the Indian Ocean.

During the second half of the 1970s, the Soviet Union felt confident enough to exploit opportunities at such distant places as Angola and Ethiopia, projecting its military force by sea and air and using Cuban troops as proxies. Constantly reassessing the 'correlation of forces', Moscow has geared its strategy toward undermining the status quo of the non-communist world at its most vulnerable points. On balance, however, whatever gains went to Moscow during the 1970s could not compensate for the loss of Egypt, let alone the earlier loss of China.

The new diplomacy of 'collective security' cannot be investigated without reflecting on the phenomenal expansion of Soviet naval power. Since the 1960s, both have served in a concerted manner in Moscow's pursuit of the establishment of a maritime passage (a SLOC) from the Black Sea, via Suez and the Indian Ocean, to the Far East. Loss of Somalia and Egypt were key setbacks, only imperfectly compensated by the acquisition of new Soviet *points d'appui* in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in the form of repair and basing facilities at Mitsiwa, Dahlak, Aden and Socotra (poor substitutes for Alexandria and Port Said).

It should be noted that the initial Soviet intention in the Horn of Africa was more strategic than political: namely to counter the anticipated deployment of US Polaris submarines in the Indian Ocean. However, since the early 1970s, the main Soviet concern has become the protection of a SLOC across the Indian Ocean and the gaining of access to the Persian Gulf. At present, the Soviets clearly want to continue the competition with the United States in the Indian Ocean; they will try to gain more access to the detriment of the West; and they will push quite hard, as in the case of Ethiopia and Afghanistan, if there is no countervailing US presence on hand.<sup>23</sup>

Proposals to transform the Indian Ocean into a 'zone of peace' are part of this strategy, which clearly demonstrates the advantages of the long-range 'correlation of forces' approach.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, the Rapid Deployment Force of the US Central Command continues to be perceived by many regional states as interventionist, as a sign that the United States is unable to replace military by political and economic means.

The event that has constituted a turning point in the recent history of the Indian Ocean area is the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This is true for a variety of reasons, including the following:

(a) It has transformed Afghanistan into a permanent war zone flanking the Indian Ocean, one in which the Red Army has been directly involved for seven consecutive years, with little prospect of withdrawing.

(b) The occupation of Afghanistan has provided the Soviets with a considerable geostrategic advantage in that it halved the distance between the

old Soviet border and the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and put the Strait of Hormuz within reach of Soviet air power.

(c) It became one of the catalysts in the chain of upheavals within the region (revolution in Iran, the Gulf War, threats to the oil traffic).

(d) It increased Soviet military and subversive capabilities for intimidating Pakistan, and for exploiting Indo-Pakistani and Indo-Chinese tensions in order to bring decisive pressure to bear over the whole sub-continent.

(e) It has given Moscow a free hand to improve the strategic infrastructure of Afghanistan, with the ultimate possibility of establishing a year-round naval base on an open sea shore somewhere between Bandar Abbas and Karachi. Such a 'second Port Arthur' might then be connected with the Soviet motherland through permanent road and rail communications, which would make it an ideal starting point for a SLOC running to the Far East.

(f) Finally, and perhaps most important from a geostrategic perspective, it has increased the encirclement of China, still considered by many in Russia to be the ultimate foe.

Alongside the new opportunities afforded to the Soviet Union for breaking out from its geographic enclosure in Central Asia toward the Indian Ocean, there remains a geostrategic problem of the first magnitude: namely the two-front-war spectre. In this context, it is fair to predict that the Central Asian nexus will be of increasing geostrategic significance, since it finds itself approximately equidistant from the two Main TVD's at the western and eastern extremities of the empire, and because it is located in close proximity to what is perhaps the most politically unstable region in the world. If the Trans-Siberian Railway were cut off from the Far Eastern TVD, then the Indo-Persian Corridor would be the only passage through which the Soviets could gain access to the shore of the Indian Ocean and thence to East Asia via a SLOC.<sup>25</sup> They have no other reliable, year-round alternative.

Moreover, as the invasion of Afghanistan demonstrated, it is only in the Indo-Persian Corridor that the Soviet Union can still expand in Asia without risking a major war. Whether the Soviets will behave more aggressively in the Indo-Persian Corridor depends not on some sort of a master plan for world domination, but on possibly favourable circumstances and the interplay of factors constituting the 'correlation of forces'. It would be foolish to expect that given a favourable balance of opportunities and constraints similar to that in 1979, the Kremlin would fail to exploit a new opening, thereby missing the chance of strengthening the Soviet Union's superpower status vis-à-vis its two major potential enemies, the US and China.

What are the ramifications to this thinking of a possible emergence of the Indian Ocean area as the world's third independent geostrategic region, endowed today already with about 1,5 billion people?<sup>26</sup> What advantages could Moscow derive from controlling this new geostrategic realm?

Although the assets are considerable (access to cheap oil and minerals), they would be offset by Moscow's caution in taking on further millions of devout Muslims and tens of millions of hungry people. Unable at present to feed their own population, today's masters of the Kremlin would presumably prefer not to revive the tsarist dreams of one day ruling over the entire Eurasian Continent.

The Indo-Persian Corridor, thus, continues to be of largely derivative importance for the Soviet Eurasian Empire, its status determined by the continuing stress on the western and eastern fronts and the fear that war with China is in the long run inevitable. This focus on the west-east axis is all the stronger given the shift of the Soviet economic centre of gravity to the east of the Urals, where nearly ninety per cent of the country's mineral and energy resources are located.<sup>27</sup>

Yet with time, circumstances will endow 'Greater Central Asia' with growing importance in international affairs. The region could become again the 'geographical pivot of history', as Mackinder characterized it almost a century ago — a fulcrum of power bearing weight to the East, West, and South. Whereas in 1904, Mackinder stressed the inaccessibility of his 'Heartland Russia' to sea powers as a prime geostrategic advantage, the major lesson since then has been the advantages that accrue to economics with maritime rather than transcontinental forms of transportation. If the Soviet Eurasian Empire wants to maintain its superpower position vis-à-vis its multiple rivals (the US, Western Europe, China), it must not only rely on its pivot area, but reach out to the warm waters in order to break out from the enclosure. The question is whether Moscow can or will pursue this expansion without violent means.

(Acknowledgment to 'Problems of communism' in which this article first appeared.)

#### Notes

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16. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-173, 306-339.
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26. The other two 'geostrategic realms', according to Saul B. Cohen, are the 'Trade-Dependent Maritime Realm' (centred on the North Atlantic basin) and the 'Eurasian Continental Realm' (consisting of two cores: the Russian Heartland with Eastern Europe, and the East Asian Mainland, centered on China). See Saul B. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 66, 308-312.
27. Soviet Academician Abel Aganbegyan has stated that 'Siberia and the [Soviet] Far East now account for 88 per cent of fuels and raw material, and only 9 percent are near the bulk of the population and industrial centers in the Urals and European part of the USSR.' *Trud* (Moscow), Aug. 28 and 29, 1984, trans. in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union* (Washington, DC), Aug. 30, 1984, p. S/1; also summarized in *The Soviet Analyst* (London), Oct. 24, 1984, pp. 2-4.

THE STATESMAN'S YEARBOOK 1987-88  
124th edition. Edited by John Paxton  
*Macmillan, London: 1987, 1659 pp + xl*  
(In South Africa: *Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd*)

It is gratifying to have the opportunity to review the latest edition of this work, dedicated as it is to the memory of the late Harold Macmillan, First Earl of Stockton, whose ancestor Alexander was the founding father of the Macmillan publishing house and had himself commissioned the first edition in 1864.

In this age of electronic gadgetry, this hard-cover reference book, printed on good quality india paper, encompasses an astonishing amount of information on the nations of the world — and on all international organisations of standing which thrust themselves from time to time on one's attention, from the United Nations and its agencies to the South Pacific Forum and the World Council of Churches.

The headings, listed by country, are comprehensive and give the latest available statistics on a comparative basis without being compressed to the point of unintelligibility. In addition to the standard 'gazetteer' variety of physical and demographic information, considerable attention is paid to those areas of enduring concern such as Defence, Economy, Industry, Natural Resources, Energy and Banking. Constitutions, Law and Religion are all fully covered and each country's section closes with a brief but useful bibliography. A cross-check with specialist works of reference shows no weaknesses or errors of fact. In some areas, it even appears to be a little ahead of its specialised competitors. The overall contemporaneity of the *Statesman's Yearbook* can be judged from the *Addenda*, which include, among other things, the change of government in Ireland from March 1987, when Charles Haughey took office as Taoiseach.

I have no hesitation in recommending this venerable but eternally young publication to all those concerned with world affairs, be they diplomats, politicians, journalists, businessmen, or just plain 'curious travellers'.

At 840 gms and dimensions of 130 × 55 × 45 mm, it makes small demands on space, and at R122, it is a solid investment.

Alan Begg,  
SAIIA  
Johannesburg

#### RECOGNITION AND THE UNITED NATIONS

John Dugard

*Grotius Publications Limited, Cambridge: 1987, 170 pp.*

1947 Sir Hersch Lauterpacht's *Recognition in International Law* was published. It caused quite a stir in international law circles and many scholars



criticized his argument in favour of the constitutive character of the recognition of new states and governments, an argument which he coupled with a legal duty to recognize. Many however hailed it as the first work ever to put the question of recognition in international law within a framework of legal principle and theory, free from 'the prison of power politics'.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Lauterpacht taught at the University of Cambridge and became one of the most famous international lawyers of his time. (Professor Dugard considers him 'the greatest international lawyer of this century'.<sup>6</sup>) The Hersch Lauterpacht Memorial Lectures are held in commemoration of this renowned scholar and take place under the auspices of the Research Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge. Professor John Dugard, who is an alumnus of that university and at present Director of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, recently delivered a series of these lectures. They have now been published under the title 'Recognition and the United Nations'.<sup>3</sup>

In this publication Professor Dugard addresses what he considers a neglected aspect of the law and practice with respect to recognition, namely 'the question whether the United Nations does not already act as an agency for the collective recognition of new States'.<sup>4</sup> It is thus also an enquiry into the modern law of recognition as developed in the post-World War Two practice of the international community — as facilitated by the United Nations Organization. For this reason it is equally a study of the law of non-recognition. It is this latter aspect, the refusal by the international community to bless certain aspiring entities with the benediction of statehood, that makes this work of more than ordinary interest for a South African audience. After all, the most famous of these unsuccessful candidates are South Africa's 'independent' homelands, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. As did his illustrious predecessor, Professor Dugard also puts his study within a framework of legal principle and theory, which brings him to a discussion *inter alia* of the concept of *jus cogens*.

The author starts his analysis with an investigation into the practice of the League of Nations and especially the non-recognition of Manchukuo. The Stimson doctrine of 1932, which was enunciated in response to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, is presented as the origin of the modern law of collective non-recognition. This was the start of important new trends — a demise in the absolute discretion of individual states to grant or withhold recognition and the emergence of new requirements for statehood. These requirements include respect for fundamental rules of international law, such as the prohibition of aggression, self-determination and respect for basic human rights.

In the chapter on the practice of the United Nations, Professor Dugard detects further support for his thesis, even to the point that 'it appears that strict compliance with the requirements of independence and effective

government have on occasions been overlooked in the interest of self-determination'.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter a considerable number of individual cases are discussed (especially within the context of decolonization), the problem of 'mini-states' is addressed and a jurisprudential framework is distilled from the writings of scholars such as Kelsen, Briggs and Wright. The conclusions that he arrives at as a result are not timid ones: Recognition of these new states takes place through a certification process (admission to membership) by the United Nations. The international community has delegated to this organization the authority to recognize decolonized entities as states. (At p. 73).

The central theme of this book is that 'the key to the modern law of recognition is increasingly to be found in the doctrine of non-recognition'.<sup>6</sup> Such a 'doctrine' is established 'as the international community expounds principles that will preclude recognition of entities as States'.<sup>7</sup> A small point of criticism might be directed at the somewhat uncritical treatment of UN resolutions.

The author equates the United Nations with the international community and the practice of that organization, and more specifically the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, with the law creating practice. It is the cumulative effect of this reasoning that must be treated with caution — at least insofar as the creation of a new international law 'doctrine' is concerned. When does the practice of an organization amount to a 'doctrine'? It seems safe to assume that such a doctrine must reflect basic and binding tenets of that law. Resolutions of the General Assembly and many of the Security Council are not binding as such. General Assembly resolutions are recommendations, and although it might be true that they could reflect state practice, new (customary) international law can only come about through the combined effect of state practice and *opinio iuris*. It is not self-evident that the required *opinio iuris* can be said to be present if states, in voting for General Assembly resolutions, do so on the basis of the knowledge that such resolutions are only 'recommendations'.

The chapter dealing with UN practice does not analyse the voting patterns with respect to the various resolutions that are discussed. The political nature of many of these questions requires that the patterns of support for certain new tendencies should be taken into account. This is especially true if basic, new rules of international law, a doctrine of international law, is to be distilled from these resolutions. This was pointed out in, for example, the *Texaco Arbitration*. '[C]onsensus by a majority of States belonging to the various representative groups indicates . . . universal recognition.' A further distinction is then drawn between resolutions on the basis of being 'political' or 'legal'. Of the former kind are those which advance the ideological cause of the developing countries, and which do so against the wishes of the western nations.<sup>8</sup>

This reviewer is not unsympathetic towards the approach adopted or the conclusions drawn by the author. They could however have gained even further in their persuasive quality had they been discussed within a broader framework that would have accounted for this traditional criticism of UN resolutions.

The importance of Professor Dugard's contribution lies in his argument that non-compliance with certain 'basic' norms of international law is responsible for the *non-recognition* by the international community of certain entities as states. These basic norms are those of non-aggression, self-determination and respect for human rights, which are all peremptory rules of international law, i.e. *jus cogens*. This conclusion is preceded by a discussion of a number of cases such as Rhodesia, Katanga, South Africa's independent homelands, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as well as examples of the non-recognition of territorial acquisitions: East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, Goa — and the separate case of Namibia. These case studies often indicate conflicts between fundamental norms. In the case of Goa it was between the prohibition on the use of force and the advancement of decolonization. It is then stated: 'It is the Colonial context of India's invasion of Goa which distinguishes it from the cases of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and explains why India had little difficulty in securing recognition of her conquest of Goa.'<sup>9</sup>

The assumed superior juridical quality of the 'Colonial context' in curing the illegality of India's aggression when compared to Israel's rights to territorial integrity and self-defence, could have been explained more thoroughly. After all, Goa's decolonization also existed in being incorporated into India. Can Israel's 'title' also become complete through the subsequent recognition that a General Assembly resolution would imply?

Since it is 'absurd' to consider entities such as South Africa's homelands, Rhodesia and Northern Cyprus as states, despite the fact that they, according to Professor Dugard, meet the traditional Montevideo requirements, the new conditions of statehood must be explained. This is done in the penultimate chapter. It is the concept of *jus cogens* that now provides the basis for the modern law of non-recognition. 'An act in violation of a norm having the character of *jus cogens* is illegal and is therefore null and void.'<sup>10</sup> This includes the coming into being of a new State. The argument is then systematically developed to account for the binding force of the duty of non-recognition and the nature and content of *jus cogens*. The author also lists (and it is difficult to disagree): the prohibition of systematic racial discrimination, suppression of human rights and self-determination as examples of *jus cogens*. The effect is that entities that have attained formal 'statehood' in violation of these rules of international law will not qualify as states. This disqualification also applies to the whole of the international community, i.e. *era omnes*. In this regard the concept of *jus cogens* has a much wider effect than traditional

rules such as *ex iniuria non oritur jus*. Its obvious application to South Africa's homelands and Namibia is self-evident.

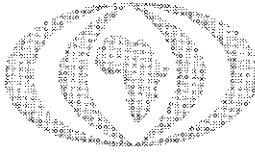
In the concluding chapter the author admits that factual anomalies and logical inconsistencies still exist in this branch of law. One is often struck by the degree to which this very fact is used as the basis for defending South Africa's policies. In doing so the wood is often not seen for the trees. Professor Dugard has not written a critique on South Africa. He has however made a very stimulating and sound contribution to the law of recognition, and to the theoretical basis of an important branch of international law as such. He has done so in a lucid and convincing manner. No serious future study of modern questions of recognition and even of *jus cogens* will be able to ignore the arguments contained in this book. The author has done justice to the memory of Hersch Lauterpacht, especially since he is also prepared to criticize and expand the latter's arguments. This fact, as well as the overall merit of this work is perhaps aptly illustrated by one of the earlier statements in the book: '[It] has become abundantly clear that Professor Lauterpacht's claim that the doctrine of non-recognition can, as a rule, have no bearing on the question of recognition of States, is today without substance.'<sup>11</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Dugard *Recognition and the United Nations*, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Previous titles include S Rosenne, *Breach of Treaty*, and F Morgenstern, *Legal Problems of International Organization*.
4. p. 4.
5. p. 78.
6. p. 81.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *International Legal Materials* Vol. 17 (1978) paras 73 *et seq.* Emphasis added.
9. p. 116.
10. p. 135.
11. p. 82.

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