

MCH91-31-2-11

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4th February, 1986.

Comrade Zola Skweyiya,  
Vice-Chairman,  
Constitution Committee,  
ANC Lusaka.

Dear Comrade Zola,

I received two documents today, with an invitation to send you my comments, which I accordingly do. The documents are:

1. Fresh Prospects for South Africa, by the Foundation for International Conciliation, Geneva;
2. David Chapman, An Electoral System for South Africa, the Instituion for Social Inventions, London, 1986.

I shall comment briefly on the tendencies revealed by the documents and then deal with each in turn.

### Perspectives

The documents reveal some of the widespread interest in the South African Revolution. As the struggle advances, we might expect increasing efforts from highly placed quarters in the West to dilute our determination, defuse the Revolution, and turn it into channels consistent with the political and material aims of the white oligarchy and its international backers. They want to intervene because there is no external authority with power to impose a solution as was the case in the supposed decolonisation of Africa.

There is no "Lancaster House" type of indaba in the offing or other major force willing and able to resolve the conflict between ourselves and the racist regime. It is this situation that stimulates the sponsors of these initiatives to propose way and means of filling the gap by acting as go-betweens.

Given the origins and composition of the insitutions concerned, we should not expect to derive assistance or support from their activities. In fact, I personally find them somewhat irritating because I detect in their approach elements of paternalism.

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None of the persons involved have to my knowledge identified with our struggle or even recognised our existence. Nevertheless, the situation has changed and we need to extract from them whatever is useful for our purpose of transferring power to the oppressed majority. That, however, is precisely what the Foundation and the Institute want to prevent.

The Foundation for International Conciliation (FIC)

It was officially launched as recently as August, 1984, and gives an impression of being something of an ad hoc affair, created to deal specifically with the South African Revolution. While claiming to "have already assisted" in confrontations "of major international significance", the FIC gives no details because, it says, its field work is "necessarily confidential".

The Director and founder is one Michael Davis, a British national, living at Windsor (at or near Windsor Castle), company director and former consultant of WHO in South America, Africa and the Far East. He put up the money for the Foundation's initial operations from his personal resources and seems to be the driving force behind the enterprise. It supplements government efforts in political conflicts and claims to be different from the usual forms of third party intervention because it assists parties involved in a conflict to work out solutions on their own (Something like the Buchmanite "Olyford Group" Movement of the 1930s which attracted followers also in South Africa!)

The FIC works through "Delegates", the go-betweens, who prepare the ground for a meeting between the opposing forces: ourselves, presumably, and the regime. A secretariat, now functioning in Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, will set up its headquarters in a suitable residence near Johannesburg in the near future.

According to the prospectus, a first round of discussions will begin during this month and will be open to all political organisations, among them parties without political representation, businessmen, trade unions, community councils, churches and anyone else who has a point of view. These early meetings are expected to "focus on the definition and clarification of interests". At a later stage the FIC secretariat and delegates will proceed to the formulation of practical options and consider ways and means of putting them into effect.

This is a fishing expedition, a kind of unofficial commission set up to canvass opinions and come up with ideas acceptable to all interests. In

practice, the FIC is bound to propose a scheme that would pander to right wing racists who insist on rigid segregation and measures to perpetuate Afrikaner hegemony and white supremacy.

What should be our approach? I don't think that a boycott would be fruitful; it would merely give the racists and our opponents a free hand. On the contrary we ought to keep ourselves informed of the goings on at this right wing "think tank", and this can be done only by active participation. It would be wrong for the ANC to take part, but we can put the word around that people at home who share our point of view might keep in touch, even submit our demands for absolute destruction of apartheid institutions and a transfer of power to the majority.

Institute for Social Inventions: An Electoral System for South Africa,  
by David Chapman

We are invited to give our views, preferably in the form of modifications and improvements rather than an outright rejection. Permission is requested to publish our reply in the Guardian. In this case too, an outright refusal to co-operate would do us no good at all; in this instance a considered critical comment is called for.

Chapman is the author of the "Governing-List System (GLS)", based on the principle of proportional representation. He has prepared a modified form, known as the Multi-Roll GLS (MRGLS) for South Africa, because its "entrenched" divisions requires special measures to "prevent domination by the majority group". The antidote to majority rule, in his scheme, is to have separate racial electoral rolls. "Four rolls are suggested, one each for blacks, whites, coloureds, and Indians, as indeed exist at present" (My emphasis).

Many objections leap to mind. Chapman tries to answer them, e.g. the argument that "Separate racial rolls reinforce racialist attitudes" (p.8). He denies this with the argument that "the separate-roll system requires voters of each race to express their preference for parties which include politicians of, and which appeal to, other races as well as their own".

Chapman is intent on finding a formula that would prevent Africans from forming the government in a unitary state. Whites, he claims fear that their interests would suffer under majority rule, and "this fear appears

justifiable" (p.1). Under MRGLS, this outcome is avoided by creating a ~~single national constituency and requiring every competing party to present~~ a single list of candidates. Two ballots are held in the first election, one to elect members of the legislature, the second to elect a governing party. Thereafter only one ballot is held. It will bear the names of parties, not individual candidates, and six parties are selected to compete for the prize (p.2).

I shall not take the discussion farther except to point out that the Constitution Committee rejected PR provisionally, but left the issue open for further consideration and comments by Kadar. For this reason, and because of the outright condemnation of African majority rule, as well as the perpetuation of separate racial rolls, we should have no truck with MRGLS.

We need to draft a considered, principled objection, however. I assume that the document has been circulated to Kadar. If not, this should be done with a request for an opinion which the Committee can study before deciding on its next move.

I am returning the papers of the Foundation as requested.

Amandla!

Jack Simons