

one woman's struggle for

# A THIRD-PARTY VOICE

in the bi-partisan system

by  
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The best kept secret in this country is not some clandestine undercover operation in the Middle East or Central America, but the fact that there is an independent candidate who will be on the presidential ballot in all 50 states, including the District of Columbia, and who has qualified for Federal Primary Matching Funds.

Her name is Lenora Fulani, and she is the first black woman in the history of our country to achieve this impressive status despite the overwhelming odds stacked against her. A doctor of Developmental Psychology, she is originally from Chester, Pennsylvania and now directs her campaign from New York. She is also the Director of Social Therapy Associates, a national network of mental health clinics.

Fulani is a staunch Jesse Jackson supporter. In fact, her campaign slogan is "Two Roads Are Better than One." Since Jackson is not the Democratic presidential nominee, she will run as an independent in the general election to help lobby for the progressive "rainbow social vision." An outspoken advocate of Civil Rights, Gay Rights and Abortion Rights, Fulani is lobbying to force the major candidates to take a stand on these issues. The Fulani camp feels that our presidential electoral process is more like a Madison Avenue beauty contest in

which images, not issues, are important to win an election. Latest polls show that 50% of all eligible voters do not vote in presidential elections and over 70% don't vote in local elections. Fulani feels that these figures reflect more than just voter apathy and can be more aptly described as voter alienation. According to Fulani, voters are turned off by politics because politicians are not held accountable for their views, and many policy makers get into office merely on the basis of their images. She is trying to break this media stranglehold on the electoral process and make it more open and fair. Although she has not received extensive national media coverage, she has made significant progress.

In order for a candidate to

which shows she has broad-based, grass-roots support. As of late spring, she raised over \$400,000 in matching funds. However, Fulani has no delusions about being the next president of the United States. The entire thrust of her campaign is to show people how exclusionary our political system is for independents and why she cannot be president.

Beyond meeting the Matching Funds requirements, ballot-access requirements have proven to be even more exigent. In Pennsylvania, an independent is required to petition 25,568 "valid" signatures (signatures from registered voters) within a given amount of time to achieve ballot-access status; whereas for Democrats or Republicans, the law only requires that they obtain two

thousand signatures and receive matching funds. In some states the requirements for an independent are even more stringent. In Texas, for instance, an independent has only seventy-five days to raise 34,415 "valid" signatures, starting on the day of the state primary, and only those who

have not voted in the primary are eligible to sign, eliminating approximately thirty percent of all potential signers.

Fulani is working closely with Representative John Conyers (D. Michigan) to reform ballot-access laws and the delegate selection process. Rep.



qualify for Matching Funds, he/she must raise \$5,000 in checks from individual contributors (not exceeding the legal limit of \$250 per person) in twenty states. Fulani met these onerous requirements by receiving donations from 17,000 individual contributors nationwide,

Conyers said at The Peoples Convention in Atlanta, sponsored by the New Alliance Party, that the major cause of voter apathy in America is a lack of alternative candidates on the ballot. According to Conyers, the healthiest thing that could happen to the political process, and to all the political parties, is that it be made as fair as possible for all candidates. He has introduced legislation this year to establish uniform ballot-access requirements for independent candidates in all fifty states, reducing the required signatures to about 100,000 and establishing a uniform seven month petitioning period.

The delegate selection processes are not shining examples of our democratic system. In 1984, Jesse Jackson garnered twenty percent of the vote nationally in the primaries; however, he went to the Democratic National Convention with only eleven percent of the delegates. This is because the distribution of delegates in congressional areas is uneven and the Threshold Law of 1984 dictated that a candidate must win twenty percent of the vote in any given area to win the delegates therein. Also, the parties can appoint superdelegates: delegates who are commissioned by the states to insure that a nominated candidate is within the best interests of the party. Jackson went to the National Convention with fifty percent of the delegates; the party can still nominate whomever it chooses, despite the popular vote. Although the Threshold Law of twenty percent has been lowered to fifteen percent, the number of superdelegates a state can appoint has been raised.

Getting media coverage has been a problem for Fulani. Regardless of her history-making struggle, she has not been included in any major debates sponsored by the League of Women Voters—a supposedly non-partisan organization—even though they have been inundated with over 5000 postcards from Fulani supporters asking to have her included. The League has argued that independents do not participate in the primary process and, therefore, should not be included. The Federal Election Commission has stated that meeting ballot-access requirements for independents is akin to the bi-partisan primary process.

Fulani is suing the League of Women Voters and the Department of the Treasury to have the League's tax-exempt status taken away. The League, being non-partisan, is tax-exempt, but Fulani argues that it is bi-partisan since it refuses to include independents, and she is seeking an injunction to stop the debates.

Whatever the outcome of the pending lawsuit, Fulani and her supporters promise to have an impact on electoral politics in this country.

## The black, white and grey of South Africa *continued from page 17*

disliked by Tambo and the A.N.C.

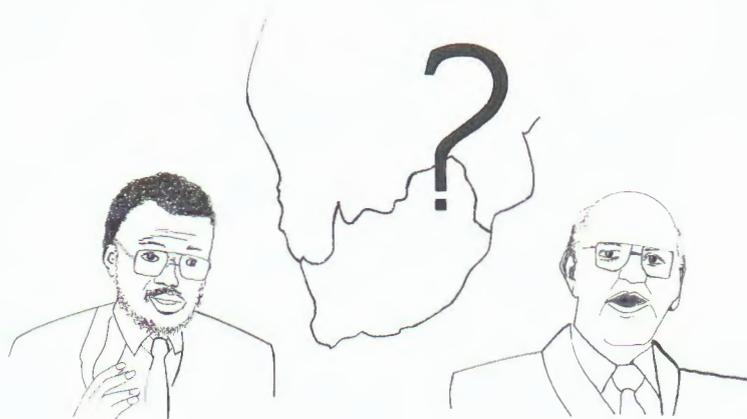
The seventy-year-old A.N.C., an organization that Pretoria can neither come to terms with nor exorcise, fuels the state's attempts to retain political hegemony. Against both extremes of the left and right, Buthelezei tries to find common ground. Even the South African newspaper, *The Citizen*, recognized Buthelezei's work and asked, "What government would ever agree to its own demise or to the suicide of a nation?"

Beyond mere demise, an A.N.C.-backed revolution is likely to change the South African economy drastically and shift the nation's position in the geopolitical balance. For upon close examination, the A.N.C.'s communist

"Indhaba," has caused the A.N.C. to seethe.

With Buthelezei's "chief" status assured, one would think that Westerners would listen to what this man has to say. Ironically, Westerners embrace the radical A.N.C. and ostracize the Chief. This does not contribute to rational discussion of the republic's future. The West should recognize that the A.N.C. is not the only alternative player on the South African

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leanings become clear. Under the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act, for example, Congress asked the State Department for reports addressing the level of Soviet bloc involvement in the A.N.C. and the power of the South African Communist Party (S.A.C.P.), the A.N.C.'s primary ally. Eighteen of the A.N.C.'s top leaders belong to the S.A.C.P. Joe Slovo, S.A.C.P. Chairman, heads the A.N.C.'s military wing, "Spear of the Nation." Despite aid from Scandinavian countries and Canada, the A.N.C. remains a rabidly anti-Western, pro-Soviet, terrorist organization. The A.N.C.'s only goal is the violent seizure of political power.

As such, the antagonism between the capitalistic Buthelezei and the Marxist A.N.C. will likely worsen. By working within the system, Buthelezei has been able to advance the cause of black rights. He has pushed for integration and refused to accept an independent black homeland as a solution. The product of his effort,

scene. Unless the country becomes ungovernable, the A.N.C. stands little chance of taking power.

Perhaps South Africa's pariah status will give the troubled nation's leaders an incentive to solve their problems. Clearly the imposition of the trade sanctions has only deprived the United States of a constructive role in any such dialogue. And thus, sadly, with the current situation, there is not much the U.S. can do about South Africa. Apartheid's opponents have the world's moral support on their side. And to challenge apartheid militarily is another, quite complex question. If the U.S. does not support the efforts of Buthelezei and others like him, Americans will continue to be nothing more than spectators to a situation that is approaching anarchy. And ultimately, anarchy will do nothing to reconcile the aspirations of South Africa's blacks with the white population's concerns for stability.