

Chapter Seven

It is worse in Franco Spain, it is worse in Greece. It was worse in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. But this is how it started. *The Guardian*, 1946¹

The Road to Fascism

“The Suppression Act” and Dissolution of the SACP

If Smuts’ government had acted as if it were the executive arm of the Chamber of Mines during the miners’ strike, the CPSA identified the aggressive tactics of both the United and the National Party in the years 1946–48 as the start of a significant stage in the development of a police state.

The NP’s path to power had been a tortuous one. In the run-up to Malan’s election victory it was clear that the country was on the road to fascism, but there was considerable uncertainty about the pace and directness of that path. Hyman Basner (“Bas” as we called him at Frankenwald, the university settlement near Rivonia that we coincidentally lived in a decade later), was previously a native representative in the senate. A communist in the 1930s, Basner had few illusions about either the United or the National Party’s disdain for democracy and their racist post-war rhetoric. It was as if the world had stopped in the mid-forties and the principles of the Atlantic Charter or the United Nations’ Declaration of Human Rights had never been written. His cynicism was expressed in his lively column in *The Guardian*. He likened parliament (in May 1947, a year before Malan took power) to an assembly of sorcerers, witches and warlocks, whose foul incantations evoked a spectre of bigotry and chauvinism:

Fair is foul and foul is fair ... For real wickedness, for senseless malice and sterile intolerance, for destructiveness of mind and debasement of spirit, you’ve got to hear a racist doing his stuff amid the hear hears of his party’s chorus.²

Basner believed that only a political miracle could save the country from an NP government. However, he was unsure whether there would be sufficient consensus among the all-white electorate to deliver the country to the National Party in a single electoral contest. He envisaged the possibility of an NP–UP coalition, “or a position of stalemate in which no party would be able to form a government”. His initial prognosis of an outright

victory for the Malan–Havenga alliance was perhaps the closest the Left came to accurately assessing the proximity of a neo-fascist government in South Africa. Not until the very end of the election campaign did the Party itself speculate on the chances of a National Party electoral victory. It rightly recognized that “as long as the vote was denied to the African, Coloured and Indian peoples, parliament would perpetuate the present backward and oppressive system of society”. It regarded its task during the elections as one of advancing the struggle for universal franchise – “Votes for All!” – “for a social democracy and the rallying of the people against imperialism”.³ It did not expect an outright National Party victory but had no doubt that this outcome would represent “the greatest single danger to South Africa”. *The Guardian* (increasingly voicing the views of the leadership at that time and even more so later) noted that the NP’s open acceptance of fascist ideology made it imperative “for all democrats” to unite and defeat them.⁴ Interestingly, the Party, along with the national organizations, still believed that even though the eleventh hour had passed, an all-party national convention “whose object would be to prevent splitting the anti-nationalist vote”, was possible.

Basner, who normally had his feet firmly on the ground, had little faith that the “democratic” political parties would call a national convention on their own volition. Instead, he called for a strong “organized progressive and working class combination” to bring pressure on Smuts’ party to abandon its more reactionary candidates and take a stronger line against fascist organizations. He was searching for some effective form of united opposition to the nationalists and in a statement that perhaps was designed more for Communist Party consumption than the general public noted that

there is no possibility of immediate Socialism in South Africa, there is only the possibility of immediate reforms in the colour bar and cheap labour structure of South Africa’s economy. Any party which will help to industrialize South Africa and abolish its feudal agrarian structure is a progressive party at this stage in South Africa.⁵

But there was no likelihood of reforms of the sort envisaged by Basner, let alone a united front against the NP menace. The absence of conditions conducive to the development of Socialism would be part of a later debate on the national democratic revolution which had little resonance with the situation in 1948 and was not particularly pertinent at that moment.⁶ Illuminating as that debate is, it was hardly likely that Smuts would agree to an all-party national convention (least of all one including the CPSA) or “drop his party’s more reactionary candidates”, especially as he had personally instructed them to make anti-communism a principal plank in the United Party’s political platform.⁷ Either the

movement was on the edge of reality or like almost everyone else, it did not expect Malan to win.

In April 1948, a month before election day, either in denial of the likely reality of an NP victory or in an uncharacteristic leap of speculation, *The Guardian* noted:

Dr Malan is going to lose the election. He knows it by now, as must his followers ... but what is important is that the national defeat should be conclusive enough to hound [him] and his bankrupt racialism from public life.⁸

It was not so much that the paper (which was close to the leadership) had been carried away by the excitement of the election contest that was worrying, but that it should have misread the moment so badly. *The Guardian* report was followed by a brief analysis in which it argued that the proposed apartheid labour policies would be too restrictive for South Africa's fast growing economy and that the industrialists and farmers (mainly those in the Free State) were riding the crest of a prosperity wave and would not vote for the NP. For all these and other reasons, the party believed "the Malan-Havenga coalition is not going at all well".⁹

The Party miscalculated on the extent of rural support for the Malan-Havenga alliance, but could be forgiven for believing that the industrialists were not especially enthusiastic about the possibility of a highly regulated labour structure, which they associated with the new concept of apartheid. It was only in the early 1970s that the orthodox view that apartheid labour policies were antithetical to capitalist growth was analytically challenged. Progressive sociologists and historians disputed that apartheid practices necessarily inhibited an increase in profits and argued that at certain times and in particular sectors of the economy, apartheid might serve to enhance them. The chief protagonist of this revisionist view of the economics of apartheid was Harold Wolpe who became a good friend. Harold and I had quite a lot in common, including a very precarious sense of direction as to streets and places. We had been together in the CPSA and in the Young Communist League and lived close to one another in Yeoville, Johannesburg, but it was in London that I grew to know him well and assimilated his path-breaking analysis of apartheid into the research I was doing on the migrant labour system.¹⁰ This was long after the impending parliamentary elections and the National Party victory in 1948.¹¹

I was taken aback by Malan's success in the elections but I was not alone in this. *The Guardian* expressed its astonishment at the outcome, as well as everyone else: "The elections had taken the whole country by surprise", it stated. The combined vote for the Malan-Havenga alliance was 443 700 votes against the United Party and Labour Party's 623 500. They had won on a minority of votes but in view of the favourable weighting of

the rural constituencies over the urban areas, the NP had won the largest number of seats in parliament, with 79 seats to the Opposition's 71.¹² It was a narrow victory, in which the National Party had captured the countryside and "arrived" in the cities, especially in and around the urban areas of Pretoria and the Witwatersrand. It is a feature of the "Westminster System" (or variants of it) that the party which wins the popular vote might often have no representation in government. Malan, a recent convert to parliamentary democracy was now free to celebrate his triumph. Even Smuts, premier and leader of the United Party, was stunned by his party's narrow defeat, and the nationalists were by all accounts equally taken aback by the reality of their victory "which gave them responsibility before they were ready for it".¹³

For their part, the NP newspapers could not contain their jubilation and the English language press that supported the Smuts government either sought an accommodation with the new regime or sat on the fence and bided their time.¹⁴ The *Cape Argus*, unconscious of the racial exclusiveness of an all-white election, called upon the United Party "to close ranks and fight against the narrow racial exclusiveness for which the National Party stands". A week before the elections, the CPSA registered its disgust at the limited opportunities for the whole population to vote (less than one million out of a total of fourteen million people eventually participated in the ballot). The Communist Party also expressed its disbelief at the banality of the issues debated during the elections. "If the adult [African] population was enfranchised", it said, "this election would have been fought around issues of real concern to the people, instead of around racist rubbish and communist bogies."¹⁵

Yet I had no clear understanding of what it meant that we were on the brink of a fascist experience. The only thing to do was to carry on, as before! I do not remember having any specific sense of personal danger. The Party called for objectivity and stoicism in a tough election analysis and we accordingly followed its lead. There was a sobering impersonal assessment of the moment, in which the CPSA almost anticipated the entire nationalist project for the next two decades: "The Nationalist victory", it said in a statement, "had given power to a group of men who had consistently threatened to abolish the basis of democracy in South Africa" and before long would "abolish the Coloured vote, seek to deport the Indian population, prevent the growth of the African trade union movement and control the activities of the white and black sections of organised labour". Furthermore, the CPSA predicted that the NP government would "prevent the immigration of Jews or the extension of civic rights to non-national elements", seek to "liquidate the influence of Communist elements" and prevent the further development of the national liberation movement. The lesson that had to be drawn was that "the United Party had failed to oppose the reactionary National Party with a bold and positive policy

of its own and had failed to deal adequately with the fundamental economic and social political issues facing the country”.¹⁶

There were some errors in this message. The Indians were not deported in droves although their entry into the country was formally restricted, and the immigration of Jews was not overtly suspended. But for the most part these predictions were accurate, even restrained. The difficulty was to carry on as usual, knowing that the axe was momentarily to fall and that the security police were close at hand, awkwardly observing our actions, waiting for a judicious moment to swoop. We knew that there was a familiar pattern in which the Communist Party was invariably the first victim of repressive regimes. Momentarily free, there were more questions about the future than good answers to cheer us. We had written in our election manifesto in 1948 that the nationalist threat to outlaw the communists was real and that “if we are to judge by the experience in other countries [the attack on communists] would only be the beginning of a general onslaught against every form of democratic liberty”.¹⁷ Now that the unthinkable had occurred there was no other course for us to take but to resist: communists did not flee!

That this meant eventual arrest, detention, long trials and even longer prison sentences was not anything that I envisaged at the time, and I doubt whether many others did either. The evidence of hindsight is notoriously second-rate, but it seems obvious that we would be caught “red handed” as the prison inmates would later tell me (unaware of the delicious pun) unless we were “professional”. *They* did not need to read Lenin on the necessity for “professional revolutionaries” to know that illegal work required painstaking preparation and careful undercover activity, something elementary to anyone who took “crime” seriously. Yet I would have done the same again, not out of bravado but for the reason that it was our cause and I believed in it.

We may have been “unprofessional” but at that moment there was nothing criminal about the Communist Party. In 1948 it was as legal as any other party. At the time, the challenge was to make the transition from the relative freedom we currently enjoyed to the more restrictive period ahead; to state the Communist case as best we could, just as we had done during the elections. But the writing was on the wall. It was likely that we would soon be outlawed or banned or both: a statement which was previously innocuous would now be seen to have treasonable connotations. Underground work was not something that one could seriously practise when the organization was still legal.

The Party was not dissolved for another two years during which there was little time to become “professional” underground cadres. For some in the Communist Party this was impossible, even when the underground SACP was formed in 1953 (two years after the dissolution of the former Party). The majority of activists could not become professional revolutionaries, especially when there were families to feed and where there were no sources of income other than through paid employment. Many of us fell into that category

and nearly all of us in that situation went to jail. The degree to which we learnt to become effective underground activists (but not technically “professional revolutionaries”) is evident from the Fischer Trial in 1964, the first occasion in which a cell of the SACP was exposed.

Fascist Measures

In retrospect, it was clear that our insistence on continuing the struggle irrespective of the imminent dangers ahead led to the subsequent bannings and proscriptions many of us suffered. Effectively our involvement never seemed to cease. After the NP came to power in 1948, the attack on the Party was the least unexpected of the regime’s actions. Before then, the new government introduced the Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Bill, which set a new standard of callousness in the regulation of African labour.¹⁸ This was in 1949, while the long anticipated legislation on suppression of communism was passed into law in 1950. Both bills were under discussion at the same time.

There had been rigorous regulations regarding the movement of Africans to urban areas since 1923 and these had been made more stringent over the years. Their purpose was to manage the movement of the African urban population, contain African influx in the towns and cities and direct the flow of labour to where it was needed. The new regulations were restrictive and inhuman and purported to “streamline” the existing regulations to suit the labour needs of the major business interests and satisfy the ideologues in the Broederbond. Failure on the part of a person to satisfy the native commissioner of his innocence would lead to an order either to remove him from the urban area, return him to his home or direct him to a (work) place chosen by the native commissioner or magistrate. The definition of an “idle” person included one who was “habitually or intermittently unemployed or who because of his own misconduct ... is unable to support himself or his dependants.”

Sam Kahn, still in parliament, told the House that the institution being developed was not a labour exchange but “something akin to a slave labour market”.¹⁹ In May 1949, there were on average 208 cases of contraventions of the Urban Areas Act per day²⁰ and according to Kahn, every morning before the court started, the accused were herded together in a wire-enclosed cage and addressed by the public prosecutor who told them [illegally] that the court would withdraw charges against them if they accepted six months employment from a farmer.²¹ Before Kahn, the Reverend Michael Scott, representing the Campaign for Right and Justice, and later Ruth First, the Johannesburg editor of *The Guardian* along with the reporters on *Drum* magazine, provided evidence of scores of slave labour squads on the Bethal potato farms, all of them consisting of helpless victims of the regime’s repressive social policies. Many of them were captives under the (Natives) Urban Areas regulations. In 1947, Scott noted that conditions were in many respects

worse than slavery. The men were signed up on a six-month's contract for two pounds per month, were housed in windowless barn-like buildings and slept on sacks.²² The new Natives (Urban Areas) Bill together with a number of other unjust laws, formed the context in which the Suppression of Communism Act was passed.

The “Suppression Act”

Within three months of their accession to office the National Party government announced the establishment of a special “secret police” to investigate communist activities. The political section of the police force had been increased in size (this would not be for the first time) and plain-clothes police would attend all meetings of the Communist Party, trade unions and the congresses. This was more of an elaboration of prevailing practice than anything new. What ought to have been alarming was that it was all so unashamedly overt. Telephone lines were routinely tapped and surveillance increased. There was talk that the police were compiling a register of undesirables – a black list – along the lines of the Un-American Activities Committee in the USA where it was rumoured that the FBI had listed 100 000 names of communists and sympathizers, including activists “in the inner fastness of Hollywood”.²³ It seemed that the National Party government was looking closely at Canadian, Australian and US anti-communist practice. In 1948, the entire national leadership of the American Communist Party were charged with overthrowing the US government. Howard Fast and ten members of the US Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee had been sent to jail for twelve months for refusing to give evidence before a Committee of Congress. Paul Robeson, whose records we played at musical evenings and whose stirring rendering of the Ballad for America I chanted for years – although I could not hold a tune if my life depended on it – likewise defied the US senate, and refused to answer questions.²⁴ There were closer warnings. H.A. Naidoo, the Durban trade unionist and CPSA leader cautioned: “the communists are the first to face the initial attacks of a regime rapidly turning fascist” and that the US was on the high road to Fascism. The more eloquent his expression of outrage, it seemed, the more remotely we sensed the danger. He referred in dramatic terms to the “notorious Mundt Bill”, the US subversive activities bill which was so widely framed as to include any organization with a foreign or domestic policy similar to the Communist Party; including so-called “front organizations”.

The idea of outlawing the Communist Party was one of a few options the government could choose to suppress the CPSA. Initially it seems to have looked for a more effective way of curbing communist activity than formal trials and eventually settled for a form of legislation that would effectively silence the party. It charged the special branch of the South African police to provide it with a report on the extent of the nation's exposure to Communism and announced that it had received 700 dossiers of communists

throughout the country and a list of 300 fellow-travellers. My dossier was possibly among them. Their thinking was to use the report to institute a public commission of inquiry into Communism in South Africa, probably by appointing a select committee or a panel of so-called experts on Communism along the lines of the House Un-American Activities Committee in the US.²⁵ As it happened, the new government decided to consider other options; it was evidently still feeling its way.

Eventually, the Minister of Justice, C.R. Swart, promised that the steps to outlaw the CPSA were liable to be “drastic” but did not reveal the details – a bill had clearly not yet been drafted. He nevertheless gave notice that consideration had already been given to a proposal to expel all communists from any branch of the public service. This was probably for National Party consumption as there were no prominent members of the CPSA in senior government service at that time.²⁶ More seriously, he told parliament that it had been recommended that the government “immediately consider the dissolution of the Communist Party” and that “literature of a communist nature would be strictly controlled.”²⁷ Although this would obviously affect us all very seriously, we seemed to be inexplicably detached from these threats. Possibly it was easier to express anger at the spate of repressive legislation that the regime was considering than to deal with the impact the suppression of the Party would have on our lives.

There was an armful of bills before the legislature to keep our minds occupied, and if the stream of legislation currently before parliament was to be written into law (there were draft bills on education; discriminatory measures for Indians; and labour laws in the legislative pipeline) these would give us much to campaign about. The government had already declared its intention to deprive Africans of their meagre parliamentary representation as well as their political rights in the urban areas, and now they prepared themselves to remove the Coloured voters from the common electoral roll and give them the same token representative institutions as Africans. For the Asian population, Malan announced in no uncertain terms that government would repeal the franchise provisions of the Smuts “Ghetto Act” and provide “special” (unequal) treatment for the Indians.²⁸ The future seemed bleak. I was nineteen years old, single and an indefatigable foot soldier. My instinctive reaction was to “carry on”. The early exodus of a few activists had little impact on me; those who had already left the country had done so quietly, unmarked, almost unnoticed and their leaving seemed to be unrelated to present dangers.

As it turned out, the early draft of the anti-communist bill in South Africa was not modelled on the US, but to some extent on the Canadian anti-communist legislation which gave government “wide and drastic powers” to outlaw any opposition group it believed to threaten the state.²⁹ Canada had repealed this legislation in 1936 but its wide-ranging formulation of what constituted an unlawful organization initially attracted the Malan government who presented an early draft bill to parliament, based on the Canadian

principles. This bill was severely flawed. It left no organization or individual secure; all could be declared unlawful for promoting the interests of a particular class or section of the population. Even if the organization were not banned, a person would be liable to imprisonment for advising or defending a strike or encouraging political, economic and social change.³⁰ The Party warned that although the bill was aimed at Communism, in reality it presented a blueprint for Fascism. It was also too drastic for the two major National Party newspapers, *Die Vaderland* and *Die Burger*. The former complained, “if the Bill were to become law in its present form it could affect even a good number of Nationalist members of parliament because of speeches about cartels and private monopolies”. Mindful of the less savoury extra-parliamentary movements it had previously supported – which organizations might well resurface under a different government – the newspaper cautiously reiterated its trust in Malan but at the same time reminded its readers that “under a government like the present, there is little danger of misuse ... but this government will not always be in power”.³¹

Die Burger, slightly more pragmatic, wanted the bill to be “more expressly against Communism” as was the case in Australia, where anticipating conflict with the USSR, the Party was outlawed as a war measure.³² The government yielded to the pressure and eventually withdrew the draft in favour of something less controversial. If it had not yet realised that the spirit of the earlier bill could be recaptured by administrative practice and ordinary intimidation, it would soon learn this as it gained more experience in government. The similarities of the new anti-communist draft legislation with the Canadian product however, were quite recognisable as was the language describing an unlawful organization. The government did not accept *Die Burger*’s suggestion that the bill be phrased “more expressly against communism” and targeted “any association, organization society or corporation whose professed purpose is to bring about industrial or economic change ... by use of force”.³³ Unfortunately, *Die Vaderland*’s fear that the net would be cast too wide for their party’s peace of mind should it lose power, was never put to the test because the National Party remained in office for the next 40 years until the apartheid regime was dismantled and with it the legislation on “Communism”.

It was not a propitious moment for the CPSA. At the time, however, even the smallest of “victories” were a boost to morale. It was immensely gratifying to those of us who felt battered by the incessant assaults on the Left to read Sam Kahn’s war of words with the National Party. His verbal offensive in parliament made little impact on the legislators or on the majority of white South Africans, but it momentarily assuaged the sense of powerlessness we felt as the government exposed its fascist facade to the country. Kahn had been elected to parliament as the native representative for the Cape (West) in November 1948³⁴ and from that moment until his eviction from parliament in

1951, remained a thorn in the flesh of the government. He was sarcastic, witty and verbally devastating. “The whole country”, he told parliament,

has cause for alarm as ... South Africa degenerated into an unsavoury police state. High-handed police investigation and censorship of overseas mail, police spying on trade unions and political meetings, are all pointers to a government with the mind of Himmler, the tongue of Goebbels and the destined fate of a Hitler.³⁵

Kahn’s satirical wit and good humour marked the end of an era in which Communist ideas, if offensive to the white consensus, were not yet proscribed. The Party was battered but still not banned and its representative in parliament could criticise the neo-Nazi policies of the government with the abandon of a prisoner on death row. The Party, however, was fighting for its life; on the one hand, encouraging mass meetings in the main urban centres and on the other defending its right to exist by dint of reason and hard argument.

In a mass rally, the first of many united front activities called by the CPSA the ANC and the Indian congresses, 20 000 people gathered in Durban to observe a national day of mourning to protest against what was still called the Unlawful Organizations Bill. It was early June 1950. Similar rallies were held at the Feather Market Hall in Port Elizabeth and at the Market Square in Johannesburg. I recall the meeting at the Market Square, for which a team of energetic activists in the Indian Youth Congress, all of whom were extraordinary young at the time, plastered the city with posters of the rally and distributed tiny square-shaped leaflets at the Diagonal Street bus ranks. It was there on Friday nights that we ritually sold *The Guardian* and publicized future meetings. The mass rally itself, as I recall it, was a boisterous gathering of thousands of people in the bright Johannesburg sunlight, a very lively affair, more pertinent to our winning the political war than the sombre sight of the masses gathering to mourn.

In the imminence of the Party’s suppression, there were a number of early obituaries, one of them recording our long record of overcoming “barriers”, tracking the Party’s history through two World Wars and the Communist International. Death notices are designed to bring comfort, but these tended to increase the tension between what Bill Andrews, the Party’s chairman, discerned as “appearance” and “reality”. Still a child when Marx and Engels were in their prime and now in his eighties, Andrews could stand back and view the scene unfolding with the distance of an intrepid “voyager”. He used the metaphor of a turbulent river to describe the present conjuncture, urging us to learn to distinguish the river’s rapids from its restless currents and to see the rocks as “illusory barriers that had to be gently navigated”. He wrote encouragingly “that barriers often seem worse than they are” and exhorted us all to “press on” undeterred by appearances.

We would discover that the “barrier was merely a sharp bend in the river which when rounded, disclosed a further long reach of navigable water, to be followed perhaps by similar barriers which in their turn prove to be but illusions”.³⁶

This was a stirring rallying call to those too young to have pioneered earlier voyages but there was nothing illusory about the perils of the passage we were soon to confront. This did not detract from the venerable struggles that Andrews recalled, especially the brutal assaults from the earliest times that members of the CPSA suffered for protesting against the intolerable working and living conditions of African workers, receiving prison sentences for their pains. He recalled the traumas of the aftermath of the 1922 Mine Strike and the arrests and charges of sedition following the African mineworkers’ strike in 1946.³⁷ But the era of neo-fascism was different and the assaults encountered during the long struggle from Malan to Mandela transcended anything that Andrews could ever have imagined. If Bill Andrews harked back to the CPSA’s birth in 1921 and its intrepid institutional forbears in the International Socialist League of 1915, Michael Harmel, intellectual and professional revolutionary, and also a member of the Central Committee, communicated an even longer journey, replete with hardship and struggle.

Harmel recounted Marx’s eventful flight from his native Germany in 1843, when the young founder of the movement was “hounded from France to Belgium and thence to London”.³⁸ He recalled the crushing of the Paris Commune in 1871, the incarceration of countless Bolsheviks in Tsarist prisons before 1917, “when Lenin had to be sent abroad by his party to save his life, and Stalin spent years of his life in the bleak waters of Siberia where he was frequently exiled”. From the accounts of flight and exile of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and the early Bolsheviks, he recalled the tribulations of martyred communists in other struggles including Mussolini’s Italy, Franco’s Spain, Chiang Kaichek’s China, militarist Japan and Hitler’s Germany. “Attacks on Communists”, he wrote, “are always a prelude to the destruction of democratic rights and liberties, to the suppression of all opposition ... and [to the] eventual open dictatorship of the most extreme reactionaries of the Hitler type”.³⁹

These were at once stirring and bewildering thoughts at a time when the leaders of the National Party and their counterparts in the Broederbond had only just assumed control of the state. Externally nothing had changed. I went about my business as usual; there was little sense of crisis in the streets. People pushed past each other, as they had always done on Johannesburg’s wide pavements in the city centre, the men often in their double breasted suits and wide-brimmed felt hats and the women in long skirts, some with scarves covering their heads. It was winter but as warm as an English summer. Everything seemed very normal; the trams ran as before, rattling along Twist Street into Kotze Street past Hillbrow, all the way to Yeoville where I lived, as if that journey home was the way it was and always would be ... I would jump onto the vehicle while it was still moving,

pay my fare to an idle conductor, and dart upstairs until it was time to jump off 20 minutes later while the tram moved on, a slithery red tube on metal rails. Doubtless, Africans in the townships made their way back from work in the long, overly full PUTCO buses wending their way out of the city – the men bearing the same burdens of poverty and menaced by the same fears of police interference or arrest under a pass offence or another section of the Urban Areas Act, as before. Possibly Andrews was right; it was all appearance and the talk of arrest, political suppression and exile, an ugly illusion. At any rate, it was not long before reality intervened, when the litany of communist sacrifice encountered over decades became a reference point for the emulation of the heroes Harmel had written about. “Communism is not ... a petty conspiracy”, he stated: “it is at the same time a profound social theory and a mighty historical force, arising out of the creation of modern industry, capitalist society and the working class.” Encouragingly, the final declaratory note stirred us into action: “You can kill communists”, he wrote, “but you cannot kill Communism.”⁴⁰ He had appealed to our sense of communist commitment, to the defence of Socialism and all that we strove for. Fortified by the political theory that in our view had been transformed into a science, Marxism was the force that would take us beyond ordinary endurance, transcending mere belief and assuring us that we would in the end succeed. It provided a sense of certainty, and we sorely needed it.

Suppression

“Communism” in terms of the new Bill was a broadly conceived doctrine, bereft of the ideas of Marx, Engels and the Third Communist International. Its advocacy in South Africa was an offence as long as it expounded the doctrines of Marxian Socialism or bore any of these influences, including violent political, industrial or economic change or the advocacy of the “Dictatorship of the Proletariat”. Anything relating to this or encouraging feelings of hostility between “Europeans” and “non-Europeans” was similarly “communism”. (As defined, communism was a catchword for anything an insecure government with a fascist ideology, unconcerned with the shades of meaning between one political philosophy and another, wanted it to be.)

Three weeks before the Bill was passed into law, the CPSA told a Select Committee of the House of Assembly:

[The Bill’s] powers are so wide, and the right of organizations and individuals to present a civilized defence before the courts of our country are so undermined, that if it were carried into effect, this Bill would constitute a *complete* abrogation of the rule of law in South Africa.⁴¹

The reference to the rule of law was an overstatement (at the time) but it was not essentially wrong to say that the Bill profoundly infringed the rule of law and left it badly limping. At any rate, what was left of the legal process provided space enough in the 1950s to raise the level of struggle to new heights and to move on to the offensive when the government would have expected us to be reeling. Interestingly, the parliamentary Select Committee, at the time of the act's making, gave the Party an opportunity to present its views to parliament on a number of questions that touched on the state's demonic description of Communism. It was a chance to set the record straight on some of our fundamental values.

A major theme was our response to the government's stereotypical view – not necessarily ours, we argued – of the phrase “overthrow of the state by force”. A literal interpretation of this would constitute an offence under the pending anti-communist legislation so we addressed the concept cautiously, as the Australian communists had done before us. Doubtless, they too had been advised by their lawyers to treat the subject with circumspection. Mention of the words “overthrow”, “force” or “violence” was obviously to be avoided, and the concept of force was to be turned gently on its head and replaced by the blander terminology of “gradualism”. As the National Party attached some importance to the (coercive) notion of the Leninist concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat – its connotations were seen to be violent – that matter too was sensitively addressed.

The question of violence, generally, was a seminal one because it was seen by the state's lawyers as likely to accompany any sort of industrial or political change. The subject of violence would be repeatedly argued before the courts in the Treason, Rivonia, Fischer and other trials during the next decade. As far as I can recall we hardly debated the precise manner in which a democratic transition would occur, as we were so preoccupied with the pending closure of the Party (and the possibility of democratic transformation was so remote), that discussion of the matter seemed irrelevant. We also dismissed the CPSA's entire submission to the Select Committee as an abstruse legal argument, a sort of Aesopian exercise to confuse them, something that had no bearing on our actual interpretation of Marxist or Leninist principles. The subject of political change was accordingly presented by our representatives to the Select Committee as something essentially unproblematical. It was a matter “upon which every student of history, political science, sociology and philosophy should be tolerably well informed”, we insisted. “Everyone knew that the subject was academic at the moment” and would be considered “when the time comes”. It was all a matter of “contingency”.

The CPSA cited the Australian position,⁴² languidly explaining that:

in the ultimate ideal of [achieving] a communist society, all profess to welcome a revolutionary change from the present economic system. It is, it would seem from the writings in evidence, the element of time which must be clearly examined in determining whether at the present or the near or very far distant future there is to be any employment of violence and force on the part of the classes for which the Communist Party claims to speak.⁴³

What should have been confusing to members was that the Communist Party generally rejected the “inevitability of gradualness” as a socialist and labour doctrine, favouring instead human agency and class struggle. However, present considerations required a refutation of the use of violence. Hence we stuck to our earlier submission that the allegations that the Party aimed to change the order of society by force was “sheer fabrication”, a falsification of the Party’s fundamental aims and methods of struggle. Change would occur quite naturally from the *ruins* of the old society, we explained, for “it was clear to all Marxists that a socialist state would emerge from the very nature of the capitalist economy”. But when? The question was rhetorical. “There is no answer to this question. History shows that the struggle for communism illustrates the gradualness, the extreme gradualness, of inevitability”.⁴⁴ What could be clearer?

Ideology has a life of its own in which there are some propositions that can be dispensed with only at the expense of the entire theory; remove one pillar of the temple and the whole structure crumbles. The concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (the DOP in its friendlier, modern form of reference) held that significant status in the body of Leninist literature. A socialist revolution in which the working class seized state power was unthinkable without the establishment of the DOP; the former ruling class would simply subvert it. The concept of the DOP was not initially included in the Suppression of Communism Bill, but found its way into the legislation because of its coercive connotations – and because, in the government’s view, it was further evidence of the Party’s proclivity for force and violence. Besides, its “necessity” was a defining (Leninist) assumption of most communist parties.

The CPSA defended the principle staunchly as it was theoretically obliged to do, on the grounds that the DOP quite naturally replaced one form of dictatorship with another.

The communists claim that democratic institutions conceal, but do not mitigate, the concentration of political and economic power in the property owning class, and that for such dictatorship, there should be substituted the open, undisguised dictatorship of the property-less classes. They say it is extremely probable that violent upheaval will ensue *when the time comes* to effect such substitution.⁴⁵

Based on the premise of “gradualness”, in which the DOP would emerge from the collapse of the property-owning classes, it was an eloquent if long-winded defence of the Party’s position.

It is, however, an irony that the SACP today would not have defended the concept of the DOP as vigorously, because of its authoritarian connotations. The property-less classes, in the modern South African state of the future would be protected from the worst abuses of their defeated class enemies by the Constitution and the collective action of all those who had the political will to defend it. The philosophy of Marxism–Leninism could evidently remain intact with some reconfiguration of the concepts previously held indispensable to it; the absence of the Leninist necessity for the DOP might be one such superfluous conception. In this view, the thinking is that Marxist theory is so rich that one does not need to eat the whole cow to know that most of the meat is good. However, a new generation of Young Communists, weary of revisionist theory, may disagree on the sustainability of working class power without the DOP.

It was easier for the CPSA to disclaim control from Moscow and argue that the Party’s affiliation to the Communist International did not formally bind it to that body’s decisions than to talk about the DOP. The Communist International (CI) had dissolved itself in 1942 but in its evidence to the Select Committee, the CPSA insisted that it had always been an autonomous body operating under its own constitution before, during and after the formation of the CI. “We have no more been bound by our international affiliation than, for instance, have the trade unions or the Labour Party or other organizations by their membership of international bodies.”⁴⁶ Technically this was true (a majority of the Party’s Central Committee at least had to agree to the CI’s resolutions), but officially the CPSA was a section of the Communist International, an obligatory requirement of the latter’s constitution, and the CPSA was bound by its rules to accept the decisions of its Central Executive Committee as if they were its own.⁴⁷ The Party’s Bolshevik discipline and respect for the decisions of the majority of the executive of the Communist International in the 1930s, led it to accept that body’s resolutions completely. It was unequivocal about its internationalism and in pursuit of this principle purged its membership of those who would not accept that discipline or the CI’s authority.

However, it was futile to argue with the Malan government on matters of Marxist theory in order to refute the contents of the anti-communist legislation. Deeply frustrated at the far-reaching scope of the Suppression of Communism Act, the Party cynically noted: Anyone could be subjected to ministerial sanctions, banished, placed under police supervision at the will of the minister ... and any one charged with an offence under the Act will be presumed guilty until he can prove his innocence.”⁴⁸ In terms of the act, a communist was anyone who encouraged the achievement of any of the objectives of Communism and in terms of the act, any liberal, humanist or socially-conscious

philosophy would teeter on the brink of communist sin. We eventually adopted a language to preserve our ideological identity by emphasizing the state's distinction between "Statutory Communism" – the language of the Suppression of Communism Act – and the Communism we believed to be our own.

In reality the distinction between the statutory meaning and the way in which we chose to interpret Marxism made little difference when it came to dealing with the public official responsible for maintaining the register of named communists. Initially this was a zealous official called De Villiers Louw, appointed by the minister to identify the leaders and other activists in the CPSA, deprive them of their civil rights and render the Party ineffective. His official responsibilities were to complete a register of office bearers, members and active supporters of the Party who if found guilty of subsequently pursuing the statutory aims of Communism, would be subject to the penalties prescribed by the act. Unusually active for a public servant and possibly pressured by his minister he firstly identified all the members of the central committee, gave them three weeks to make representations before placing their names on the official register, and then wasted no time in despatching hundreds of letters to the rank and file members of the Party.

Once placed on the "liquidator's" list, it was difficult to get off it. Ostensibly the public protector against communism, he fingered any political opponent he believed to have encouraged the objectives of communism, as prescribed by the act. Subsequent appeals against his decisions proved futile and the archives of his office (probably a potentially rich repository of fact and fantasy for future historians) appear to have vanished with the act. Sam Kahn, who unsuccessfully appealed against the liquidator's decision to include his name on the register, perfectly characterized this official's office when he told parliament: "the Liquidator [would] ... in the future, ... rely on chit chat, on malice, on innuendo, on gossip, on uncomprehending scraps of paper ..." to add yet "more and more" names to his incriminating list.⁴⁹

As *The Guardian* predicted, when the legislation was still in an early draft in 1950, "if you were only a member or active supporter of an unlawful organization for one month in 1924 – you become subject to the minister's pleasure."⁵⁰ I had been a communist for six years by 1950, first in the YCL and then in the CPSA. Recently (in the year 2003), I gained access to my security police file marked (NORMAN LEVY: GEHEIM [Secret]) currently in the custody of the State Archives and now by prescription of time, an historical artefact. It was a strange and emotionally stressful experience, mulling over the minutiae of entries that tracked the different phases of my life's activities over the decades; a half-forgotten narrative which had only the remotest threads connecting past and present. I nervously copied the documents from the folder, including newspaper cuttings of the Fischer Trial in 1964 and 1965, summaries of the court proceedings, and an inane extract of the meetings I attended in the 1950s and 1960s and what I was alleged

to have said. I was sure that some of the “facts” they listed were not facts at all but detailed descriptions of Leon’s activities and not mine. The security police never quite sorted out which twin was carrying out the unlawful objectives of which potentially unlawful organization.

There were garbled narratives accompanying some of the entries against my name, one of them, a message I’d brought from the Congress of Democrats to a meeting of the ANC in Sophiatown saying, “South Africa is the most unhappy country in the world”. It was hardly a subversive statement, and I’m sure that that was not the only thing I’d said, but at least they got that part of the message right. There was also a long list of meetings I was believed to have attended, which to the best of my knowledge was accurate, excepting those occasions where they had the twins confused. My activist “history”, like everything else, was written in cold “intelligence” shorthand and more worryingly, in the ominous language of the objectives of the Suppression of Communism Act. As I leafed through the pages in the folder, I was astonished to read what information the security police were privy to and where they had unexpectedly penetrated. In my file there was a list of persons whose names appeared on the liquidator’s original register in 1950. The names had been entered on a consolidated list published in the *Government Gazette* of 4 July 1986, with hundreds of others added, after the commencement of the Internal Security Act of 1982. The long arm of the law, if that is an appropriate description for administrative procedures dedicated to the suppression of democratic organizations, extended to individuals on Robben Island and in the other political prisons as well as to the entire diaspora of political exiles who had left the country after the Suppression Act of 1950. The list of named communists included persons in London, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Cuba and wherever else people had fled. It also followed them literally to the grave. There was a category of persons referred to as *oorlede* – “deceased” – including Ruth First, J.B. Marks, M.P. Naicker and Moses Kotane to mention only a few of the veterans who died during the course of the struggle – a posthumous roll of honour initially designed to de-personalize and destroy them.

There are two letters in my folder under the signature of the liquidator, D.P. Wilcocks, a successor to the first appointee to this office. One of the letters named me as a member of the South African Congress of Democrats, which was declared an unlawful organisation by government proclamation in 1962. The “Suppression Act” as the new act was often known, gave government the power to declare any organization unlawful if the minister believed it was encouraging the spread of Communism. (This was an enabling feature of the legislation, a crucial clause in the small print of the act, which allowed the prevailing minister to proscribe other “non-communist” organizations by government proclamation, without the need for further legislation.⁵¹) The second letter dated 5 December 1966, belatedly listed me as a member of the Communist Party. De Villiers

Louw, zealous as he was, had not placed my name on his black list. I have not yet been able to track my security file for the period prior to 1956, which is probably lost. The subsequent files are all in the State Archives, but not the folder with the information leading up to the period of the Treason Trial in 1956.

When the liquidator finally caught up with me ten years later, in 1966, the evidence in my file was much stronger. I had already been jailed for membership of the Communist Party and still had nearly three years of my sentence to serve. Under the circumstances the proscriptions on my movements were a bureaucratic bad joke. Oblivious of my prisoner status he had prohibited me from attending social gatherings where persons “have any social intercourse with one another”, or from any political gathering in which the principles and policies of the government might be criticised or from any gathering of students “assembled for the purpose of being instructed, trained” or addressed by me. In gaol? As a person sentenced under the Suppression of Communism Act, I was now (technically) a “Statutory Communist” but the prohibitions were no different in principle from any of the others who received notices from the liquidator after the passage of the Act in June 1950.

Dissolution

Despite the clarification of our political values at the sessions of the parliamentary Select Committee before the anti-communist legislation was finalised, the Suppression of Communism Act was passed into law without regard to any of our submissions. In the debate during the passage of the act, Sam Kahn read a statement on the Party’s decision to dissolve the organization:

Recognising that on the day the Suppression of Communism Bill becomes law, everyone of our members, merely by virtue of their membership, may be liable to be imprisoned without the option of a fine for a maximum of ten years, the Central Committee of the Communist Party has decided to dissolve the party as from today, Tuesday 20 June 1950.⁵²

It was part of a terse statement that suppressed more emotion than it revealed, ending with a prophetic paragraph: “Nothing can stop the people of South Africa in their struggle for full democracy, for the removal of colour bars, for justice and for Socialism.”⁵³

After reading the statement, Kahn broke the tension in the hushed House, showering his opponents with taunts that Communism would outlive the National Party, and that “democracy would still be triumphant when members of this government will be manuring the fields of history”.⁵⁴ Earlier, rising to the historical occasion, Kahn had made the speech of his political career, stating in words that will always be remembered:

after this Bill will come the concentration camps ... and all the sadistic bestialities for which their Nazi soul mates were responsible in Germany. In the name of this Bill will come the extermination of people on the vast scale that horrified, shocked and revolted the civilized world.

At this point, according to *Hansard*, Kahn was interrupted by the National Party Minister of Transport: “are you talking about Siberia?” Sam responded characteristically: “I am talking about your black heart” and proceeded with his prepared speech:

History cannot point to a single tyrant who has lived his life in peace and who has survived the viciousness of his own tyranny. Hitler died a quavering coward's death, Mussolini went to hell upside down ... The history of people's struggles for freedom throughout the centuries has demonstrated that one great truth: you cannot imprison ideas; you cannot impale peoples opinions on bayonets ... and no amount of suppression; no amount of brutal force to hinder people in the expression of their political views ... will ever succeed. Life will always assert itself.⁵⁵

Kahn did not live to witness the revelations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or experience the confessions of bestiality, the judicial killings or the crude torture at Vlakplaas or any similar “facility”.⁵⁶ His epitaph is to be found in his contribution to the country's democratic constitution; in his commitment to Socialism, and in the memorable message he left behind as the party reached its nadir. A life-long champion of human rights, he would have recognised the Constitution as testimony to all he had fought for and the Bill of Rights as “an assertion of life after the nightmare of apartheid” (a phrase he frequently used).

The self-liquidation of the CPSA was a controversial decision and continues to command the attention of the Party and a new generation of committed communists. In 1950, it fell to Kotane, the Party's stalwart general secretary, to convey to the Party membership the Central Committee's decision to dissolve the Party and dispose of its limited assets as the act came into force. I remember the meeting convened for this purpose. It was held in the Party's branch premises in End Street, Johannesburg, a cold, oblong space with large dusty shop windows and a rough cement floor. Here the Party night school had been held for years. There, I taught potential cadres to read, write and count every Thursday night before going off to complete my own school homework. On one occasion I remember standing in front of the class, chalk in hand, blackboard behind me and watching a face peer through the dirty windows. Its owner then entered the room to tell Myrtle Berman – the school's principal, who was standing close to the door – that *he* should be teaching the class rather than me, because he was in standard nine and I was

a year below him. It was Ginger, who had first brought me to the YCL. That happened five years before the Party was dissolved, and many of the cadres I coached during that time had come to the meeting to hear Kotane's depressing message. Moses himself had been the Party's star participant at the school in the 1930s but that was another time and not in this cheerless room where almost everyone I knew was present. It was a galling affair and Kotane was emotionally at his most distant. It must have been mid-winter in Johannesburg and chilly outside, but not more numbing than the grim proceedings inside the room.

The words "liquidate", "dissolve" and "dispose" (of the Party's "assets") are impersonal, legal words that mask the emotions that lie behind them. Kotane's language was both corporate and legal as he formally conveyed the Central Committee's decision to dissolve the Party to a tense membership. His manner may have been impassive but the message was as blunt as an old axe; the Central Committee had considered the unlawful organizations bill and had agreed that the party should dissolve if the legislation was passed. The districts and branches would cease to function and the CC would wind up the CPSA's affairs.⁵⁷ Earlier that day, Sam Kahn had read the CC's statement to the House of Assembly. Kotane now repeated the gist of it: the CC had recognised that as soon as the bill became law, each one of us would, by virtue of our membership, be liable to imprisonment for a maximum of ten years. The decision had been "forced upon us ... by a government that represents one and a quarter million people out of a total of eleven million". The statement ended on a more stirring note with a reference to the Communist Manifesto and the First International: "For more than one hundred years ... the enemies of the people sought to crush the movement for social justice ... peace and socialism [and] all those attempts had failed."⁵⁸ Kotane's address was followed first by a stunned silence and subsequently by scepticism as to whether the message was really intended for us – or to confuse the police informers who were likely to have been present at the meeting.

I was sure that we would receive the leadership's instructions later at a more propitious time, but it did not cross my mind that a collective leadership did not exist and that we were on our own. Of all the members of the CC only two voted against the decision to dissolve the Party. Kotane was not one of them.⁵⁹ A realist, if ever there was one, he had reservations about our ability to survive under the Suppression of Communism Act and believed that the organization was structurally unsuited to working underground. This became the official view a decade later, when a new communist leadership praised the CPSA for spreading socialist teachings, leading historic struggles and bringing profound changes in the political outlook of the people. In acknowledging the tradition of the erstwhile Party, the SACP that arose from its ashes both praised and damned its predecessor: "Hated, slandered and persecuted by the ruling classes, the Party

grew to become the outstanding champion of the oppressed”. The praise that was given with the one hand was followed on the other, by a scathing critique of the CPSA’s “legalistic illusions [which] had penetrated into the ranks of the Party, including its leading personnel”.⁶⁰

The thrust of the critique was that the former leadership had been blinded by the state’s façade of democratic tolerance towards communists. It was more of an indictment than a criticism, especially the accusation that the former party “had proved unprepared and unable to work underground”. In the circumstances, the reproach was harsh but consistent with our style of self-criticism. The authors of the critique were most probably the same individuals who had voted for the dissolution of the CPSA, and their harsh words were at best an act of self-criticism, at worst an abdication of accountability. What I do not believe was fair, was the accusation that the Party leadership had “legalistic illusions” about the even-handedness of bourgeois democracy, especially in the context of the whole decade of the anti-fascist struggles, leading up to the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. The CPSA was never a *putschist* organization and it did not work in secret. Its formation in 1921 was inspired by the Bolshevik victory in 1917 and it wished to emulate its success in “[appealing] to all South African workers, organized and unorganized, white and black, to join in promoting the overthrow of the capitalist system” – as the Bolsheviks had realised in practical fashion in Russia.⁶¹ It saw itself as a party “rooted in the working class” in whose name it would openly speak for the whole of society. This was essential for the successful outcome of the Social Revolution itself – “towards which every step it took must tend directly”.

At its inception the CPSA noted that the struggle was a grim one, often dangerous, even mortal and it was idle to pretend that it could end in “a drawn battle or an armistice”.⁶² Despite this and possibly naïve to the dangers of working legally, we carried on to the end. It was the conventional wisdom that committed communists did not easily abandon the Party in the face of danger, any more than communist parties could “liquidate” themselves with impunity or the “social revolution” be stopped in its tracks. That is how I interpreted the party lore, a convention more understood than articulated. Those of us who believed it to be outrageous for the party to “dissolve” itself or berated the leadership for its “liquidationist” decision, came closest to articulating that tradition. I did not berate the party leadership or condemn its decision to dissolve the organization, but expected it to send out signals that we would retreat and later regroup, that we should not lose hope and that the Party would resume in a more appropriate form. I seem to have expected more transparency than a vulnerable and beleaguered leadership, under recent conditions of severe political censorship, could offer. Those signals came three years later but in the interim I was disappointed and carried on in the mass movement; the peace committee, the Indian and African congresses, the discussion groups. I was always

looking for signs that that call from the Indian or African National Congress, that statement from a prominent trade unionist or that request from the Women's Federation, was a call to the Communist Party.

When the call came (in 1953), the dust of the Suppression Act had settled and a new leadership – derived from groups meeting separately and secretly in Johannesburg and Cape Town moved to establish the SACP.⁶³ The new party was formed under rigorous wraps of cover, opening an entirely different style of party establishment. The new organization was called the SACP, the name it has today, and was formed according to a cellular structure in which trust of the leadership and trust of each member of the cell were the central strands upon which our survival depended. Secrecy and the “need to know” (meaning that one did not really need to know, unless the information was essential to the “operation” being undertaken) were the twin standards sustaining the system. The former party – after years of open activity – could not have made this transformation if it tried. Although aware of the possibility of state repression, the CPSA's membership was recruited for its left wing convictions but not its exceptional discretion, its rigorous organizational discipline, or its low-profile lifestyle. Nor was its orientation secretive; this was the antithesis of how it understood its social responsibility. If it was to be the champion of the working class and the oppressed, it had to be visible.

Initially, there were numerous references to harassment, even the beating of communists, but unlike the Bolshevik Party, the CPSA was not a clandestine organization. It had persevered in the 1920s and 30s despite the police batons and nights at the Marshall Square prison or (later) in the gaols at Roeland Street in Cape Town, and Pine Street in Durban. Once it was diverted by the Communist International from its exclusive concentration on the proletariat, its appeal had become broader and encompassed both class and national struggles. Its activities were broad-based, intense and as far as I am aware, seldom, if ever clandestine. From its mobilization of support for the popular front against the rise of fascism in Europe in the late 1930s, it had bitterly fought the insidious dissemination of nationalist socialist ideas. Once it accepted its responsibility for participation in the war against Hitler, it gave it all its energy; acting as the country's conscience for the unqualified support of the war effort and a rational dispensation afterwards. Its radical message was distinctive and its actions as the party of socialism had meaning only under its own name.

For a decade before its banning, the Party vigorously campaigned for the withdrawal of the inhibitive war measures, for the organization of trade unions and their legal recognition, for a living wage and for workers' unity. It made substantial submissions to the wage boards, not least in support of the AMWU, and stood with them in their confrontation with the Chamber of Mines, the *de facto* face behind Smuts' arrogant image. In contesting the elections for the Advisory Boards, the local authorities,

parliament and the Natives Representative Council, the CPSA sought to mobilize opinion, take up the pressing problems of the poor and work towards its aim of being a party “rooted in the people”. The Party formed after the CPSA’s dissolution drew on its predecessor’s identification with the working class and the national movements.⁶⁴ Undeniably it was that which contributed to its lasting credibility during the struggle years that followed. The next decade would see a break with the past in response to the intensification of repression – a change in the pace, politics, organizational style and strategy of the movement as it geared itself to confront the rapid rise of South Africa’s variant of fascism.

Chapter 7

- 1 *The Guardian*, 26.09.46.
- 2 *The Guardian*, 22.05.47.
- 3 Resolution taken at the Communist Party Conference held on 2–4 January 1948, cited in *The Guardian*, 08.01.48.
- 4 *The Guardian*, 08.01.48 citing conference resolutions 2–4th January 1948.
- 5 *The Guardian*, 08.01.48.
- 6 See chapter 20 below.
- 7 See *The Guardian*, 8.01.48; Yusuf Dadoo similarly called for a national convention at this time. See Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p. 151.
- 8 *The Guardian*, 15.04.48.
- 9 *The Guardian*, 15.08.48.
- 10 Harold Wolpe’s initial article, “From Segregation to Apartheid”, was first published in 1972, although he had presented the thesis to a conference of sociologists in 1969. My book *The Foundations*, was published in 1982, but the work had started in the early 1970s.
- 11 See Bunting, *Moses Kotane*; Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich*; and D. O’Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, on background to the 1948 elections.
- 12 *The Guardian*, 03.06.48; Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, p. 589.
- 13 *The Guardian*, 03.06.48.
- 14 *The Cape Times*, for instance, considered it policy to support the government of the day. See *The Guardian*, 03.06.48.
- 15 *The Guardian*, 20.05.48.
- 16 Central Committee statement of the CPSA, cited in *The Guardian*, 03.06.48.
- 17 *The Guardian*, 29.04.48.
- 18 The two bills enacted in 1949 were respectively, The Natives Laws Amendment Bill and the Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Bill.
- 19 *The Guardian*, 16.06.49.

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- 20 In May 1949, at least 4 157 Africans were charged with breaches of various urban regulations. See *The Guardian*, 23.06.49.
- 21 *The Guardian*, 16.06.49.
- 22 *The Guardian*, 03.05.47.
- 23 *The Guardian*, 05.08.48.
- 24 *The Guardian*, 01.07.48.
- 25 *The Guardian*, 04.11.48.
- 26 Bill Roberts was a senior, though not prominent, official in the railways. He was a member of the Johannesburg District Committee and also an accused in 1946 after the African Mineworkers' strike.
- 27 *The Guardian*, 01.07.48.
- 28 An insulting sop to the Indian community providing representation in parliament by a few Indian representatives (as was the case with Africans) was originally included in the Ghetto Act.
- 29 The South African Bill was apparently initially based on Section 98 of the Criminal Code of Canada (repealed in 1936), *The Guardian*, 16.02.50.
- 30 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.
- 31 *The Guardian*, 18.05.50.
- 32 *The Guardian*, 18.05.50.
- 33 Section 98 of the Canadian Criminal Code, cited in *The Guardian*, 16.02.50.
- 34 Two other (non-Communist) "native representatives" were respectively for the Cape (East) and the Transkei.
- 35 *The Guardian*, 09.03.50.
- 36 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.
- 37 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.
- 38 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.
- 39 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.
- 40 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.
- 41 *The Guardian*, 01.06.50.
- 42 Cited in *The Guardian*, 01.06.50, from the Australian Commonwealth Law Reports 487 (1932).
- 43 *The Guardian*, 01.06.50.
- 44 *The Guardian*, 01.06.50 (my italics).
- 45 *The Guardian*, 01.06.50.
- 46 *The Guardian*, 01.06.50.
- 47 The full name of the CPSA included the words "a section of the Communist International".
- 48 *The Guardian*, 08.06.50.
- 49 Debate in the House of Assembly on the Suppression of Communism Amendment Act, cited in *The Guardian*, 07.06.51.
- 50 *The Guardian*, 11.05.50.

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- 51 See Section 2a, b, and c of the Suppression of Communism Act. The act gave government power to declare organizations unlawful if the minister believed they were encouraging the spread of Communism.
- 52 For the full text of the CC's statement see *South African Communists Speak, Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party, 1915–1980* (Inkululeko Publications, London, 1981). See also *The Guardian*, citing Kahn's reading of the the CPSA's statement on the dissolution of the Party, 22.06.50.
- 53 See *Hansard*, 15.06.50 and 20.06.1950, for the full texts of Kahn's speeches. See also *The Guardian*, 22.06.50.
- 54 *The Guardian*, 22.06.50.
- 55 *The Guardian*, 15.06.50; and 22.06.50.
- 56 See Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports, October 1998.
- 57 See the Resolution of the Central Committee of CPSA, 7 May 1950, in Document 93, *South African Communists Speak*, for the précised text of the resolution.
- 58 *South African Communists Speak*, p. 214. CC statement read to parliament by Sam Kahn 20 June 1950.
- 59 According to Bernstein, *Memory against Forgetting*, p. 124, the two CC members opposed to the resolution were Michael Harmel and Bill Andrews.
- 60 See Programme of the SACP 1962. Cited in *South African Communists Speak*, p. 310.
- 61 Manifesto of the Communist Party of SA, 1921, cited in *South African Communists Speak*, Document 22, p. 62.
- 62 Manifesto of the CPSA, 1921, in *South African Communists Speak*, Document 22, p. 62.
- 63 There is no *official* documentation of the steps preceding the SACP's formation other than informal accounts in the autobiographies of former CPSA members, of whom Rusty Bernstein, *Memory against Forgetting*, pp. 127–131, is the most compelling (though still impressionistic). For a more recent account in the secondary literature see David Everett, *The Origins of Non-Racialism: White Opposition to Apartheid in the 1950s* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2009), pp. 74–79.
- 64 The underground Party was started in 1952 and established in the following year.