

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE FOR A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

OCTOBER 1987

## Why the mission to Dakar?

The answer is twofold. Firstly, our initiative arose out of deep concern for our country which is so hopelessly divided and the victim of escalating violence. At present there exists a stalemate. The state cannot govern without a state of emergency and all the state apparatus which is so visible in the total society, and in the townships in particular. On the other hand, the Black majority cannot overthrow the state by force.

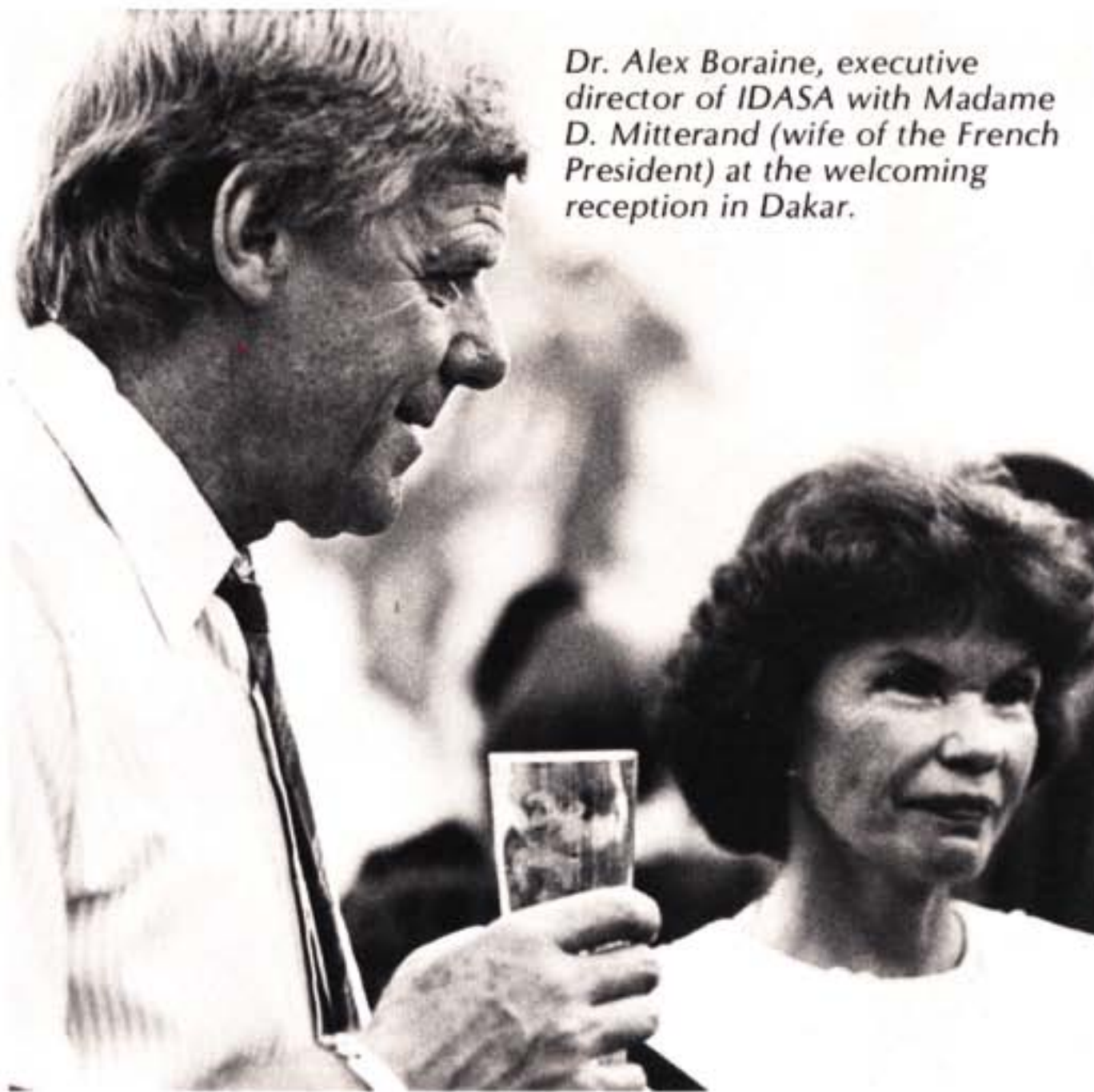
The second reason why we went to Dakar arises from our experience in talking with leaders of the Black community and with organisations in those communities. It is quite clear that the ANC is the largest single political party in South Africa. We are committed to the politics of negotiation and as the national executive of the ANC are forbidden from returning to South Africa, we arranged to meet with them in Senegal.

### **But Don't You Give the ANC Credibility in Meeting With Them?**

We met with them because they *have* credibility! They have been in existence for 75 years; they have missions in thirty-three countries; have met with leaders, foreign secretaries, heads of state in numerous countries, have given evidence before the House of Commons and are generally well known in most parts of the world. Furthermore, they cannot be isolated to Lusaka and London. Their real base is in South Africa, and their support is growing. In other words, we met with them not to give them credibility but because they have credibility.

### **What Have You Achieved?**

We stressed from the outset that we were in no position to negotiate. We have neither the power nor the mandate to do so.



*Dr. Alex Boraine, executive director of IDASA with Madame D. Mitterand (wife of the French President) at the welcoming reception in Dakar.*

But we were able to enter into serious discussions on many of the crucial issues facing South Africa. And we have demonstrated that discussions can be constructive. It is possible to meet around a table with the ANC rather than on a battlefield where there are no winners.

Secondly, we showed that Africa is open to South Africans, Black and White, who have abandoned apartheid and are genuinely

searching for a non-racial democracy. Thirdly, the assistance afforded us by Madame Mitterand clearly indicates that the West wants to assist and that the only onslaught which exists is the onslaught against apartheid, not against South Africa.

But we have also struck a blow for *negotiation politics*. In the course of the last year, the government has mounted an intensive campaign against the ANC, depicting them as a terrorist group living in Lusaka with no constituency and a commitment to violence at all costs. We have tried to break the cycle and to point towards the possibility of a negotiated settlement which will end the violence which has become endemic.



**I**DASA continues to deal with the remarkable impact and repercussions of the recent Dakar initiative. The delegates who travelled from South Africa under IDASA's auspices have been inundated with requests to share their experiences with a very wide range of interest groups. In particular, Dr. Slabbert and I have travelled far and wide, meeting with small and large groups to outline the reasons why we went to Dakar and the possible benefits which might flow from such a meeting. In general, the response we have received has been overwhelmingly favourable. However, there is another side to it.

The State President delivered a very scathing attack on IDASA and on the Dakar meeting when he spoke in Parliament recently. Leaving aside the rhetoric, he made several announcements concerning possible action. These

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

included, firstly, the appointment of a select committee of Parliament in order to examine the activities of IDASA and other extra-Parliamentary organisations.

Whilst we know full well that such a select committee will be heavily weighted in favour of the National and Conservative Parties, IDASA has nothing to hide and we will simply have to handle whatever flows from that committee. The State President has also warned that if further Dakar initiatives with the ANC are undertaken, the state will have to reconsider granting passports to those who wish to participate. Implicit in his warning was the possibility of taking away passports of those who already hold them. This is a very serious threat

and will not make it easy for IDASA to arrange any further encounters with the ANC, so that the stress on the importance of negotiation rather than violence may suffer.

Thirdly, the State President issued a clear warning that he is considering cutting off all overseas funding of IDASA. This would affect IDASA's work fundamentally and we should not take this threat lightly.

In the final analysis, it is very difficult for IDASA or any other organisation to resist state action. If the state is determined to block any initiatives other than their own, it has the power to do so.

I very much hope that wisdom will prevail and IDASA will be allowed to continue doing work which we believe is vital to the resolution of the ever-deepening conflict in our society.

In particular, we intend to embark upon a major internal fundraising campaign in order to offset possible problems arising from overseas funding being prevented by the state. This will not be easy because the State President's overwhelming attitude will clearly influence a lot of people inside South Africa who are already very nervous about risking the state's disapproval. I hope, however, that those who are committed to a non-racial, democratic future will withstand the government pressure and will continue to support initiatives like those undertaken by IDASA in its attempt to help White South Africans, in particular, to seek a democratic alternative to the present system.

The board meeting, involving the trustees of IDASA, gave full support to the IDASA staff; and it is encouraging to know that we have their full backing.

In a polarised society, where there is much suspicion, anger and distrust, it is very difficult to achieve anything of significance. Despite all the forces working against a commitment to a peaceful, secure and just South Africa, IDASA remains firm. We will continue and we have no doubt that there will be many in the total South African community, and beyond our borders, who will join with us in making a new society possible.

**Dr. A. Boraine,**  
Cape Town,  
24 September 1987.



Thaabit Albertus

*The full IDASA staff assembled for the quarterly Board Meeting on 31 August 1987.*

## Streamlining of Organisation

**A**T the recent board meeting, consideration was given to the structure and organisation of IDASA as it has developed over the last nine months. It was decided that in order to facilitate smooth running and to clearly identify line management, Dr. Alex Boraine would be the sole Executive Director responsible for the daily running of IDASA, in terms of administration, organisation and contact with the public and the press. Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert, who is heavily involved with the promotion of IDASA as well as

running specific projects, will now be Director of Policy and Planning.

Dr. Boraine was also authorised to consider the total organisational structure as it involves other staff members and to restructure, if necessary, in the interests of the greatest possible efficiency, so that the ultimate goal of a non-racial democracy can best be served. Consideration of these and other developments will be the prime focus of a staff residential weekend during November.

**The Directors.**

## Northern Transvaal launches action in KwaNdebele

**T**HE Northern Transvaal region, in response to many requests, has recently been active in the area of "KwaNdebele", a region some authorities would like to see as permanently "independent". Needless to say, the people caught up in this situation are desperately struggling to survive in a hostile world. It is a situation being nursed by kitskonstabels and security police, by Caspirs, by SADF units, by exceptionally draconian emergency regulations, by detentions ad lib, by media control, by Radio KwaNdebele, by subtle coercive measures relating to business licences and other privileges, by the usual slander and

by employing the bogey man of ANC involvement in a "total onslaught".

In this region, democracy in action is not an armchair operation. We don't have the luxury of academic discussion about "final solutions" on a "national level". Neither can we comfortably opt for a "long term extra-Parliamentary" line of action with the exclusion of a wicked "system". The needs are immediate and they are urgent. Whatever "democratic" participation there may be for the people of the region is being threatened by the structures currently set up and, above all, by the possible finalisation of these by the granting of so-

called "independence".

IDASA is concerned to work towards a democratic alternative to these apartheid structures. Our action is aimed at the dissemination of information about the crisis in the region and setting up negotiations or consultations where the voice of the people will be heard. Eventually we hope to initiate a larger forum involving other non-independent "homelands" in the Transvaal where the search for a democratic alternative will be pursued.

**Braam Viljoen, Director,  
Northern Transvaal region.**

### IDASA National Conference and other Occasional Papers

• The lectures presented at the National Conference are being published as a series of Occasional Papers. They will be available as from the end of November at R1,50 per paper (including postage), and can be ordered from the national office as of 1 December 1987. Please indicate which you would like, how many copies, and enclose your cheque or postal order in favour of IDASA. The papers are:

1. Democracy and Government — a UDF perspective.
2. Democracy and Government: a post-Leninist perspective, by Dr. Charter Simkins.
3. Democracy and Law, by Advocate Arthur Chaskalson.
4. Democracy and the Church, by Prof. J.W. de Gruchy.
5. Democracy and Business, by Mr. Leon Louw.
6. Democracy and Media, Labour and Education, by Messrs. J. Latakoma, E. Mntonga and M. Ralawe.

• DR. F. VAN ZYL SLABBERT's three lectures as Tanner Lecturer at Brasenose College, Oxford University, to be presented during October/November 1987:

- (a) From Apartheid to Reform: the Ideological Preparation for the Total Onslaught.
- (b) The Dynamics of Reform: Co-optive Domination — Sharing Power without losing any.
- (c) The Dynamics of Reform: Patterns of Resistance and Revolt.

• DR. ALEX BORAINÉ's outstanding Report-back on Dakar presented in the Claremont Civic Centre in August 1987.

## Film-fees op Stellenbosch

**S**TELLENBOSCH IDASA het vanaf 17-27 Augustus 'n film-fees saam met The Weekly Mail op Stellenbosch aangebied. Die films wat meestal deur Suid-Afrikaanse filmmakers gemaak is, het veral die fokus laat val op verskeie sosio-politieke aspekte van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Die Filmfees is bygewoon deur nagenoeg 500 persone. Die bywoningsyfers by 3 nie-Suid-Afrikaanse films naamlik Official Version, Battle of Algiers en Bonhoeffer was betreklik hoër as by die Suid-Afrikaans vervaardigde films. Alhoewel die bywoning-syfer in die algemeen relatief laag was, sou die geslaagdheid van die film-fees seer sekerlik nie in die finale instansie in hierdie terme gemeet kan word nie. Die nie-gefikseerde en dikwels onkonvensionele film-tegnieke wat gebruik is, het definitief die punt onderstreep dat die negatiewe ervaring wat swartmense van apartheid het, in 'n onopgesmukte en getroue wyse, oorgedra kan word aan veral die wit gemeenskap.

Die Stellenbosse tak van IDASA het ook op die 28ste Augustus 'n 1ste jaars kweekskool klas van Stel-



*Menere Ian Liebenberg en Egbie Nel van die Stellenbosch IDASA kantoor.*

lenbosch op 'n blootstellingstoer deur die Skiereiland geneem. Gesprekke is gevoer met dosente by UWK se Kweekskool en met persone werksaam by die Surplus Peoples Project. Daarna is die groep deur Kruispad en Khayelitsha geneem om hul te vergewis van sekere aspekte van die mense se lewensomstandighede in die areas. Positiewe terugvoer is van verskeie van die studente ontvang wat die toer meegemaak het.

**Ian Liebenberg en Egbie Nel.**

**T**HE Institute's major focus is on democracy so it is not surprising that we in the Border region decided to make it the theme of our first project. It is immediately apparent that the task is to highlight the differences between the various uses of the word "Democracy". Whilst all are supposedly working for democracy, the Nat's goal of "Broadening Democracy" is totally different to the goals of those in the progressive organisations.

To date we have had two lively discussions. The first was led by Tom Tshalimani, a member of the East London committee of the UDF. Val Viljoen of the Black Sash was the speaker at the second. Some people who are involved in local government have attended one or both of these discussions but by and large the participants are concerned citizens of all races rather than politicians. About half the group have attended both meetings and it is fascinating to note the emergence of some rather clear lines in what is proving to be an interesting debate.

Some of these lines of debate have been predictable. Members of the Democratic Movements have been challenged to work within the system whilst the involvement of those within the parliamentary system has also been questioned. At this stage the debate is still very much in its infancy. It would, of course, be naive to expect the group to reach a consensus, but more discussion is needed for participants to understand — let alone accept — the views of others. For example, much frustration and even some anger has been evident among those who cannot understand why, in response to questions about the specifics of a future political dispensation, they are told about the *Process* that must be followed to determine these details. The concept of a *participatory democracy* held by some of the group has yet to be understood by all. The debate so far has also illustrated how we in South Africa tend to dismiss others and immediately suspect their motives if their views are radically different from our own. This has been apparent in one or two

## Perspectives on Democracy and Video Project in Border Region

persons threatening to withdraw from debate rather than explore differences of opinion.

In many ways the discussion has mirrored the wider debate taking place in South Africa but with one significant exception: instead of talking *about* each other we are talking *to* each other. The value of the project lies in the composition of the group. Few of the participants would otherwise have the opportunity of discussing democracy with a truly representative group of South Africans. The goals of the future meetings in this series are to facilitate understanding and good communication among the participants and to involve people in the process.

A second project which illustrates the work of the Border region is our *Video Project*. We have sought to use video presentations to stimulate thinking and discussion and in this way to pursue our goal of creating a climate for democracy in the region. A video on the Sandton debate between Dr. Worrall and Dr. Slabbert on the relevance of parliament, a documentary on IDASA, and another on the UDF address on "Democracy and government" to the IDASA National Conference, are examples of the material we have shown. The lunch-time meetings do not provide the same opportunities in this regard as the



*The IDASA Border regional staff: standing - the late Mr. Eric Mntonga, and Mr. Steve Fourie; seated - Ms. Nondwe Miki and Ms. Priscilla Ntlebi.*

evening meetings but they have led to useful, informal discussions.

The most successful presentation was the debate on the relevance of parliament. This 17h30 presentation drew the largest attendance of all and the debate which followed illustrates the usefulness of the project. Once again, the composition of the group had a lot to do with the quality of the discussion. The presentation brought together people who had participated in the last election and those who could not. Also present were a significant number of people who feel that the tricameral parliamentary system should be boycotted. We therefore had a more representative attendance than that at the actual debate which, as Dr. Worrall remarked, was made up largely of PFP supporters. Much of the discussion after the video presentation amounted to an attempt by those Whites who were present to explore avenues for change. The video debate which we had watched was hardly alluded to. It served instead to get the discussion going. One felt that the participants were not talking theoretically about the role of parliament but were grappling with the question of their own involvement.

The evening facilitated a valuable discussion between those who are committed to changing the system from within and those who are committed to changing it by extra-parliamentary means. The value of such discussions cannot be overestimated in our fragmented, polarised society.

The second most popular video presentation was that of the UDF address on democracy and government to the IDASA conference. The video proved to be a useful way of sharing the material presented to the conference with those who were not able to attend. It also illustrated the interest, particularly among Whites, in the stance of the UDF. It is our hope that by showing videos such as these we are feeding necessary information into the debate about a non-racial democracy in this region.

**Steve Fourie,  
Regional Director.**

# André Brink: In View of Dakar

**I** DO not wish to overrate the significance of Dakar as a potential historical starting point. At the same time it would be unwise to underestimate its value in the way most of the subservient Afrikaans newspapers, and some sections of the English press as well, have done. (This, in itself, was a curious journalistic phenomenon: devoting hundreds, if not thousands, of column inches to explain to readers why Dakar had been a non-event!) Certainly, members of the internal group were not "delegates" representing any kind of "constituency". The Afrikaans press, especially, made much of this, revealing in the process the sad conditioning of the Nationalist mind which can only think in patriarchal and paternalistic terms: only "leaders" can make history; "ordinary people" do not count for anything, are not permitted to influence events or even voice opinions. Whereas, much of the significance of Dakar resided in the very fact that a group of individuals from widely divergent backgrounds and holding

widely divergent views were able to discuss openly and without the constraints of preconception or ideology, aspects of the future of South Africa which profoundly concern us all.

Specific aspects of the discussions as such have already been widely aired at meetings and in the press. What concerns me here is the broader context of the talks, involving both discoveries and re-discoveries, often in the form of a confirmation of impressions already shaped during many previous contacts I have been fortunate to have with members of the ANC in different parts of the world.

1. Basic to the exchange of ideas was the acknowledgement of us all as South Africans. If there was, indeed, an "ANC delegation" and an "IDASA group", if indeed some members of the "internal group" had to make the sad confession that they "knew nothing about the ANC", there never was a sentiment of "us" and "them". Especially during the visit to other West African countries the touring

group headed jointly by Thabo Mbeki and Van Zyl Slabbert experienced a profound sense of "us South Africans". It was an important factor from the first day of discussions when each individual was required to present himself or herself to the audience. To several of the white South Africans it came as a jolt of discovery when one ANC delegate after another announced: I was born in Germiston...in Bloemfontein...in Cape Town...in Schweizer Reneke... Biography and geography became fused in an experience common to us all: and it certainly helped to clear those hurdles inevitably set up by the long and destructive experience of apartheid which has marked us all.

2. Many Afrikaners in the group revealed the ravages of apartheid in distressing ways. One realized anew that the apartheid mentality is demonstrated not only in the lunatic excesses of the AWB or the rantings and ravings of Bothas, but in more subtle distortions of the mind:

In the inability to liberate one's thought processes from the conditioning caused by worries about "what the people back home will think";

In an inability, even among intellectuals concerned with history, to move away from simplistic concepts of "White Nationalism" vs "Black Nationalism" (whereas not only the lucid pronouncements by various members of the ANC but the long history of that organisation demonstrate its commitment to non-racial principles. Two quotes in this respect: "It is the extent and involvement of our white compatriots in the struggle that offers the greatest guarantee for the future"; and: "Never in the history of South Africa have blacks dominated anyone else. We do not want to dominate whites. We shall fight with everything in our power to guarantee that no-one ever dominates others again");

**Continued overleaf**



*Barbara Masekela, Secretary for Arts and Culture, in conversation with Prof. André Brink whose response to the Dakar conference appears on this page.*

In the persistence among whites to think that an eventual "solution" can only come from whites, and a concomitant inability to approach the situation from the point of view and the experience of the vast majority of South Africans;

In what appeared like an organic deficiency of empathy, above all of compassion. During a visit to the slave island of Gorée, where some 30 million slaves had been "processed" during the centuries of slavery, some whites merely found it "interesting" — unable to relate it to the presence, in our midst, of Thabo Mbeki whose own father has spent almost a quarter of a century incarcerated on an island just like this, within sight of Cape Town. But when news came of the victimization of the small child of one of our white members, everybody was deeply concerned: *this* they could empathise with.

3. The thorough knowledge of history (both world history and South African history) among members of the ANC stood in alarming contrast to the lack of true historical insight among most of the "internal" group members. On one occasion Mac Maharaj told the meeting of a visit a past minister of justice had paid to Robben Island to berate "terrorists" about their commitment to violence; in response, Nelson Mandela outlined to the minister the ANC's long history of peaceful struggle and the manner in which every conceivable avenue of non-violent response to the institutionalised violence of apartheid had been explored before the decision was taken to form Umkhonto we Sizwe. The minister, aghast, responded: "I never knew about this." Sadly, several of the whites at the meeting also hadn't known. This, it seems to me, is an area where the seeds of Dakar can most usefully be sown, in order to spread and enhance awareness and increase knowledge.

4. What Dakar confirmed above all else was the most simple, yet the most indispensable, of discoveries: that even in a time of escalating violence, talk is still possible. Indeed, the passionate commitment of the ANC to reach the negotiating table — to which the P.W. Botha mentality appears to be the only true stumbling block — must have left an indelible impression on the minds of the "internal"

visitors: "We don't want indiscriminate violence. We don't want any violence which does not have a clearly defined political objective. We need white support. So it would have no strategic sense to institute a campaign against white civilians — and this apart from any

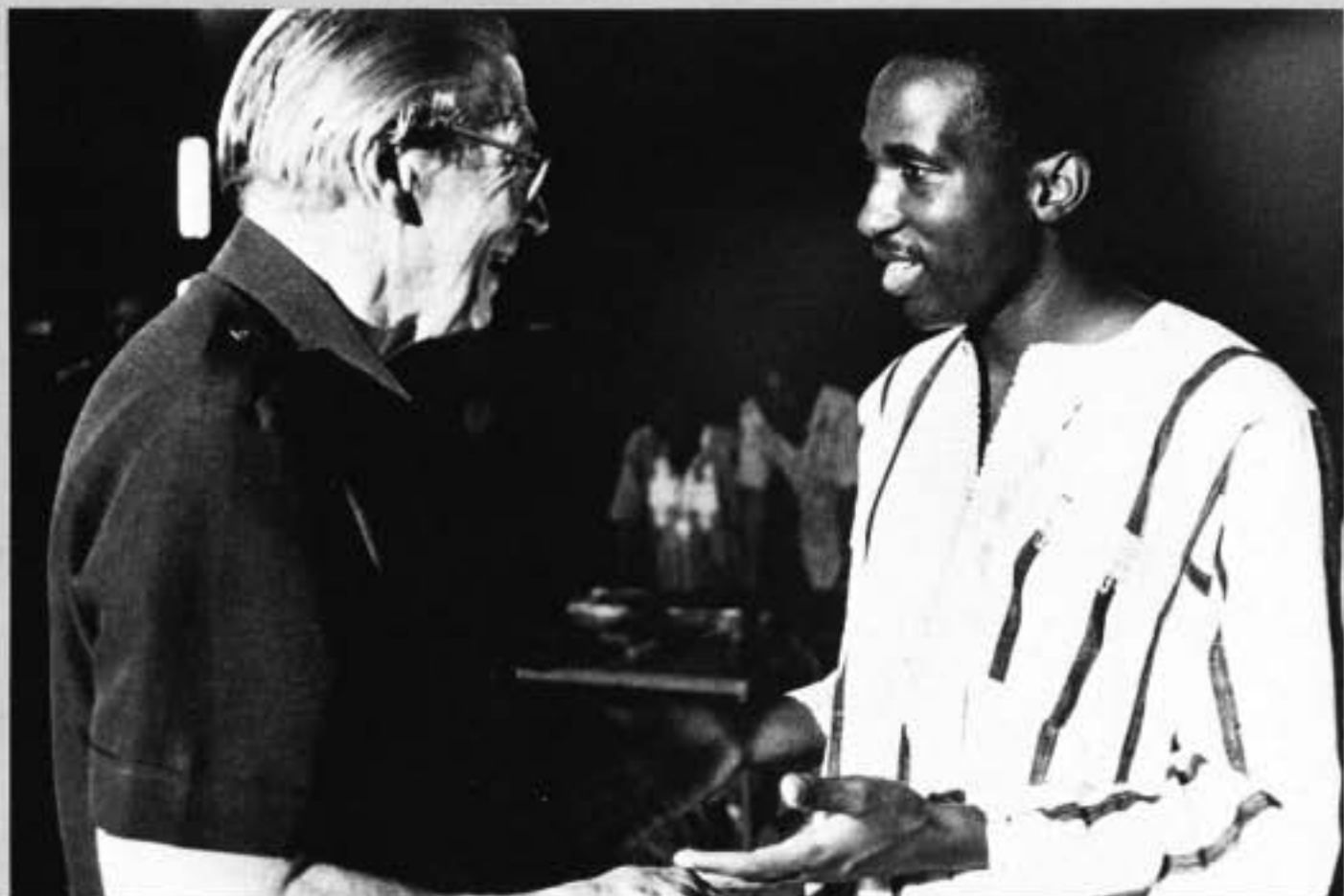
considerations of morality."

5. When members of the ANC spoke about morality, even within a situation in which violence had become endemic ("Failure to resort to armed struggle may bring about greater evil than the resort

## PICTORIAL IMPRESS



*Mr. Thabo Mbeki and Dr. van Zyl Slabbert, the respective leaders of the two delegations.*



*Dr. Beyers Naude, former general secretary of the SA Council of Churches, in conversation with President Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso.*

to armed struggle"), one was moved by the perception that this was not a matter of stating theory, or ideology, or of outlining in an abstract or political manner the strategies and programmes of change. This was *lived experience*, embodied in individual men and

women who have all been exposed to violence and knew exactly what they were talking about. A mother who has to prepare her three year old son for self-reliance in case a South African raid on Lusaka — which may happen any day, as it has

happened in the past — leaves her or her husband dead, does not theorize about violence, but lives it every day of her life.

When white members of the IDASA group evoked morality in order to denounce violence, it often had the hollow ring of expedience. It is so easy to preach morality to others; it is so easy to be conscious of the dictates of morality when the historical actions of one's own people have created a situation in which, suddenly, one is faced with a violent response.

A week after our return from Dakar came the ghastly bomb explosion in Johannesburg. It was reported on the same day as the news that the minister of justice had implied guilt by offering to pay R1,3 million in compensation to the relatives of the twenty people — men, women, children and babies — shot, mostly in the back, at Langa in 1985. So where should one look for the true locus of violence and the true roots of morality in South Africa?

6. When all was said and done, one was left with a sense of tragedy: but as in all tragedy, it also carried a germ of hope. The two main adversaries in the present South African confrontation are the Afrikaner and the black African (a deadlock which may eventually be broken by the non-racial approach of the ANC). History has turned them into enemies. And yet they are, probably, the two groups of people in South Africa who have most in common! They share a collective consciousness of a nomadic and peasant existence. Both have been conditioned by tribal experience. Both have chosen Africa as the object of their deepest loyalties and understanding. Both have experienced oppression, and the agonies and exhilaration of a struggle for liberation. In the deepest possible sense they *belong* together.

Dakar has demonstrated, in a small and tentative yet richly significant way, that this can be achieved, since we have the cause, and means, and strength, and will to do it. The single precondition is the destruction of apartheid and every vestige of racism that goes with it; and the removal of the Botha regime from the seat of power it occupies illegally and in the face of history.

## ONS FROM DAKAR



Mr. Thabo Mbeki with South African independent T.V. news journalists, Hennie Serfontein and Jimmy Matthews.



President Abdou Diouf of Senegal (left), Dr. van Zyl Slabbert, Breyten Breytenbach and the President's entourage move towards the official opening ceremony of the conference in Dakar.

**W**HAT did Dakar mean to me? The richest and most educative experience of my life. If one could live many lives in one week, I certainly did. These are some of my impressions of the meeting and of private conversations with members of the cultural delegation of the ANC.

Maybe some of my colleagues won't like being called "cultural workers". Maybe they do not feel the need to become part of alternative artistic structures. Maybe they do not feel ready to commit themselves politically.

Maybe some of them do.

As for me, I came away with the firm conviction that we in South Africa will have to come to terms with the realities of the cultural boycott and understand the reasons behind it. Thabo Mbeki, Barbara Masekela and Manala Manzini put their case eloquently.

The ANC is wary of people jumping onto the anti-apartheid bandwagon to further their individual careers. (What Barbara called the "Ipi Tombi syndrome"). They receive appeals from hundreds of people who want special consideration for their work. The ANC feels that it cannot verify the integrity of these individuals and that it would be counter-productive to appoint some kind of selection committee in South Africa.

However, the ANC after much agonised debate, decided to reconsider its stance on the cultural boycott. They stressed that this was an ongoing debate. It was felt that genuine alternative democratic structures were being formed inside South Africa "through struggle and sacrifice" and that

## Dakar — Talking About Culture

*"What did Dakar mean to me? The richest and most educative experience of my life."*

these structures should not be penalised, but encouraged. The ANC clearly approved of the recently formed alternative structures by musicians and writers and urged actors and film makers to do the same. (Similar structures have been formed by alternative film makers and actors.)

It seemed to me that the ANC preferred to deal with clearly identifiable organisations whose political integrity had been established. They emphasised the need for broader based decision making and participation to provide a democratic alternative to the present elitist structures in the arts. The alternative organisations should commit themselves to training programmes to promote further democratization.

I can imagine the uneasiness of some of my colleagues who might feel that their work would only be acceptable if it had a strong political message. I can only answer that this was not the impression I gained from the ANC. Barbara Masekela was emphatic that they did not see art in terms of political pamphleteering.

As I see it, this does not mean that all our work has to be politicised, but rather that artists can make a valuable contribution to the

struggle in their personal capacity.

How does the Dakar experience affect me and my work? I have been propelled in a new direction and maybe I can find a wider audience which will appreciate me for what I am and respect my beliefs, even if they do not necessarily agree with them. Van Zyl Slabbert spoke of our need as South Africans to break out of the cocoon of isolation that has been imposed on us. I believe this applies especially to artists who tend to isolate themselves in the belief that this is necessary for creativity. No artist in South Africa can afford the luxury of a career that ignores the political realities of our country: the State of Emergency; the thousands in detention; the murder of activists by death squads; the increasingly sinister press curbs and all other impediments to freedom of expression. Actors, who are visible people in our society must speak out against these abuses, as they could be a powerful influence for change.

Barbara Masekela emphasised the importance of women in a future South Africa and the need to change the hearts and minds of South African women. They must be encouraged to break out of their domestic bondage and play an active part in the destiny of their country. White South African women should consider carefully the implications of their husbands and sons doing duty in the townships.

We had come a long way to find something so close to home. It seemed that I had to journey to Africa, to feel first-hand the impact of the banner carried by the young children in Ouagadougou: "Apartheid is a crime against humanity." The obscenity of apartheid and the slave trade were inextricably linked in my mind after a visit to Gorée island. The words of Du Bois's poem carried a special significance. I was moved to tears when a young Ghanaian read the final words of this poem by the black American writer who spent his last years in Ghana:

"I felt the blazing glory of the sun;  
I heard the song of children crying "Free!"  
I saw the face of freedom . . .  
And I died —"

**Grethe Fox**



Ms. Lindiwe Mabuze (ANC chief representative in the Nordic countries) with Ms. Barbara Masekela (ANC Secretary for Arts and Culture) with Trudie de Ridder and Grethe Fox of the South African delegation. Excerpts from Ms. Fox's response to Dakar appear on this page.



## Dakar: Symbolic Act and Protest

**W**HAT Dakar meant to me personally and whether the whole experience lived up to my expectations, are questions that can only be answered by looking at the reasons why I agreed in the first place to go on this trip.

It is sometimes difficult to analyse one's own motives for coming to an important decision, but in the case of the Dakar meeting with the ANC there is absolute clarity in my own mind as to why I accepted IDASA's invitation. I did it for three reasons:

1. As a 'symbolic act of protest against the South African government's unwillingness to sit down at the negotiation table with a political movement that is supported by the majority of the politically aware blacks in South Africa. I accepted it could not be more than a symbolic act, because the group that went to Dakar made no pretence of being powerbrokers or having a mandate of any sort.
2. At a previous meeting with the ANC in Lusaka I had the opportunity to speak to members of the ANC's National Executive on matters pertaining to the situation in the field of education. I wanted to renew those contacts and to move more specifically into the field of

politics, because they and those of us who were at Lusaka knew that the serious situation of education has its basic roots in South African politics.

3. Thirdly, and just as importantly, I wanted to see a part of Africa that I would have never been able to see unless drastic changes came about in South Africa.

My reasons also reflect the expectations that I had and, today, I can state in all honesty that Dakar, as far as I am concerned, succeeded beyond expectations.

1. Within my lifetime there has never been a symbolic act that I can recall that has made such an impact and has driven home the message it wished to convey as Dakar. Despite the efforts of the Nationalist press (and some others too) to ridicule and belittle Dakar the debate on the necessity of talks and negotiations with the ANC became the most talked about thing in South Africa. Weeks of hysterical reaction put paid to the idea that Dakar was an empty gesture.

As a symbolic act of protest it succeeded beyond expectations.

2. The in-depth talks with the ANC delegates at the conference and in private conversations created a more profound understanding of the issues at stake in South Africa. It clearly showed how all the spheres of life, politics, economics, education, culture, etc. hang together in such a way that there is no easy way out of our dilemma. Not to talk and not to negotiate on these matters with the ANC as fellow South Africans is in a sense an easy way out, but surely also a recipe for ultimate disaster.

3. I wanted to see West Africa and what an experience that was! Africa opened its arms in an unbelievable way to us, South Africans who were willing not only to totally reject apartheid (that is no longer so difficult these days, in theory at least), but also to opt for a non-racial democracy in a unitary South Africa. Africa needs us and wants to welcome us back in the fold where we rightly belong. We need Africa. What are we missing by being so stupidly obstreperous! Perhaps this is still Dakar's greatest lesson.

**Prof. J.J.F. Durand,  
Vice-Rector, UWC.**

*'Within my lifetime there has never been a symbolic act that I can recall that has made such an impact and has driven home the message it wished to convey as Dakar.'*



*Dr. F. van Zyl Slabbert and Mr. Thabo Mbeki (ANC Secretary for Presidential Affairs and Director of Information) seated centre, with (left to right) Prof. Jaap Durand, Dr. Andre Odendaal, Dr. Ampie Coetzee and Prof. Jakes Gerwel, all of the University of the Western Cape, gathered in Dakar.*

# NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

## IDASA in the Eastern Cape: Education Forum

**T**HE forum was held at the IDASA conference room on 12 September, where representatives from three teachers' associations were present (NEUSA, SATA and TASA). The purpose of the exercise was to:

- open lines of communication between all teacher association unions regarding the removal of artificial barriers;
- be an enrichment exercise, i.e., enrich each other about the present crisis in education;
- embark on a programme of alleviating differences between the so-called collaborationists and progressives by reaching some form of common ground;
- be a launching pad for unity in action.

The only problem experienced by this forum was the reluctance on the part of two associations to attend. We are all convinced that this hurdle is going to be overcome amicably. The forum is also intending to form a non-racial pressure group to address earmarked short-term objectives. This model could also form the basis for a national alliance of teacher association unions.

The meeting unanimously agreed that, on 28 October 1987, a social occasion to be addressed by a renowned educationalist, be organised by IDASA.

## Domestic Workers/ Housewives Forum

**T**HIS regional seminar, held on 5 September 1987, involved the South African Domestic Workers' Union and a number of White housewives from Port Elizabeth. Despite a relatively small attendance from the White community, the meeting was an outstanding success.

The meeting was addressed by the General-Secretary of SADWU (from Cape Town) who spoke on the policy and objectives of the organisation. The Vice-President of SADWU spoke about the problems encountered by employees who are of course first and

foremost affiliates of SADWU. She enumerated a number of problems encountered by some of them in the workplace, particularly regarding injuries sustained at work.

This point was illustrated and supported by a number of documents. Because there is no legislation dealing with domestic and farm workers, these injuries are not covered by the Workmen's Compensation Act. Everybody in the meeting was astounded by this hidden reality and as a result, the housewives present undertook to organise an even bigger meeting in the future.

The meeting then broke up into workshops where recommendations were made to improve communication and the quality of the working relationships in the home.

The date for the next meeting, to be held in Port Elizabeth, was set for 5 October 1987. It will be addressed once again by SADWU.

**Maxwell Mamase.**

## Public Meeting

**“W**HAT now?”, “What Next?” was the theme of this meeting and more than 2000 Port Elizabethans showed their concern for the future by coming to listen to the speakers. Certainly, Port Elizabeth's White suburbs have never witnessed any meeting quite like this and it made political meetings leading up to the general election in May 1987, with their “Whites Only” audiences, pale by comparison.

The venue that had hosted the State President but a few months earlier was this time jammed to capacity by a thronging but totally peaceful non-racial audience sending out, from an incident-free meeting, a loud and clear message that harmony amongst all races is alive and well in Port Elizabeth.

Racial tension was non-existent and the AWB, who had threatened to disrupt the meeting, were conspicuous by their absence. Perhaps they shamefacedly beat a hasty retreat when confronted by the goodwill exuded by the non-racial gathering. Who knows?

The meeting itself was held under the auspices of the Black Sash

and IDAMASA (the local non-racial Ministers Fraternal) with IDASA playing a behind-the-scenes facilitating role. Speakers were Mary Burton of the Black Sash, the Rev. Mike Mjekula of IDAMASA and Dr. Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert. The Rev. Patrick Pasha of IDAMASA made available his band which promoted the happy atmosphere with its fine brand of music.

After the meeting had ended with a soulful rendition of “Nkosi Sikelel' i Afrika”, 2000 people went home with warmed and gladdened hearts, convinced, we are sure, that there is hope for all tomorrow.

## Luncheon Meeting (6 August 1987).

**T**HIS luncheon, hosted by IDASA, provided an opportunity for over 40 of Port Elizabeth's well-placed men and women to hear a first-hand account of the Dakar trip by Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert. In his incisive manner, Dr. Slabbert analysed the purpose of the trip as well as its ramifications and one could sense that people in the audience were rapidly coming to grips with the realisation that so much of what they had heard and read about the so-called “Safari” was simply so much nonsense.

Facilitating of communication, IDASA's watchwords, was the major reason for the expedition, and if people had raised their expectations to more than this, they were bound to be disappointed. Some had thought that the IDASA delegation might return from Dakar with all kinds of concessions and solutions. The fact that they didn't can never be construed as an indictment of the trip itself, but more as an indication of how important communication is going to be in resolving South Africa's future peacefully.

Those who attended the luncheon came to the understanding that peacemakers, not warmongers, were required from the White community to safeguard their children's futures. Initiatives such as Dakar could only help to move the country towards a peaceful resolution of our problems.

**Keith Watrus.**

# NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

## IDASA OFF THE GROUND IN THE SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL Dakar Report-back on 17 August 1987 at Die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit.

**T**HE meeting started off with a finger supper and wine. It was attended by 66 persons: forty-one academics and twenty-five students as well as the IDASA office staff. Every person who was invited and who could not attend had a valid reason, and all of them indicated their willingness to attend a function of a similar nature in the future. Interest amongst the students as well as the academics was unbelievable. The idea of a closed meeting was ideal in this situation because of better control and communication. The finger supper and wine allowed for contact on a one to one basis. This project has served IDASA well because we have been invited to attend and participate in future functions on their campus. According to Deon van Greunen, who assisted us, the meeting was a success and further such meetings on the RAU campus would follow.

## Brakpan Discussion Group

**T**HIS was the first project started in the Southern Transvaal region and is still growing five months later. It was started with the co-operation of five influential Afrikaners and has developed into a working group with an average of ten to eighteen persons participating. The group meets approximately three times a month.

The objective of the group is to find common ground in the search for a future democratic South Africa. Specific attention has been given to issues such as democracy in business and in the economy as a whole, the role of labour and the trade union movement, as well as the education of Black workers. There has also been meaningful sharing with each other as people, and especially around the



*Mr. George Peffer, regional director of the Southern Transvaal region.*



*Ms. Gamiede Jaffar, secretary of the S. Transvaal IDASA office.*

common concern for children and their future in South Africa. Finally, the group also examined the role of the church and its relation to the crisis in the country.

The unique value of the group lies in its participants and sharing process — a process which becomes heated at times but always ends positively, and with a firm commitment to continue.

## MEDIA NEWS

### 1. DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Should you want to receive this news bulletin on a regular basis, please send your name and address to:

The Editor  
Democracy in Action  
IDASA  
1 Penzance Road  
MOWBRAY  
7700

### 2. IDASA POLICY BROCHURE — STATEMENT ON GOALS AND STRATEGIES

This brochure on our goals and strategies is available in English from our national and regional offices. It is free. Should you not have your regional office address you can get a copy from our national office at the above address. The Afrikaans version will be available in November from the same address, and a Xhosa version will follow in the new year.

### 3. NATIONAL CONFERENCE PAPERS

These are in the process of being published as a series of

Occasional Papers. They will be available for purchase by 1st December. Full details will be made available in the December issue of this bulletin. The papers cover Democracy and the following — Government, Law, Business, the Church, Media, Labour and Education. See 'ad' on page 3.

### 4. VIDEO LIBRARY

IDASA's media office is in the process of establishing a video library for educational and information purposes. Full details will appear in the December



*Members of the IDASA National Office Staff (left to right): Ms. Sarah Zibaya, Mrs. Paddy Clark, Mr. James Polley (Media Consultant), Ms. Margaret Kulu, Ms. Beverley February.*

issue. In the interim the following are available on VHS:

1. The National Conference speeches/addresses as listed above — each on a separate tape of 30-45 minutes duration.
2. An edited version of the full National Conference covering all the speeches, workshops, report-backs and plenary discussions. Also available on Beta.
3. The Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert/Dr. D. Worrall public debate at Sandton shortly before the general elections.
4. The two Press Conferences on Dakar given by Dr. Alex Boraine and Dr. F. Van Zyl Slabbert, respectively, on their return to South Africa. These are two separate tapes, each of 40 minutes duration, providing an outstanding glimpse of the entire Dakar experience and immediate local reaction.

Write to the Media Consultant at the National office address (above) for use of this material.

# Township Tours Project

**I**T is our belief that experience is the best teacher. It is for this very reason that we have embarked on a programme which will give people "hands on" experience of life in townships, squatter and refugee camps and awaken their senses to the conditions existing in the "real world" as opposed to that which is portrayed by the media. These tours are not of a mere sightseeing nature, but involve interaction between the participants, the community and members of its leadership, so that

first hand experience may be obtained of the prevailing problems and conditions. This also serves to promote a better understanding amongst White South Africans of the conditions which affect their Black counterparts.

Ultimately, what we wish to achieve by these tours, which are meant predominantly for White participants who are very much removed from these conditions, is to assist in changing people's attitudes so that they may respond more positively towards rejecting and dismantling the Apartheid system and to bring them to an entry point into the broader democratic movement.

This programme is conducted at two levels, namely, at a general participation level which caters predominantly for Whites in general and also at a more specific level for White students/scholars. These tours will be conducted quite regularly due to the positive response we received from participants and non-participants following our recent successful "pilot" tours conducted on the 19th and 20th September for general participants and students, respectively, and which involved about 80 participants altogether. The tours were preceded by a

documentary film on conflict in the black ghettos which was shown at the IDASA conference centre, after which the participants visited Crossroads, KTC, Nyanga Bush Camp, Oscar Mpetha Square and Khayelitsha, to name but a few. The programme ended with participants and community leaders reflecting on the tour, sharing experiences and interacting socially at a braai in the Township.

*T. Albertus (below) and "Pro" Jack (left below), Regional Directors of the Western Cape.*



*Mr. "Pro" Jack.*



*Mr. Thaabit Albertus*



*A typical "street" scene in the KTC squatter community, characterised by green pools of polluted water.*



*Mr. "Pro" Jack (IDASA regional co-ordinator in the W. Cape) who organised the township tour is seated on the table with Drs. Slabbert and Boraine - surrounded by various members of the touring party.*

*Bottom two pics on this page by Thaabit Albertus.*