



of the South African press more than anything else, has since then laid firm claim to the dubious honour of the avant-garde party. Internationally this claim has been contested by the old spinster/huckster organisations: the African National Congress (ANC), the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). At home in South Africa, and among exiles in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, the bidding of the old league nationalist-Stalinists have largely fallen on deaf ears. Unfortunately not so the pretensions of the careerists who were one-time leaders of the SSRC and who now parade under the title of the “Third Force”. There are many exiled students who seem quite contented to submit to the spectacle of their self-styled leadership and titillate themselves with the memory of their past participation in the struggle. Too bad for those in search of a shepherd that the hunt for a vanguard party will only find a fleeting shadow.

As for the leadership of the “Third Force,” it is one of the most hideous hierarchical freaks ever spawned by revolutionary experience, and history has never been lacking in grotesque examples. Concocted in the fashion of a passively consumable item, at a time when its later consumers were far from idle, it had to wait for exile before it could raise its ugly head. From outside South Africa the “Third Force” has joined the ANC and PAC in perpetuating the self-same myths that have always crippled proletarian struggle, and even indulges in the same ruthless and coercive tactics when it comes to dealing with others who do not subscribe to its own stupidity, and when it comes to expanding its tiny ranks.

The SSRC grew out of an organisation known as the South African Students Movement (SASM), although its relation to that organisation was extremely dubious. In the heat of the first week of the uprisings, a number of the earlier coordinators of the June 16 demonstration, wanting to lend legitimacy to their claims of leadership, hijacked the controls of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) organisation, SASM, from its elected executives who were based in Cape Town.

How could an open struggle that raged for almost two years, and spread the length and breadth of the country, involving at least two hundred cities or towns and hundreds of thousands of active participants, have been under the control of an ad hoc committee that only emerged full-fledged in August, almost two months after June 16, and a fortnight or so before its first self-appointed leadership went into exile?

All revolutionary history shows the part played in the defeat of popular struggle by the appearance of an ideology advocating popular struggle.

