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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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IFP enigma

A fragile peace descended on tormented KwaZulu/Natal when the Inkatha Freedom Party finally decided to participate in the election. This peace still holds, more or less, in the wake of the subsequent IFP regional victory. But what are the prospects for the future and what will become of the enigmatic party of ethnic pieties and free market principles? Three scenarios are possible **5**

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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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COMMENT

Reconciliation must include truth

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela's state of the nation speech understandably focused on the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). However, in a very brief paragraph, he referred to the question of amnesty for political crimes. He said *inter alia* that "the nation must come to terms with its past in a spirit of openness and forgiveness and proceed to build the future on the basis of repairing and healing". He added: "The burden of the past lies heavily on us, including those responsible for inflicting injury and those who suffered."

The most important point he made was that amnesty must be linked with disclosure. In other words, the president has put it on record that reconciliation and dealing with the past must include truth. To put it another way, the government of national unity is committed to amnesty but not to amnesia.

It is this thought that was dominant in a recent conference entitled "Justice in Transition" organised by Idasa. It is this concept which is emphasised in Idasa's most recent publication entitled *Dealing with the Past: Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa.*

The clause in the interim Constitution dealing with national unity and reconciliation acknowledges that South Africa's past is characterised by "strife, conflicts, untold suffering and injustice", and commits the nation to "transcend the divisions and strife of the past which generated gross violations of human rights, the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflicts and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge".

For the RDP to work, it will not only require very careful financial planning, efficiency and hard work, it will also require a stable society. For peace to be endurable, however, it must be based on truth. Reconciliation involves forgiveness, but in order to forgive, it must be known who to forgive and for what.

Furthermore, in our focus on amnesty we should never forget that a fundamental objective of the new dispensation should be the restoring of human and civil dignity to the thousands of victims who suffered under apartheid. To ignore the suffering of the victims and to focus only on the violators of human rights is to get it only half right, and the impression will be that the victims don't really matter.

Inevitably there are those who have sounded warnings about any attempt to deal with the past which involves public disclosure. One of the points that has been made by several commentators is that our democracy is so fragile and our unity so precarious that nothing should be done which could put these at risk.

Eduardo Galeano, referring to the transition towards democracy in Uruguay, writes as follows: "On the part of the government and important sectors of the population, there is a belief that democracy is a fragile old lady in a wheelchair. If she moves too much, she will collapse, and if you speak too loudly, she will have a heart attack. So democracy is something that shouldn't be touched. These ideas are actually the enemies of democracy because true democracy must move forward, deepen and develop."

Central to democracy is the rule of law and it is important that, in the process of dealing with their past, South Africans include the overhauling of the present security system so that the gross violations of human rights which were perpetrated by the old state can never reoccur. In a search for truth and a deepening of democracy, we will have to build up a political culture in which the rule of law is respected and observed, so that no individual or group can violate human rights with impunity.

In a new spirit of reconciliation South Africa has an enviable opportunity to work towards genuine healing, which involves dealing honestly, fearlessly and sensitively with past violations of human rights. It will be considerably easier to achieve a new beginning, in a spirit of unity and democracy, if thorough attention is given to the undemocratic and often inhuman practices of the past. In all the planning of new legislation, it is imperative that the widest consultation should take place and, above all, that the voice of the victims should be heard.

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

Idasa's goals are:

- To promote the development of a democratic culture in South Africa
- To address fear, prejudice, anger and other obstacles in the transition to a non-racial democracy in South Africa
- To engage influential groups and individuals who may be outsiders to the transition process
- To provide, wherever possible, information on critical issues and to explore ways of addressing these
- To facilitate discussion of constitutional and developmental issues relevant to southern Africa
- To assist and encourage others to contribute to the attainment of these goals

ja–nee

Rainbow nation

A charming man at Nelson Mandela's inauguration ceremony approached a knot of people including Indian film director Shyam Benegal (in South Africa to make a film on Gandhi), Judge Ismail Mahomed, relatives of the late Chief Albert Luthuli and, decked in glittering saris, Fatima Meer and her daughter Shenaz. Apparently confused by the Meers' traditional attire, he welcomed the group warmly to the new South Africa. Having alerted him to their South African origins, Fatima Meer asked the man who he was. Gary Player, he replied.
– Par for the course?

Slip of the tongue?

There was some healthy embarrassment at South African Press Association (Sapa) offices about a report on the new health plan unveiled at a press conference by Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma. The report issued by Sapa referred to the new minister as "he". A hasty update corrected the pronoun to "she".

CV or not CV?

One of the demands of former IEC monitors demonstrating recently in Johannesburg was a certificate stating that they had worked for the IEC. The response of IEC commissioner Charles Nupen was that he had no idea that there were still people who wanted to be publicly associated with the IEC.

Sweet talk

A member of an NGO board recently tried to persuade colleagues of the need for the organisation to engage in teaching peace and reconciliation to the youth of Natal. "We must hammer it into them," he said. "We must knock it in."

Moving mission

Pik Botha has been moved from Foreign Affairs to Energy and Mineral Affairs but he doesn't want to move offices.
– Is it a lack of energy? A new phobia of things foreign? Or simply that the man needs some room to pik and choose?

Brand-new look

By MOIRA LEVY

A NEW South Africa signals change all round, and *Democracy in Action* (*DIA*) is celebrating the changes with a brand-new look to reflect a whole new reality.

The aim is an upbeat, lively magazine that truly reflects the notion of democracy in action. The revamp is in keeping with Idasa's commitment to making democracy work and coincides with Idasa's name change – to the Institute for Democracy in South Africa – and the change in the organisation's leadership.

Part of the rationale for change is to improve the appeal of *DIA* to a broader readership and to secure a place for the magazine in the increasingly competitive current affairs magazine market.

It coincides with efforts, initiated by the Media Department and co-ordinated by staffer Lindiwe Kulu, to establish an informal distribution system in the local townships. If this proves successful, we hope to extend the network to other major cities.

DIA now reaches more than 2 000 new readers in Cape Town's Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu and Khayelitsha townships, through clinics, schools, community centres and taxi ranks.

That does not mean that our existing readers will lose out. *DIA* remains committed to critical, in-depth analysis of the issues that a changing society has to examine.

Our recent readership survey turned out a firm thumbs-up for our style and content, and that will not change. Regular features, like Ja-Nee, My View and Comment will continue. Reports on Idasa's work in the regional offices around the country will be highlighted in a Democracy in Action section.

What you can now expect are more profiles on interesting and important South Africans; a column, called Democracy Watch, that will place under the investigative microscope crucial aspects of our developing democracy; and an occasional pull-out-and-keep education supplement, compiled by Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy.

Our new look is the product of months of consultation, brainstorming and experimentation. Directing the media department in this initiative was Cape Town design consultant Sarah-Anne Raynham, who described the new look as "open and accessible."

Raynham, who is also a freelance desktop publisher and who has had years of experience editing the Black Sash journal *SASH* and the ecumenical movement's *SA Outlook*, said "accessibility is the key thing". Her aim was to produce a publication that is "there for the readers – open and uncluttered and easy for them to access".

She has created a look that makes use of lots of white space as a design feature and that sets up a clear hierarchical arrangement of stories to facilitate reading and understanding.

Cape Town graphic artist Marianne Saddington was responsible for creating the masthead and the icons. Probably best known for her outstanding calligraphy, Saddington has published a book, called *Making Your Own Paper*, and she also illustrates books. Her icons, calligraphy and embroidery have been exhibited at various shows and she teaches paper making, calligraphy and drawing.

We want to know what you, the readers, think of the new-look *DIA*. Send us your ideas, comments and feedback, and let us know what you would like to see in the magazine. After all, *Democracy in Action* aims for democracy in practice, and transparency, consultation and accountability is what democracy is all about. ■

IFP enigma

The peace that descended on KwaZulu/Natal when the Inkatha Freedom Party finally decided to participate in the election is still holding – more or less. It has a chance of enduring – more or less. Political scientist ALEXANDER JOHNSTON examines why.

Picture: SOUTH

IN a sense, the most important results of the election in KwaZulu/Natal are that it took place at all and that the level of endemic violence which has plagued the region for years dropped to almost nothing for the duration of voting and counting. In the light of these facts, it is scarcely surprising that relief is the predominant emotion of both winners and losers in the contest.

This sense of having drawn back from the brink is undercut by the controversy over alleged vote-rigging by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in areas under its control and the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu government. The ANC in the region is clearly divided over the issue, with Midlands leader Harry Gwala and candidate for regional premier Jacob Zuma issuing contradictory statements about the degree of vigour with which the matter should be pursued.

It is certain, however, that Zuma's softer line has the backing of the ANC at national level. Indeed, it is difficult to escape the inference that for the ANC leadership at national level, IFP control of KwaZulu/Natal, obtained by whatever means, is an acceptable price to pay for peace. This may make sense in terms of *realpolitik*, but it is an inauspicious beginning for democracy.

The IFP's achievement of an overall majority in the region poses a number of interesting and difficult political questions. Among them, what will the IFP become?

Those who have studied and written about this movement invariably refer to its hybrid nature. In one respect, the IFP is a party of ethnic mobilisation, making extensive use of history-as-mythology to rally support in the face of real or imagined threats to cultural identity, or even (in the eyes of the IFP's

more extreme leaders) the ethnic group's physical existence.

At the same time, the IFP has always appealed to white interests which saw partnership with a black political movement as a long-term investment in stability. To them, the IFP has offered a foothold in African popular politics without the revolutionary baggage that came with the ANC. In addition, the movement's ethnic personification has always appealed to those whites who are most comfortable with Africans when they are in "traditional" roles, guise and garb.

It has never been easy to line up these differing constituencies into a plausible coalition. To some extent, the sheer fact that the IFP was not the ANC was enough to hold them together, but now some credible synthesis of ideology must be put in place.

The politics of cultural weapons and the monarchy has clearly served well enough through periods of high political tension and low-level civil war. However, they do not make a stable basis for government of an ethnically diverse and politically divided population in a partly modernised economy. On the other hand, it would be dangerous for the IFP to de-emphasise the ethnic pieties altogether and turn itself into a completely secular party of federalism, free enterprise and investment opportunities, since this would risk becoming remote from its popular base.

The IFP's enigmatic nature is emphasised by the increasingly important role played by the Zulu monarchy in its profile and strategies. Indeed, in the later stages of negotiation, the monarchy came to be the IFP's most important asset. The IFP was not alone in its estimation of the king's importance. The ANC conducted a long and elaborate courtship (which must have sorely tried the patience of some of its members) aimed at removing royal issues and influence from direct party political competition.

As befits matters of courtly intrigue, it is difficult to gauge from a distance what mixture of self-interest, kinship and balance of power in private personal relationships the king's undoubted association with the IFP and its leader is owed. But, in a sense, the issue is simple.

As long as the king has a "traditional prime minister", and as long as that courtier combines his privileged access and role as advice-giver with being the leader of a partisan political movement in regional and national politics, the monarchy is inescapably partial. Unless these circumstances change, it is difficult to see how citizens of KwaZulu/Natal who are not members of the IFP can regard King Goodwill Zwelithini as "their" monarch.

A second and closely related question concerns the problem of integrating the two parts of the new region. There is a legacy of much closer collaboration between the "white" province and the homeland. Nevertheless, formidable differences remain. Aside from the stark economic facts that KwaZulu is very much poorer, very much less developed and more populous than Natal, there is the question of political culture.

The political culture of Ulundi is that of a one-party state. Basic political freedoms of organisation and expression for rival political parties are absent; its bureaucracy has been fused with the party; and its security forces, in the form of the KwaZulu Police, cannot with confidence be regarded as impartial.

This political culture could flourish under the benign eye of a collusive central government and on the basis of ethnic appeal to a homogeneous population. But both these props have been removed. The IFP regional government's freedom of manoeuvre will be curtailed by enforced power-sharing, a vigorous opposition, an unsympathetic central government and circumscribed constitutional powers.

These new circumstances, and the demands of governing a more diverse population in a more sophisticated economy, will make themselves felt on the style and strategies of the IFP.

Three possible scenarios suggest themselves:

- the political culture of Ulundi will extend itself over the whole of the new region;
- wider horizons of political freedom and higher standards of public administration will make themselves felt throughout the region as the old homeland political culture is changed by the demands of the new regional order;
- "KwaZulu" and "Natal" will continue to be *de facto* separate entities, with the former continuing as an IFP fief which, by virtue of its numerical preponderance, will provide the basis for continuing IFP electoral victories.

The last of these scenarios is the most likely, at least in the foreseeable future, and it is even possible that pragmatists of all parties will see its utility. On the other hand, the disappearance of *de jure* jurisdictional lines between province and homeland will make this scenario a difficult one to secure. ■

Alexander Johnston is senior lecturer in the Department of Politics University of Natal, Durban

Mangosuthu Buthelezi

Sacred roots of secular IFP

IT IS a little-known fact that the ANC took a strategic decision to encourage the development of Inkatha when it was first launched by Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi in the 1970s.

Despite deep reservations about working within the bantustan system, and a public stance of refusal to have anything to do with it, the ANC in exile took the decision to encourage all mass democratic organisations within the bantustans – including Inkatha.

Accordingly, the ANC held discussions with Buthelezi and encouraged him to revive Inkatha ka Zulu, a Zulu cultural movement that had been set up in 1922 by the Zulu monarch of the time, King Solomon ka Dinizulu.

This is documented by ANC writer Mzala, who died in exile in London in 1989, in his frank and thought-provoking book *Gatsha Buthelezi: Chief With A Double Agenda*.

Mzala wrote: "The ANC felt it was historically bound to build a democratic movement in the countryside that would be directed to the path of revolutionary action by the people. In so far as Chief Buthelezi then displayed what the ANC considered a 'democratic consciousness', however limited, it thought it wise to deal with him."

He quotes then ANC president, the late Oliver Tambo, who realised that the strategy would not work: "Unfortunately, we failed to mobilise our own people to take on the task of resurrecting Inkatha as the kind of organisation that we wanted, owing to the understandable antipathy of many of our comrades towards what they considered as working within the bantustan system.

"The task of reconstituting Inkatha therefore fell on Gatsha Buthelezi himself who then built Inkatha as a personal power base far removed from the kind of organisation we had visualised, as an instrument for the mobilisation of our people in the countryside."

However, the ANC encouraged Buthelezi to scrap the "Zulus only" eligibility clause in Inkatha's original constitution, and Mzala refers to a 1977 survey which found that 50 percent of Inkatha supporters also backed the ANC. ■

Beautifully small?

Small is beautiful, according to 1960s cult economist E F Schumacher, but not many voters felt this way about the multitude of little parties that registered for the April election. In the absence of much support, should they have received state funds? SHIREEN BADAT investigates

A PLETHORA of new political parties emerged for the April elections, with virtually unknown people descending on Kempton Park almost daily towards the end of March in a mad rush to register. The Western Cape, home of the factionalist tendency, not surprisingly was the province with the most small parties.

In order to register, parties had to pay a deposit of R25 000 in the case of the National Assembly election, and R5 000 for each provincial election they wanted to contest. Parties which failed to have at least one representative elected forfeited these deposits.

One might therefore assume that many small parties lost a lot of money, but the matter is more complicated.

The Electoral Act required a party applying for state funding to provide the results of an independent opinion poll showing that it had the support of at least two percent of the voters in each election the party wished to contest. In the absence of such an opinion poll, parties could provide lists of signatures demonstrating such support, but then qualified for only half the amount of state funds.

It was impossible to find out exactly how much money parties received and what formula was used to apportion it. An Independent Electoral Commission spokesperson said the figures would be released in the final report of the chairperson, Judge Johann Kriegler. However, parties which qualified for state funding received it in proportion to the number of elections for which they registered. So, while most of the small parties failed in the electoral stakes and lost their deposits, they did profit from the election – financially, at least.

The Worker's List Party (WLP) is unapologetic. Spokesperson Immelda Whittaker feels there is no contradiction in the fact that although the WLP managed to get 10 000 signatures, it received only 4 169 votes.

"When we asked people for their signatures, we never told them to vote for the WLP," she said. "We wanted people to support our long-term goal of forming a mass workers' party. Our programme goes beyond the elections. Taking seats in parliament was never the issue for us."

When asked how the WLP spent the money it received from the IEC, Whittaker said that, in line with its demand for the right to work, the WLP employed a number of jobless and elderly people to distribute pamphlets and put up posters.

Islamic Party (IP) leader Sheriff Mohamed was similarly upbeat, claiming that the IP did extremely well in the Western Cape provincial election – the only one contested by the party, although he did not know what the party's final vote count was.

Asked whether he would consider contesting the next election, Mohamed said: "I found politics very exciting. There were all types of conspiracies going on. It reminded me of Rome in the times of Julius Caesar."

Interestingly, Mohamed emerged as IP leader only after a leadership tussle which was finally resolved in court.

Another Western Cape contender riven by a leadership wrangle was the South African Women's Party (SAWP). Despite the embarrassment of having the wrong face printed on the ballot paper, the SAWP won nearly 2 500 votes. SAWP spokesperson Michel Muller proudly pointed out that the party did not apply for state funding and drew its campaign money from its members. She said the party's entrance into the elections was the first step in a long process. "It was important to get women on to the political agenda. We gained valuable election experience and for us seats in parliament were not important."

Far less upbeat was the Women's Rights Peace Party's Nina Romm. Disappointed by the results, Romm said she felt the larger parties did not allow for meaningful participation by the smaller ones.

"This parliament will be writing the constitution and it is important that people committed to women's rights are part of the process. As can be seen in the composition of the cabinet, women have already fallen by the wayside."

A woman apparently unconcerned about women's rights was Claire Emery of the Kiss Party, whose campaign revolved around lowering taxes and ending corruption. But in common with the SAWP, Emery is proud of not asking for state funding for her campaign. She asked her husband instead.

Kiss drew a surprising 6 000 votes nationwide, though Emery thought she would do better. "There was an obvious chiselling away of votes," she said.

However, she really enjoyed the election campaign and would like to do it again. "I found that it isn't politics that is dirty, just the politicians. I think the word politician is just a euphemism for gangster."

Charges of euphemism might well have been levelled at the Green Party (GP) too, certainly by the two candidates who resigned in outrage a week before the election when they discovered that the legalisation and mass production of dagga was part of the party platform.

Despite these problems, the GP seems to be the only small party with concrete plans for the future. GP spokesperson Nathan Grant said that in preparation for the forthcoming municipal elections the party would be opening two offices in the next three months.

As for the Soccer Party (SP), uncertainty seems to be the keynote. Possibly in line with the field-day newspaper cartoonists have been having showing SP offices enveloped in clouds of smoke and disconnected euphoria, the official SP phone number rang unanswered for days.

The final bill for the election has yet to come in but it is certain that it will be high. Although state funding of the small parties will be a relatively minor item in that bill, it is legitimate to ask whether such an item is justified. Most people agree that elections should not be limited to the major players and that there should be space for special interest groups. But surely these groups should have some sort of proven track record and constituency before they receive public funds? ■

Not so long ago the SABC was a symbol of everything that was wrong with South Africa. Now it is staking a serious claim to a vanguard role. MOIRA LEVY reports.

IF THE South African Broadcasting Corporation had been a political party contesting the April poll, it probably would have got my vote. Somewhere below the PAC and above the Soccer Party on the ballot paper, I would have placed my cross beside the latest symbol of racial harmony and goodwill.

An unlikely candidate on a platform of progress and reform a short time ago, the SABC has flipped its image into the reverse of what it once was. Now the in-joke in the Auckland Park newsroom is that the national broadcaster is the real alternative press.

Pretty improbable perhaps, but then consider that today a proportion of its top presenters and producers come from *Vrye Weekblad* and *The Weekly Mail*, and the person behind a lot of the thinking that went into Election '94 is the former editor of the gutsy *Indicator of Lenasia*, Ameen Akhalwaya, a top journalist who only recently was much reviled by the very establishment for which he now works.

For the tens of thousands who stayed glued to their TV screens for Election '94, the image of non-racial, non-sexist harmony and goodwill that was beamed into their living-rooms held out more of a hope for a new South Africa than many of the parties could offer.

Ebony-ivory images of Lester Venter alongside Thandeka Gqubule and Tim Modise cosily snuggling up with Penny Smythe possibly did more to create the heady atmosphere of the election days than even the carnival spirit of the voting queues.

The SABC as a symbol of the new South Africa does stretch the imagination. But, given that these days anything is possible, and that since its inception the new SABC board has declared its commitment to affirmative action and fair and impartial news coverage, it's a giant leap forward the imagination may take.

How much the SABC's new image is the result of policy and how much due to politics is difficult to discern. The people behind the scenes suggest that they set out to do something new and different with the election coverage, and then the enthusiasm of the SABC team and the spirit of the times just added their own momentum.

Reborn SABC rides

The result was an on-screen atmosphere that was palpably invigorating and exciting, and unlike anything we have come to expect from the SABC. Television coverage over that crucial time probably did more to advance the cause of non-racialism, co-operation and goodwill than much of the political posturing of the election campaign.

According to Andre le Roux, executive director of the television election unit, Election '94 was carefully conceived; it had to be. "We realised that this was so big that nothing of this nature had been done in this country before. We had to start from scratch. We had no previous election guidelines."

Planning the technical side of the operation began last November – that was the easy part. "We were well suited to do this," said Le Roux. It was the rest that proved the real challenge. From the beginning of January, Le Roux and Akhalwaya, assistant executive editor of the television election news, began planning their moves.

Their first was to collect SABC journalists of different races, genders and skills, from various news departments, and shuffle them together into a single election pool. What they dealt out was a mix of teams that gave the election coverage its distinctive stamp.

Said Le Roux: "This was not a white event or a black event. We knew people had preconceptions about TV – that TV1 was for whites and CCV for blacks. There was no way we were going to approach the election with that in mind."

The key to the successful formula lay in the usage and spread of languages over the two main channels. The approach was two-pronged, according to Le Roux: coverage had to be accessible and easily understandable, and it had to recognise the equality of all South Africa's languages.

What that meant was that the predominant language would be English – the language most people understand – and the other official languages would receive even treatment. "We even succeeded in broadcasting in some of the minor languages – Tsonga, Venda and Swazi – during the course of the exercise."

The rest flowed from the language policy. Le Roux and Akhalwaya say they did not set out to structure anchor teams that were carefully balanced in terms of race, gender and age. "We had to deploy everyone we had to their full capacity. That in itself broke down racial and gender barriers," said Le Roux.

He and Akhalwaya are at pains to emphasise that although the SABC has an affirmative action policy, they did not make affirmative action choices when it came to deciding on the Election '94 team.

They chose people "who understand the democratisation process". "South Africa is changing, and the SABC is changing with it and attracting different people who are prepared to work for it," according to Le Roux. And there will be no going back on that – "there is no way you can unscramble that egg".

He described what he called a real *esprit de corps* in the ranks. "It was an extremely gratifying experience. We really had a situation where people came together, stayed together, and rediscovered each other. They displayed a common goal and a common purpose, and that was the success of the election."

The image of non-racial, non-sexist harmony and goodwill beamed into living-rooms held out more of a hope for a new South Africa than many of the parties could offer.

Akhalwaya agreed, paying tribute to the people behind the scenes who "laboured long hours under hot lights and came up trumps".

He points out that the election coverage represents a high point in a process that the SABC began some time ago. "We have been trying to be as equitable as possible in our current affairs and news coverage, keeping the important issues alive, and giving coverage to as many players as we can. We started redressing imbalances in terms of staffing some time ago. We realised we needed a wider input. We wanted to avoid stereotyping and bring in fresh voices and faces."

The less than enthusiastic response from right-wing viewers to black and well-known left-wing newsreaders and anchorpersons has not deterred the team. "We knew what we were letting ourselves in for," Akhalwaya says. "We are trying to reflect the wider South African reality. Our aim is to introduce South Africa to South Africans." ■

Is this the funeral of apartheid?

By Lindiwe Kulu

ON THE night of 25 April 1994, youths in the black townships took to the streets. Lights were on in every house, showing that people were not asleep. They were singing and toyi-toying for joy on the streets of Khayelitsha.

Around 4.30am on the morning of 26 April we heard screams of joy. "Give your grandmother, your grandfather their IDs! The time they have waited for for so long has arrived! The funeral of apartheid has arrived!"

I was preparing to go to Victoria West and Prieska as an observer but I was so excited that I could not wait to vote. I was travelling with a group of people in two cars. We decided to cast our votes in Guguletu at the Uluntu Centre.

The centre was full of old people waiting patiently to vote. When I was given the first ballot paper, something stuck in my mind and I asked myself, "is this really the washing powder that is going to wash out apartheid? Is this the funeral of it? Is this going to be done freely and fairly?"

My hand could not write properly because of my excitement and when I put the cross on the last ballot I prayed that God would be on our side, that the violence would not interfere with our election.

Then we started our journey to Victoria West. We arrived at 6.30pm and went to the nearest voting station for the closing. Things were going very well. It went well the next day too, and the next, although there were small problems. Voter education had been done and most people did attend these seminars.

I think the washing powder worked. Now we look forward to a democratic South Africa. ■

LINDIWE KULU: In observer attire.

the waves

Why did the African National Congress lose the election in the Western Cape? Were they caught napping by the National Party? SOBANTU XAYIYA speaks to disgruntled township dwellers.

Cape of great gloom

THE African townships of Cape Town remained gloomy while many took to the streets to celebrate the ANC victory in the country's first democratic elections. Still licking the wounds of the regional defeat, shocked residents wondered what went wrong.

Some blamed the coloured community, which constitutes a substantial majority in the region, for abandoning them and betraying their trust. Others put the blame squarely on the ANC, which they criticised both for the lack of a clear election strategy for addressing the concerns of the comunity in question, and for choosing Alan Boesak as its candidate for regional premier.

The views of the four people quoted in this article are heard from many disenchanted residents of Cape Town's townships.

Vuyani Boyce, 32, a teacher at Sithembele Mathiso Secondary School in New Cross-roads, thinks it was obvious that the ANC would run a neck-and-neck race with the National Party and that it was possible that the NP "could take the coloureds". The NP exploited this situation; the ANC ignored it. The ANC was caught napping by the NP.

Boyce has no doubt that the ANC's choice of Boesak as candidate premier contributed to the party's defeat.

"The coloured community is deeply religious and probably didn't like the way the candidate premier conducted his personal life. I don't think they forgave him for abandoning his former wife, Dorothy, a devoted comrade. I think Boesak was the first factor that militated against the ANC's election campaign in the region."

Another mistake the ANC made, in his view, was to attempt to market Boesak to voters. The NP, by contrast, downplayed Hernus Kriel, now regional premier, because they knew he was unpopular.

Asked to comment on the fact that many people asked "who is this person?" and refused to accept badges showing Boesak's face when Mandela badges ran out temporarily, Boyce pointed to an emotional attachment to Mandela, particularly among older people.

"But Mandela was never too attractive to the conservative section of the coloured community. This section sees him as a leader of an African-led, black nationalist movement which is different from the UDF (United Democratic Front) that they were part of."

As far as Boyce is concerned, the coloured community never felt apartheid as harshly as their African counterparts, and this is one of the reasons why they voted for the NP.

"If you look at the people repairing telephones here, they are coloured. People holding managerial jobs, at supermarket tills, clothing factories, even students working part time at supermarkets are all coloured. The Africans have always observed this but, because of our sophisticated approach to politics, we have tried to ignore this practice in the interests of avoiding the creation of rifts between African and coloured. Nevertheless, the coloureds have always rejected Africans, viewing them as third-class citizens."

Another factor that contributed to the ANC defeat in the region, according to Boyce, was the elitist image of regional office bearers.

ANC Western Cape deputy regional secretary Chris Nissen says the issues are more complicated. Unwilling to blame anyone for the ANC defeat, Nissen emphasises the logistical problems that were a feature of the whole election process. He also points out that statistics show that nearly half a million coloured people did vote for the ANC in the region.

Asked how his organisation was going to relate to the NP-dominated regional government, Nissen said the ANC did not see itself as the opposition but as an extension of the national government, and its duty was to build provisional unity in the region.

It may be a difficult duty to fulfil. Acrimony towards coloured people is widespread.

ANC regional office worker Thoko Ndlumbini, 25, of Old Location in Nyanga, believes that most coloured people gained security under the apartheid regime and identify with the National Party.

"Most don't see themselves as part of the oppressed. Even those not possessing the necessary qualifications are catered for – they work in factories. Others are too involved with their religion and refrain from being involved in politics."

Education, Resource and Information Project (Erip) worker Koki Dlabantu says the ANC should have concentrated on the coloured working class instead of expending effort on the middle class. He also worries about acrimony between African and coloured people.

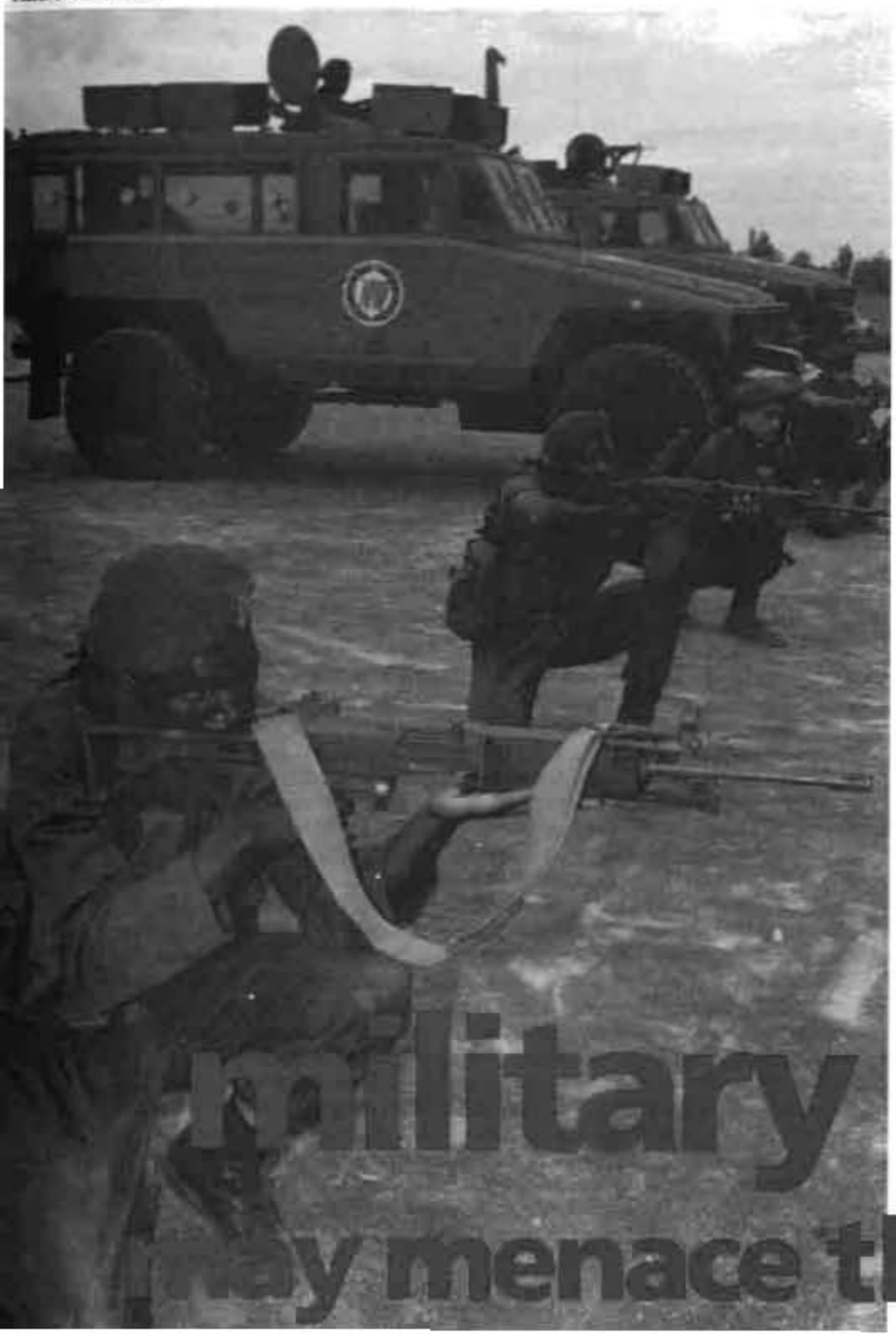
He faults the ANC in the region for an undemocratic process of choosing a candidate premier: "I don't think the opinion of all the forces in the democratic movement was tested in regard to this question," he says.

Dlabantu believes that the major task of the government of national unity will be "to start a proactive programme to deal with the working class in these areas and address issues of racialism." ■

Picture: SOUTH

A large number of South Africans are armed and trained to be dangerous. What is to become of them? Sociologist JACKLYN COCK explores the options and sounds some warnings.

Picture: THE ARGUS



Military pacts may menace the peace

AN IMPORTANT task in South Africa today is to create a common society; to build institutions which unify rather than divide us. The construction of a new defence force is perhaps the most difficult aspect of this broader project. At the same time we have to engage in a process of demilitarisation if we are to achieve a peaceful and democratic order.

The military has been a major obstacle to the achievement of democracy in Africa, and war has been a major contributor to the continent's current development crisis. It has meant not only death and injury to millions but has absorbed large amounts of national resources, caused ecological damage, destroyed infrastructure and social organisation, distorted production and created millions of displaced persons and refugees.

Throughout Africa, even when there has been a clear victory in liberation struggles against colonial rule, or cease-fires after periods of civil war, real peace has been short-lived and democratic government has not been realised.

One of the main reasons for this is the failure to demilitarise after periods of violent conflict. The successful transition to peace and democracy in South Africa depends on a process of demilitarisation which involves a shifting of both power and resources away from armed formations and military elites.

Demilitarisation does not only involve reductions in defence expenditure and force levels. There is a concomitant need to restructure the arms industry to make it more accountable and transparent; for informal disarmament, in the sense of bringing under control the present proliferation of small arms throughout the southern African region; for measures to dislodge the ideology of militarism, which

MK MANNE: Set for integration into military structures.

Picture: SOUTH

privileges violence as a legitimate solution to conflict; and, finally, for the creation of a representative and legitimate defence force that is accountable to parliament and subordinate to civilian control.

The creation of this new defence force must be linked to a demobilisation process. The potential of discontented demobilised soldiers for destabilisation, whether through political or criminal activities, is high. In Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique demobilised soldiers have been a destabilising force. The likelihood of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) returnees becoming involved in such activities increases with time if their material needs are not met.

Present thinking in defence circles seems to be to attempt to meet these needs through a process of integrating all ex-combatants into military structures. Many MK soldiers were integrated into the National Peace-keeping Force and a process of amalgamating all soldiers into a new South African National Defence Force is currently under way.

It has been suggested that this new structure will involve as many as 130 000 personnel. It would be an amalgamation of all existing armed formations, including the South African Defence Force (SADF), the armed forces of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, and 16 000 MK soldiers, according to an April 1994 report in *The Star* citing MK Chief of Staff Siphiwe Nyanda.

The force levels envisaged are hugely inflated in terms of any realistic threat analysis. While it is agreed that the new army will be subordinate to civilian control, such an inflated, overblown force will absorb large amounts of national resources and block the process of demilitarisation in the southern African region.

South Africa today faces no conventional, external, military threats. For us, as in other societies that have recently undergone a democratic transition, "the absence of a foreign threat may leave the military devoid of a legitimate military mission and enhance their inclination to think about politics", as Huntington puts it in *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Internal threats to political stability should be dealt with through strong and effective policing.

There is an argument favoured by some military elites that – at least in the short term – the size of the new defence force should be motivated by social rather than defence needs. This emphasis on social needs is informed by the immense political danger which a compulsory and harsh reduction in numbers would constitute.

However, the inflated force levels that the ongoing amalgamation of armed formations involves is highly problematic and a number of defence experts support the notion of a demobilisation process as an alternative.

This alternative is supported by Major-General A W Dennis, previously director of Military Assistance Overseas for the British Army. In an article published recently in the *South African Defence Review*, he argues: "Large numbers of MK personnel, largely untrained for conventional operations, will have either to be absorbed speedily into the new defence force (which will impose significant training requirements) or be otherwise suitably employed. The latter is preferable since the former will result in a defence force of a size well beyond South Africa's needs, with all that means for the economy."

Given the militarised nature of our past, it is important that the role of the new defence force should be limited to territorial defence and not expanded into socio-economic development. An overblown, inflated force will be more likely to be deployed in non-military activities.

However, the Chief of the South African National Defence Force, General Georg Meiring, favours the deployment of the new defence force in economic development. In another recent *South African Defence Review* article, Meiring argues that one of the roles of the future army should be "to use its inherent public utility in promoting socio-economic development and providing other essential non-military services".

Such an enhanced and expanded "social role", however, may maintain the legitimacy of the military, absorb large amounts of national resources and block the demilitarisation process.

Meiring also refers to the "large number of individuals who have received military training of some sort and who will not be accommodated in the South African army". He suggests that an idea might be "to establish a Services Brigade to accommodate and train them" and that "this brigade would be used on non-military tasks, like building projects".

It is difficult to avoid the impression that such a structure would be used as a soak-pit to absorb MK ex-combatants and that it would create tensions and antagonisms in the process. Tasks of reconstruction need to be addressed through public works programmes and non-military community service schemes.

The ANC has come to be the major party in our government of national unity largely on the basis of its resistance role and its promise to create a "better life" for all our people. The fulfilment of this promise involves a large-scale diversion of resources away from the military to housing and jobs. At this moment there is a real danger that "elite pacting" between military groupings will block this process on which a stable and democratic future depends. ■

Jacklyn Cock is a member of the Military Research Group and Professor in the Sociology Department, University of the Witwatersrand.

For(u)ming the future

The multitude of local forums that have sprung up over recent years have played an important role in establishing democracy in South Africa.

But do they have a place now that a democratic government has been installed?

SALEEM BADAT investigates.

SOUTH African democrats have been highly innovative in creating organisational vehicles for the decades-long struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist democracy. The period after February 1990 has been no exception: Democrats have drawn on their creativity and talents to establish a new form of organisation, the forum, as a means to deepen democracy.

As negotiation became the major instrument of national politics, social movements and civil society formations seized the opportunity for extending this process. Thus, alongside the Multi-Party Negotiating Process dealing with constitutional issues, national, regional and local forums mushroomed around areas such as the economy, housing, electricity, transport, local government, education and training, health and youth development.

In the main, the former National Party government was hostile to the idea that these forums should negotiate reconstruction. At best, while ostensibly open to forums, its conception of these bodies remained close to the toy telephone, reminiscent of the racial and ethnic advisory councils of grand apartheid.

By contrast, civil society formations such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African National Civic Organisation took the view that forums were much more than informal advisory and consultative bodies. Forums were mechanisms for ending unilateral restructuring by the government. They were the means to address crisis issues; to build agreement on core values, policy goals and frameworks; to negotiate the restructuring and reconstruction of social services; to extend decision- and policy-making processes to constituencies and stake holders directly affected by them.

The National Party was reluctant to concede such powers to forums, no matter how representative and inclusive they were. It was therefore not surprising that it often took a combination of mass action, vigorous persuasion and the intervention of the business sector in a broker's role for negotiating forums to establish effective functioning.

For example, the National Economic Forum resulted in part from the 1991 two-day general strike of 3,5 million people around an increase in Value Added Tax and the National Party government's unilateral economic restructuring. Similarly, the National Education and Training Forum was partly the result of a teachers' strike combined with militant demonstrations by students around examination fees during mid-1993.

Considerable time, human and financial resources have gone into forums. What they have achieved varies from forum to forum. By and large, forums have been least successful in relation to implementing programmes and delivering social services. They have been more successful in limiting unilateral restructuring by government.

Their greatest success was in contesting, and sometimes revising, the policies of the National Party government; securing information and data crucial for policy planning; and developing policy frameworks for reconstruction. They have also served as training grounds by exposing activists to the more technical aspects of governance, administration and delivery of social infrastructure and services. Finally, they have incorporated a much broader range of constituencies in policy deliberations, at the same time legitimising the involvement of civil society formations in decision- and policy-making processes.

The real value of forums may ultimately lie in their potential to contribute to institutionalising far more transparent, accountable, participatory and democratic modes of decision and policy making.

Despite this it is difficult to predict how they will develop and whether they will necessarily continue now that we have a democratically elected government. Much will depend on the positions adopted by civil society formations and the approach of the new government.

In very general terms, three scenarios can be envisaged:

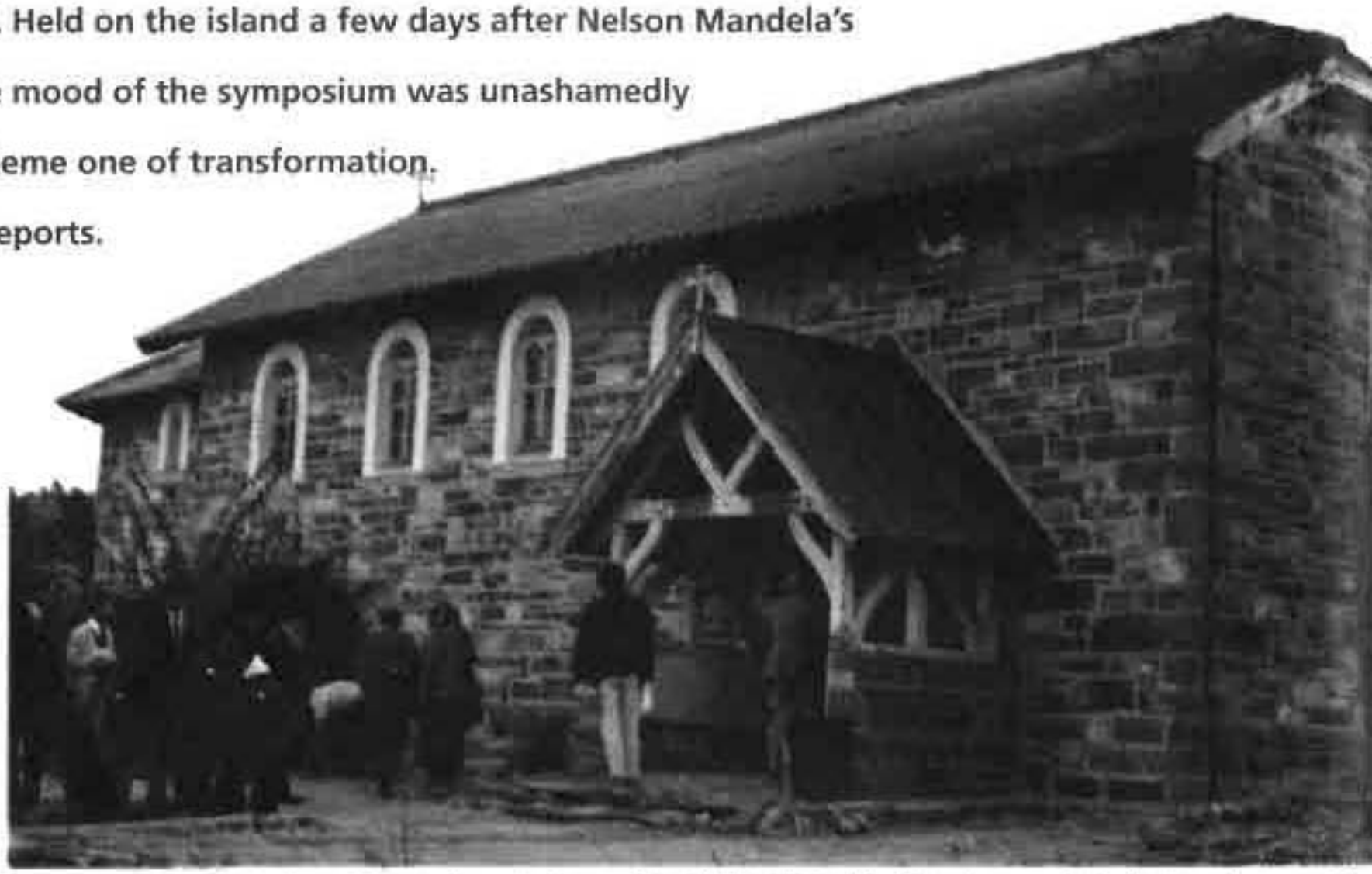
- Civil society formations accept that forums, in addition to providing a means to address issues and influence policy during the transition period, were essentially mechanisms for blocking unilateral restructuring by an illegitimate government. While mechanisms for broad participation in policy making are considered important, the role of forums is interpreted as ending with the installation of the democratically elected government.
- Civil society formations persuade the new government to make forums statutory bodies. In this scenario, forums could replace many of the existing, and often unrepresentative, statutory bodies such as the Housing Advisory Council and the Universities and Technikons Advisory Council. Whether the function of statutory forums would be advisory or would include a degree of autonomy or a policy role would be a matter for negotiation between forums and government.
- By agreement between government and forums, existing statutory bodies are reconstituted (and new ones created) as more representative and transparent structures. Forums continue to exist, but as advisory and consultative structures. The statutory bodies would be responsible for convening forums at regular intervals.

Although the new government is commited to broad participation, the size of statutory bodies is likely to be limited by considerations of efficiency, effectivity and cost. Forums have the advantage of being considerably broader-based than statutory bodies. They offer an opportunity for regular structured interaction between government, statutory bodies and constituencies. Most important, perhaps, they provide the possibility of holding both government and statutory bodies accountable and responsive to constituencies. ■

Saleem Badat is a senior researcher at the Education Policy Unit of the University of the Western Cape.

Island of pain,

Former prisoners were among participants in a recent symposium on the future of Robben Island. Held on the island a few days after Nelson Mandela's inauguration, the mood of the symposium was unashamedly emotional, the theme one of transformation. SUE VALENTINE reports.



SANCTUARY: Designed by Herbert Baker and built in 1895, this church served the leper colony on the island until 1931

"WE DO not want a shrine erected to the past which commemorates only the suffering and misery of prison life; we want a memorial which celebrates the triumph of the human spirit over injustice." According to Stellenbosch political scientist Amanda Gouws, this is the view of many former Robben Island prisoners on what should become of the island and its notorious prison.

It was also the prevailing sentiment of a symposium called "Robben Island: An investment for peace" organised by Peace Visions and held on Robben Island in mid-May. The aim of the symposium was to explore future options for the island; the mood, a few days after Nelson Mandela's inauguration, was unashamedly emotional.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu opened the proceedings with a tribute to the change taking place in the country. "There is a transformation – a transfiguration. How else does one explain the change in people where before they would shake their fists at an army helicopter flying overhead and now they cheer to the rafters or weep like children? Something has happened to us. We look at the same thing, but its reality has changed, its significance has changed."

The theme of transformation resonated throughout the day. There was a strong shared feeling among symposium participants that although the bleak, punitive conditions of the island prison should not be forgotten, it should also be remembered as an environment in which hope, vision and insight had been nurtured.

A feasibility study conducted on behalf of Peace Visions by Gouws showed much common ground on the island's future among the different interest groups surveyed. These included political parties, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), business interests, youth groups, the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA), the church and former political prisoners.

Most political parties agreed that the socio-political history of the island should be preserved and that it should become a museum and conference venue. The ANC saw the prison as an important element of the museum and the PAC supported limited tourism on the island as a means of raising funds. The PAC also wanted the international community involved and said the island should contribute to peace education for the entire human race. The Conservative Party wanted the island to remain state property, to serve as a military base and continue as a prison.

Former prisoners unanimously supported the preservation of the island's history. They specified that this should include the island's long-term history and not just its use as a political prison since the 1960s. They also spoke of the positive learning experience they had had as prisoners and wanted the educational role of the island to continue.

The CPA and department of Nature Conservation outlined a four-tier management plan for the island covering the physical environment, the cultural/historical legacy, marine conservation and tourism.

island of hope

ON THE BOAT: Luyanda Ka-Msumza of the Quaker Peace Centre travels to the island with former prisoner Walter Sisulu.

HEAD TO HEAD: Cabinet minister Kader Asmal chats to Colonel H A G de Beer, Officer Commanding Robben Island prison.

Despite several attempts, Gouws was unable to get permission to consult prison and other officials who are resident on Robben Island on how they saw the island's future.

NGOs consulted agreed that the island should be used as a museum, conference centre, library and archive. The African Community Theatre Service suggested that an amphitheatre should be built on the island for drama and music performances.

The Anglican Church, the only landowner on the island besides the state, said it was committed to developing the healing potential of the island, for example by building a retreat for contemplation where humanity and identity could be rediscovered. The concept of peace should also be contextualised within African culture, celebrating, for example, the notion of *ubuntu*.

The Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture at the University of the Western Cape favoured an integrated management and development plan which involved a range of NGOs and non-partisan groups. There should be a balance between conservation (both historical and ecological), tourism and development. Former prisoners should be given special consideration for jobs that might be created in the process.

All groups consulted were opposed to commercialisation of the island, although they accepted limited tourism that would not disturb the ecology and that would be educational and help make the island accessible.

Delegates agreed that the way forward was for a national working group, headed by Peace Visions, to initiate widespread consultation on the future of the island. ■

Fikele Bam

'A jewel out of ugliness'

THE symposium on Robben Island took place almost 20 years to the day after Eastern Cape advocate Fikele Bam was released from imprisonment there. It was the first time he had returned since 1974, and delegates listened spellbound as he remembered prison life and what it had meant for him.

"Coming here isn't as painful for me as going away from the island was when my time came to leave. It is the act of moving away from your friends, people whom you've come to love, no matter what the circumstances, that is more difficult. Not only are you leaving a band of people for whom you have developed respect and love over a period of time, but you are going to an uncertain world.

"A lot of people who left the island would have survived if they had been kept here. I think of Griffiths Mxenge and a lot of other people from the Transkei and all over, where there were these tyrants who were just ready, as the people came out of the island, to assassinate them and to make sure that they didn't have an input to make. I think all our respect goes to those people who could not see the celebrations that have taken place over the last few days.

"This piece of land on which we are standing today is holy land, it is a place to be venerated. It is the coal-face which received all the tears, which received all the sweat and all the blood and all the cries of the people who were fighting for freedom, for all the things that were realised to some extent by the jubilations which we witnessed a few days ago.

"People came here from all over the country, some as young as 15 and 16, some approaching their 70s. They came from all walks of life and this is also important. It wasn't only the Mandelas and Sisulus that you read about who were here.

"Because of all the things that happened on the island, it is an experience one never regrets, despite the losses – and make no mistake, you do lose time when you are in prison because prison is repetitive and it is a waste of time.

"What this conference is really about is to say that we are trying to transform an ugly experience into something positive. Through adversity we actually reach hope, through adversity we reach peace. We are trying to look for that jewel out of the ugliness of the situation.

"Even while we were here, the seed was being laid down for this positive side of things. Not all warders were bad. We discovered, and so did they, that they had a humanity, they discovered we had a humanity.

"Some people would say that in trying to change the image of Robben Island it should not be the victims who take the initiative. I agree with this, but with a big qualification: in the process of trying to heal and trying to reconcile, we also have to be gracious and trusting. We also have to deal with people – even those whom we believe were in the wrong – with a kind of decency." ■

Courting justice

Intense speculation surroun

Constitutional Court. Equal

Sky's the limit for powerful new body

ONE of the major items on the agenda as the euphoria of South Africa's first democratic election gives way to the challenge of reconstruction is the appointment of the 11 members of the country's first Constitutional Court. Able to overrule both legislation passed by the new parliament and executive acts of the new government, the court will be the most powerful body in the land – accountable only to the interim Constitution and the consciences of its members. The question is: Who can be trusted to wield this power?

Albie Sachs, director of the South African Constitutional Study Centre at the University of the Western Cape and former member of the ANC's Constitutional Committee, believes there are more than enough people of the necessary high character and expertise. "We've got lots of wonderful constitutional experts in this country and I think we could have two or three courts of the greatest calibre."

A possible appointee himself, Sachs has been the target of sharp criticism from some members of the legal community offended by what they construed as a public announcement of his candidacy for the court. He laughs when asked to respond.

"I wrote a piece for the *Weekly Mail & Guardian* in response to literally scores of people who have stopped me in the streets, in airplanes, expressing their disappointment at a statement I made that I was retiring from politics. People would intimate that they felt let down. The piece had nothing to do with the court. I wanted to convey that I wasn't cynical or disappointed with politics, but eager for a fresh start, wherever it might lead. We can so easily become hacks.

"One reason I opted out of the possibility of a parliamentary career was that I didn't enjoy the jockeying that seemed to go with it. Now it seems there is as much jockeying in the judicial sphere! I think it is most unfortunate. We need to have a fresh start and to encourage the new institutions to launch themselves in the spirit of dignity and respect. No one knows where he or she is going to end up these days. I certainly don't. What matters is that we have a new Constitution and that at last everyone has a chance to be considered on his or her merits."

But is it in fact an appointment he would like? "What lawyer wouldn't love to be on the Constitutional Court?" he replies.

The rest of the interview follows in a question and answer format.

What does it mean for the people of South Africa to have the interim Constitution as the supreme law of the land?

It's a huge achievement. It's our independence as a nation. It's the guarantee of common citizenship, equal rights and freedom. It's also compact between all the major forces in South African society t accept certain basic common principles. Disagreement there will alway be – it's part of the life of a nation, but the conflict will be in th framework of agreed rules that protect the fundamental rights e everybody.

What are the strengths of the interim Constitution?

It is based on universally accepted principles that have worked elsi where in the world. It's also a negotiated document that corresponds t the realities of our own country and reflects the hopes and fears of th overwhelming majority of South Africans. It is technically strong, eve if inelegant. Our country has too many soldiers and too many lawye but sometimes it's good to have too many lawyers.

What are its weaknesses?

Well, its weaknesses come from its strengths in that it is interim. It has vast amount of detail on questions that hopefully will soon disappea and insufficient precision on important questions. It's really a constitu tion for getting a constitution. There's no clear inner logic and the lan guage at times is inelegant but that's not inappropriate to an interi constitution. Time will show which are the loopholes and inconsisten cies. It lacks the ringing preamble of a final constitution – but the consti tution shouldn't peak too soon.

Does Chapter 3 of the interim Constitution dealing with funda mental rights apply only to relations between the state and citi zens or also to relations between citizens?

In the first place it applies between the state and citizens and guarantee citizens protection against abusive behaviour by the state. But the court have to take into account the spirit and the letter of the Constitution i developing the common law and interpreting statutes. So, for example the question of public policy is sometimes relevant to the law of con tract – that is between private individuals, and a contract that clearl violated fundamental rights, for example, by imposing racial discrimina tion, could be held to be unlawful.

If you had carte blanche in reshaping the final constitution, how would it differ from the interim version?

The interim Constitution starts on a flat note and ends on a ringing one I think it should start and end with fine and appropriate language tha

nminent app

e are processes of lobbying and jockeying for position behind the scenes.

Given the immense power the court will wield as guardian of the new democratic order, the call for a transparent appointment process involving public hearings is compelling. SHAUNA WESTCOTT explored the issues with constitutional expert Albie Sachs.

honours the achievement of South Africans in getting this far and declares the basic principles that should guide us into the future.

I think the institutional side should be reviewed to see how all the elements integrate, but I wouldn't anticipate major structural changes. The elements dealing with the government of national unity (GNU) would have to be reviewed and probably we would end up with a single prime minister instead of two deputy presidents. In other words, the concept of forced coalition, which corresponds to the present transitional phase, will give way to voluntary coalitions.

The electoral system I would say should try to find some way of making at least a portion of the MPs more directly accountable to constituents. I think we should avoid small single-member constituencies because in South African conditions these would tie in with racial group areas and give rise to endless disputes about constituency boundaries. But we could have multi-member constituencies. For example, Cape Town could be divided into three electoral zones, each with five MPs.

A lot of detail will have to be filled in in relation to the powers and functions of the provinces and of local government. But I think the fundamental format in the interim Constitution, which in general terms corresponds to the Constitutional Principles, will be largely maintained.

ALBIE SACHS: 'Not cynical or disappointed with politics.'

Picture: JANET LEVY

How is the interim Constitution likely to change to accommodate volkstaters, on the one hand, and the Zulu/Inkatha agenda, on the other hand?

As far as the volkstaat is concerned, the last Constitutional Principle lays down a procedure that has to be followed. What's important here is honest endeavour and realism, and then an appropriate solution can be found. In the case of the Inkatha Freedom Party, the IFP, together with other parties, has committed itself to functioning within the framework of the interim Constitution while seeking to argue for changes in the final constitution. It might well be that the whole question of federalism will be looked at in a less partisan way now that the election is over.

Is it correct that the Constitutional Court will be able to overturn Acts passed by the National Assembly?
Yes. In fact one-third of the MPs can petition the court to declare an Act invalid before it's finally promulgated. And after it's been adopted the lower courts can suspend proceedings where the validity of an Act is in question and refer the matter to the Constitutional Court. As they say in Germany, above the Constitutional Court there is only the blue sky. It is a very powerful body with a very heavy responsibility.

How will the Constitutional Court be accountable?
Well, it's accountable to the Constitution and the consciences of its members. It has to be independent. Clearly, as in other countries, the press, the public and parliament will comment on its decisions and I can think of at least one professor who will find most of its decisions appalling! If he's not on the court! That's as it should be.

Given the possible flood of applications to the Constitutional Court, how will a Bench of 11 persons cope?
The question of sorting out petitions and applications, grouping them and prioritising them, occupies constitutional courts throughout the world. A group of us who visited the German Constitutional Court were shocked to find that of the 4 000 cases submitted to that court each year, 98 percent are rejected. But the reason for this is that over 90 percent have already been heard by the ordinary courts and there's no specific constitutional question that needs specific determination.

If this approach is adopted in South Africa, then all the ordinary questions of whether or not officials have behaved in a constitutional manner will be heard by the ordinary courts and the Constitutional Court will focus on questions of principle. The constitutional courts in Europe tend to give what they call norm control to the constitutional court and control of conduct to the ordinary courts. Clearly, the new South African Constitutional Court will have to study the provisions of the interim Constitution and, in liaison with the other courts, work out procedures that would enable it to carry out its responsibilities.

What is your opinion of the recent ruling by Justice Lewis Goldblatt that only the Constitutional Court can rule on the validity of Acts of parliament?
I would need to see the full judgment before making any comment. There are going to be many applications brought and various issues raised and they must be looked at in a calm and systematic way. Other countries have solved them. I don't see why we shouldn't.

Should there be public hearings in the selection process for the Constitutional Court?
Definitely, because our society has been too divided and there's too much secret decision making. The Judicial Services Commission should have a chance to see and to question candidates in public view.

Do you think potential judges should be asked if they've ever smoked dagga?
Some people would say that you shouldn't be on the Bench if you haven't smoked dagga, whether you've inhaled or not. I would rather not comment save to say that these trivial questions are not the ones that should really be asked.

How seriously can we take the constitutional commitment to non-sexism in view of the derisory number of women appointed to the cabinet?
I think we have to build on what has been achieved. The women appointed to the cabinet are both strong personalities who should make a good contribution to government. There are over 70 women on the ANC benches alone in the National Assembly. Many of them are brilliant and should make a major impact on parliamentary debates and be the core of many future cabinet ministers.

What is your view on the enormous salaries being paid to MPs, ministers and transitional bureaucrats of all kinds?
The transitional bureaucrats had to be guaranteed their salaries otherwise they could have resisted and sabotaged elections and the whole democratic process. MPs need a good salary so they can work full time and to reduce the temptations of corruption. It is particularly those from poor backgrounds who need these salaries.

As far as the top salaries are concerned, they are only a proposal from Judge Melamet and it remains to be seen if the president and cabinet ministers accept less. I personally hope they do, since this would be a wonderful signal to the country.

Can we afford to pay these salaries and build a better life for all, particularly in view of the R60-billion national debt?
If you add up the salaries themselves the amounts are not enormous in relation to total public expenditure. The problem is that they set standards for hundreds of thousands of officials at various levels of government. One has to balance out the symbolic importance of cutting down, as against the real needs of parliamentarians, as against salary scales in the private sector. We want the best people to make themselves available for public service.

'I think we have the chance of a brilliant court, embodying the best of multiple legal and philosophical traditions in this country.'

If you were appointed to the Constitutional Court, what would your vision of your role be? What would be your hopes and goals?
They would be the same as they will be if I'm not appointed to the court. I think we have the chance of a brilliant court, embodying the best of multiple legal and philosophical traditions in this country and, by conducting itself in a wise, fair, articulate, balanced, realistic and principled way, it can serve as a model of reconciliation.

The key adjective is principled. Its function will be to defend the core values of the new society and to develop a continuity of principled positions which are not affected by the hurly-burly of daily political conflict. I've often said that I long for the day when some drunk being pushed into the police station says "I demand my conshishushional rights!" We want a country where everybody demands their constitutional rights, with the assurance they will get them.

What are your feelings in the wake of the election and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela?
It has been a wonderful vindication of our belief in democracy and in the capacity of South African people to work together to solve our common problems. At a personal level, it justifies everything, everything. I said that if we got peace and democracy, then roses and lilies would grow out of my arm. I had a look after the inauguration and my arm was the same – but the roses and lilies are in the smiles of people everywhere. ■

Food for thought in Hungary

A team of South African lawyers and judges who recently visited the Hungarian Constitutional Court found many lessons for South Africa. CHRISTINA MURRAY reports.

HUNGARY has a young Constitutional Court entrusted with implementing an equally young Bill of Rights and watching over the government of a society in transition. Clearly it has much in common with South Africa's soon to be appointed Constitutional Court. Nevertheless, when I announced to colleagues in the Law Faculty at the University of Cape Town (UCT) that I was to take a week off to visit the court in Budapest, some eyebrows were raised.

Certainly, there are significant differences between the two countries and their legal systems, and the language barrier makes it impossible for most South Africans to get to grips with the details of Hungarian constitutional jurisprudence. Nevertheless, the week spent immersed in Hungarian constitutional law and procedure was fascinating – and immensely valuable.

The trip was arranged by Idasa and took place at the end of March. The group of South Africans, who went as guests of George Soros's Open Society Foundation, consisted of two judges, Laurie Ackermann and John Didcott; three academics, Gerhard Erasmus from the University of Stellenbosch, Albie Sachs who holds honorary professorships at UCT and the University of the Western Cape, and myself; and a practising lawyer, Pius Langa, from the Durban Bar.

South Africans are just coming to realise what a radically new constitutional dispensation the 1993 Constitution introduces. Not only does it establish the first democratic legislature in our history but it also commits us to government under the Constitution. The new legislature and executive, like their counterparts in many other democratic countries, are constrained by the Constitution and, most importantly, by the values incorporated in the Bill of Rights. The Constitutional Court will have the critical job of ensuring that constitutional values are respected.

PENSIVE PIUS: Durban advocate Pius Langa poses against the skyline of Budapest.

LEGAL TEAM: South African legal eagles take time out with some of their hosts, from left, Christina Murray, the president of the Hungarian Constitutional Court, Pius Langa, Gerhard Erasmus, a judge of the Hungarian Constitutional Court, Laurie Ackermann, Albie Sachs and John Didcott.

South Africa and its new court face some difficult issues in the near future. Press speculation about likely Constitutional Court judges emphasises the political nature of the court. This is confirmed by the briefest consideration of the kind of issues it is likely to face early in its existence: abortion, the death penalty, the power of provincial legislatures, and the extent of police powers in investigating crimes and securing convictions, for instance.

No law is neutral, but many of the matters destined for this court are overtly political. Moreover, the Bill of Rights does not determine the way the court should resolve cases in which there is a conflict of rights, nor does it give more than very vague guidance on the manner in which it should be interpreted.

The Hungarian Court was established in 1989 and its first judges elected by Parliament in 1990. Most of the present nine judges were university professors before they were appointed to the court and most still teach a few days a week. They are all men.

The political role we predict for the South African Constitutional Court is a reality in Hungary. Every one of the Hungarian judges that we met emphasised the sensitivity of the court's role in guiding the country through its period of transition. Very early in its life the court dealt with the death penalty, difficult property cases, and abortion. In interpreting the Constitution, it was thrown into the centre of a dispute about the separation of powers.

Judges themselves characterised their role as guiding the country through the transition. One practical consequence of this is that they avoid divided decisions and, although dissenting judgments are occasionally delivered, they prefer to adopt a compromise position than to hand down a decision which reflects division.

The court is also alert to the fact that it can easily be drawn into disputes better resolved in the political arena. As a result it has effectively nullified its constitutional right to determine the constitutionality of a Bill *before* it is passed by parliament, recognising that this process was being used by minorities in parliament to interfere with democratic decision making.

While the judges emphasised that they were at pains to deal with the problems that they confronted in legal terms, providing clear, logical legal argument to back up decisions, the Speaker of Parliament reminded us of the highly political role of that court. Every move that the court makes, he said, is perceived as political. For instance, he claimed, decisions concerning which cases will be heard first are entirely political.

The court's quest to protect fledgeling democratic institutions may sometimes seem to backfire. Thus, in an important and controversial case about state control of the media, the court argued that "a legal vacuum is worse than an unconstitutional law" and stopped short of declaring legislation controlling the media unconstitutional. Instead the court demanded that it be amended by the legislature. At the end of March, about a month before elections, the challenged legislation was still in place.

In addition, the court's recognition of the important role it has been given in the process of transition has not simply led to a "legalisation of politics". It has also provided the basis for the provocative assertion that it is the role of the Constitutional Court to create what it terms an "invisible constitution" which is above the present constitution. This self-proclaimed role, as protector of constitutionality itself, is justified by some judges on the grounds that the present constitution was adopted through a process of negotiation in which no party had political legitimacy and that it is intended to be temporary.

Albie Sachs has documented his impressions of the trip and provides more detailed information on the operation of the Hungarian Court in a publication of the South African Constitutional Studies Centre, University of the Western Cape, entitled "Visit to the Constitutional Courts of Germany and Hungary" (April 1994).

The notion of the "invisible constitution" and the court's related protection of legal certainty led to one of its most controversial decisions, the "retroactivity case". This case concerned legislation which made crimes committed during and after the 1956 revolt punishable, although the Hungarian Statute of Limitations provides that offences cannot be tried more than 20 years after their commission. The court ruled that, although it was unjust to allow criminals to go unpunished, the law infringed the principle of legal certainty and was therefore unconstitutional.

Although our judges might do well to avoid a decision such as the one in the "retroactivity case" and the rather sweeping terms in which the Hungarian judges claimed authority over an "unwritten" constitution, this debate and the judges' discussion of their role in interpreting the Constitution will be repeated here. Like the Hungarian Bill of Rights, our Bill of Rights does not provide direct answers to the many questions that will come before the courts. As our judges deal with these questions, rank rights and develop methods of interpretation, they will also be contributing to the development of the constitutional framework within which South Africa will be governed in the future.

The Hungarian Constitutional Court prides itself on being accessible to all Hungarians. A provision very similar to one contained in our Bill of Rights entitles anyone to challenge the constitutionality of legislation before the court. As a result it receives thousands of petitions every year. We were told – by Hungarians – that Hungarians are complainers, but whether or not this is the case, the volume of complaints is evidence of the accessibility of the court to the public.

In another way, to those accustomed to courts in the Anglo-American mould, the court is very inaccessible. Proceedings are held behind closed doors and cases are seldom actually argued. Instead, the issues are researched by the judges' legal advisers and decisions taken after consideration of comparable cases from many jurisdictions. Although members of government and, even more rarely, members of interested groups, may occasionally be asked to address the Bench, the court is not keen on the practice. Judges point out that the court is concerned with abstract issues only, which do not need further argument, and, the president of the court adds, where parties are permitted time to argue they usually merely rehearse well-known political positions.

This absence of any real argument before the court reflects one of the major differences between our system and the Hungarian one. We consider argument an essential part of legal decision making, which could not be replaced by research by judges' clerks. If we are to learn from our North American counterparts, moreover, we will not limit appearances to the immediate parties to cases but will encourage other interest groups to intervene as well, thus ensuring that the court is fully informed of the possible range of arguments and the social consequences of decisions before it reaches one.

In these, and many other ways, the practices and experiences of the Hungarian Constitutional Court provide food for thought for South Africans. But the value of the trip was not restricted to our many meetings with Hungarians. Over steaming goulash and noodles spiced with fresh paprika, over long cool glasses of Urquell Pils, overlooking the Danube, and often interrupted by 1950s melodies supplied by the two judges in our group, we discussed incessantly the implications of what we were hearing for South Africa.

I learnt at least as much from conversation with my fellow travellers as from our hosts, and for this reason too the trip was extremely valuable to me. ■

Christina Murray is an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Law at UCT.

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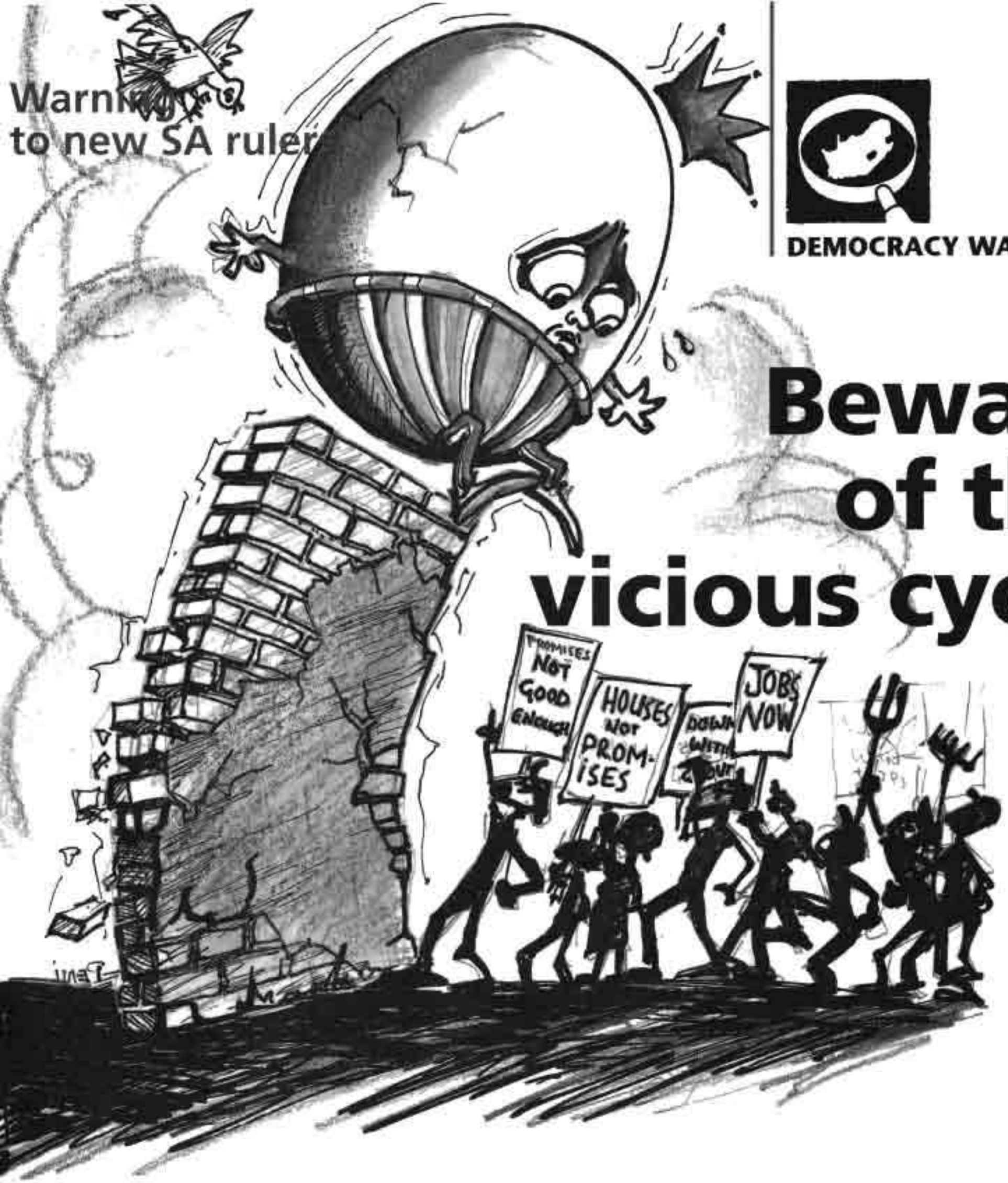


DEMOCRACY WATCH

Beware of the vicious cycle

An age-old nursery rhyme warns against the potential of leaders to suffer great falls from power. VINCENT WILLIAMS puts the Humpty Dumpty syndrome in a South African context.

AS SOUTH Africa basks in the euphoria of hard-won democracy, international commentators warn of a "vicious cycle" whereby many countries have seen their burgeoning democracies nipped in the bud by the re-emergence of dictatorships run by the military or other powerful groups.

Commentators add that it is not uncommon for the military to hand over power to an elected civilian government only to take over power again a few years later. This process was described as a "vicious cycle of convocation, transition, suspension and reorganisation" by a participant at a recent conference in Sintra, Portugal, where 16 countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and eastern Europe were represented in discussions on transitions to democracy.

The conference heard that the key factor behind the cyclical swings from military to civilian rule was that neither group could maintain political legitimacy for any length of time because of their failure to effectively address social and economic problems.

Of great interest to South Africa's new rulers will be the combination of factors that

In South Africa, we have the example of the kingdom of KwaZulu which has raised the question of whether a monarchy can be accommodated in a democracy. For most people living in KwaZulu/Natal, the king represents an enormous sense of national pride, irrespective of his subjects' political allegiance.

can apparently break this vicious cycle – a balanced triangle in which the power of the country's leader, politicians and citizenry are held in careful tension.

In scrutinising how democracy is won or lost, conference participants noted that the conditions acting as the catalyst for democratisation are often the same as those leading to its collapse – social and economic disintegration, a disgruntled civil society and a government which has lost control. It is ironic that when such conditions are present in an emerging democracy the intervention of the military or other powerful interest groups is often welcomed, since they are perceived to be ushering in a new era of social, political and economic stability. At this point, it is crucial that the new government is able to sustain itself at a political level while attempting to address social and economic problems.

Throughout history there are examples of political systems that have gravitated from one end of the spectrum to the other, and back again. Monarchs have turned into tyrants, to be replaced by governments made up of the aristocracy when tyranny could no longer be tolerated. Such governments by the aristocracy have turned into oligarchies (government by a few) intent on preserving their own interests. These too have been overthrown by popular revolt, ushering in more democratic forms of government.

But rule by the people has often degenerated into anarchy, resolvable only by the emergence of a powerful individual. This person subsequently becomes their new ruler, but in struggling to meet the demands of the people becomes increasingly tyrannical until replaced by a group (the aristocracy) claiming to be more representative of the people, and so the cycle continues.

In 20th century history the players have changed somewhat and the cycle is usually limited to a roundabout between a civilian government and the military or some equally powerful interest group. But the cycle remains the same – military or civilian dictatorship followed by an elected government which is usually either overthrown by the military or effectively replaced by a powerful individual.

However, each of these players bring with them particular elements which appear to be necessary for democracy to survive.

In the case of the benevolent monarch, there exists a powerful unifying symbol which provides a basis for common allegiance. A government by the aristocracy entails a group of people who, though they obviously want personal power and esteem, also have the capacity to govern in the interests of the common people. A broader-based democracy which encourages the participation of ordinary people gives the citizen a chance to make his or her voice heard in the affairs of the nation. But none of these on its own is sufficient for the continuation of a stable (democratic) political system.

A combination of the forces of leader, politicians and the people seems to provide a solution to the problem of the vicious cycle.

At one corner of the triangle one needs a well-respected leader who can act as a national unifying symbol. Necessary in the second corner is a class of professional politicians whose task it is to both keep the power of the national leader in check and to speak on behalf of the citizenry. At the third corner are mechanisms and procedures to enable the citizenry to participate actively in the affairs of the nation.

Most Western democracies are in fact structured more or less according to the above principles. A monarch, as is the case in Britain, or a national president acts as the nominal head of state and works with a cabinet and national assembly. Within these corridors of power there is a system of checks and balances. The national head of state usually requires the approval of at least the cabinet (or whatever form this structure may take), and sometimes also the national assembly or equivalent, before any major decisions become law.

In South Africa, we have the example of the kingdom of KwaZulu which has raised the question of whether a monarchy can be accommodated in a democracy. For most people living in KwaZulu/Natal, the king represents an enormous sense of national pride, irrespective of his subjects' political allegiance. It is exactly this factor which came into play when Chief Buthelezi put forward his demands during the run-up to the election. Failure to accommodate the king would have had catastrophic consequences for democracy in the region.

One cannot underestimate the symbolic significance of a powerful head of state, be this a monarch or president, who exercises real political power and is also indirectly accountable to the electorate. It is often this figure who provides the necessary legitimacy for political processes to continue, as was the case with the election in KwaZulu/Natal.

However, it is exactly in this area that most emerging democracies falter. Political legitimacy depends to a large extent on the will of the electorate to accept that there will be no immediate social and economic improvements. Few countries in Africa, Asia, eastern Europe and Latin America have produced charismatic leaders with the ability to foster the patience of the electorate and to engage in the politics of consensus.

At the same time, political legitimacy is not entirely dependent on the ruling party or charismatic leader, but has to be institutionalised. This may take time, and it is during this stage that the possibility of a return to a dictatorship emerges.

Perhaps we in South Africa have learnt a few lessons from the rest of the world. Several factors bode well for the legitimacy of the new government: the inclusive nature of the multi-party negotiations process and of the government of national unity; the principle of consensus during negotiations, a principle that will apply in turn to the government of national unity; the charisma and leadership style of President Nelson Mandela; and the willingness of the other political leaders to accept the due process of democracy.

Significantly, the structures of government at all levels reflect the spirit of consensus and co-operation which is required to sustain democracy. It is this spirit which has to be transferred to the electorate as a whole, and particularly to those interest groups which may feel that they have lost out, if we wish to prevent an occurrence of the "vicious cycle" in South Africa. ■

Vincent Williams is National Systems Manager for Idasa.

DIARY

highlights of forthcoming events
organised by Idasa offices

Training Centre for Democracy

A CONFERENCE-cum-workshop-cum-think-tank will be held in East London from 6 to 8 July. The conference will be co-hosted by the Institute for Human Resource Development.

The aim of the conference is to bring managers of education together to develop a set of guiding principles and to come to terms with the process of transformation in schools. Managers of education are defined as principals, inspectors, directors of educational institutions, rectors of colleges, chairpersons of school governing bodies and parent-teacher-student associations.

The conference will be held at the Teacher Training Centre in Stirling.

For further information contact Nokuzola Moiloa at the Training Centre for Democracy at (011) 484-3694, or Gideon Sam at the Institute for Human Resource Development at (0431) 35-4043.

Natal

THE Natal office will be hosting a civil society summit where the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme will be discussed.

For further information contact Jane Argall at (031) 304-8893.

Western Cape

THE Western Cape office will continue its civic dialogue programme this month.

A workshop looking at the relationship of local civics and ratepayers' and residents' associations to changing local government structures will be held on 7 June from 7pm to 9.30pm at the Southfield Civic Centre.

All civic organisations in the Southern Suburbs area are invited to attend. The workshop hopes to explore common issues and reach a common understanding of local government.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop should contact Sumaya at (021) 47-1280.

Port Elizabeth

A CROSS-CULTURAL bridging workshop will be held from to 8 July. The workshop is being organised jointly with the Early Learning Resource Unit.

Julian Sonn will facilitate the workshop, which will be held at the Humewood Hotel.

For further information contact Sandy Wren at (041) 55-3301.

Telling observations across SA

THE election is over, much of the post-mortem completed, but the experience lives on in the consciousness of millions of South Africans. It lives on also in the reports of a particularly privileged group of people who saw the whole event at close range: the many observers deployed by international and domestic organisations.

Idasa deployed a total of 54 observer teams in over 60 districts. They visited more than 750 voting stations (about nine percent of all the stations), and only in the Northern Transvaal were there no Idasa teams.

The teams had been instructed that their role was to "safeguard the election by their calm and confident presence; assist in validating the result by measured and objective assessment, and promote the conduct of future democratic elections by contributing to the evaluation of the electoral process".

Prepared for the worst by the right-wing bombings that took place on the eve of the election, they discovered only the best, as South Africans began to queue to vote.

Observers completed reports on every voting station visited and the overwhelming impression they give is of an election which, despite serious problems, was free and fair, as a result of the majority of people working together to make it so.

This is the kind of detail contained in the reports:

- The sealing of the ballot boxes and the closing of the voting station was delayed because the officials went outside to sing hymns and Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika (CJC Burrell Hall, Doringbaai, Vredendal District).
- The voting station was small and cramped and directly opposite two liquor stores. Not helpful! (Lambertsbaai Library Hall, Clanwilliam District).
- We're all alive and exhausted – have travelled 1 500 km so far (Prieska Hotel).
- The station opened at 7am and there were no disruptions or delays except for the bomb threat the previous day. Things were normalised by the bomb squad (Deelpan School, Dewetsdorp District).
- For the duration of our visit there were no voters visible (12.30pm, Day 2, Noordmanville, Trompburg District).
- Disruption: [outgoing President F W] De Klerk's arrival (Arcadia Primary School, Pretoria District).
- This small town station had white tablecloths on tables, and flowers, like a tea party (De Beer Primary School, Welverdiend, Oberholzer District).

HATS OFF TO OBSERVERS: Idasa observers (from left) Brett House, Justin Long, Lindiwe Kulu, Noel van Breda, Debbie Davy, Shireen Badat and Siviwe Minye.

DIRECTING: Idasa executive director Alex Boraine on the first day of the elections.

Observers were instructed not to intervene at all during the electoral process. However, as the only outsiders with training and a perspective on the bigger picture, they were regularly called upon for advice.

The lessons they learned about elections and the role of observers are being collated into an extended report.

Of course it is history that the count did not proceed smoothly. Some of our observers found that the lack of preparedness among what might be called "middle management" endangered all that was achieved by hard-working officials at the lowest end of the pyramid.

The similarity of problems around the country was striking. Regularly reported were problems relating to the security of ballot boxes, lack of support from district level IEC officials for voting staff, shortages of voting materials and uncertainty about special voting arrangements.

Striking also was the fact that so many observers reported positively on the quality and commitment of presiding officers and their staff, and the resilience and commitment of voters and party agents.

The observers played an important role in maintaining a climate for peace during the election. They came back from their task overwhelmed by the extraordinary role which ordinary citizens had played in making sure the elections were free and fair.

Paul Graham
Director, Training Centre for Democracy

Our cup of tea

IT WAS a chilly Thursday morning as we drove with trepidation through the dusty streets of Ladybrand; our destination, the Alpha Estate Farm; our mission, voter education. We had all heard tales about the temperament of farmers. Veldskoene and heavy boots with a penchant for being placed on people's faces – these were prospects which did not in the least amuse any of us.

Upon arrival we settled down with our equipment to start the day's business. About 180 farm workers were gathered to hear the "gospel" of voter education. We noticed an interesting contingent of farmers in the audience. Were they there to monitor our workshop? To ensure that we didn't go beyond this farm with our mission? "We shall see," we boldly declared to ourselves.

The workshop ran its course without incident. The farm workers asked about the secrecy of the vote, intimidation, literacy and other more general questions relating to elections. Workers were concerned particularly about the possibility of being victimised by their employers. Some were frightened to cast a vote they feared might cost them their livelihood.

After the questions we realised that people were confident about the poll. We felt that farmers and workers had realised the importance of the process and that the fears expressed earlier had evaporated. We then thanked everyone who attended and wished them "happy voting".

To our surprise we were invited for a cup of tea by the farmer, and a very lively discussion ensued between ourselves and all the farmers who had brought their workers for the session. As we left the farm, our earlier prejudices were something of the past, and we could not resist the feeling: we can do business with these people in future.

Noby Ngombane
Regional Co-ordinator
Free State

Tokoloshe, rap and high energy all in a day's work

BY THE time the Electoral Act was passed, Idasa was well into its voter education programme. Not only did the voter education team train voter educators, but we reached over 8 000 people directly. By the beginning of February 1994 we were inundated with requests for voter education from companies and organisations, including Old Mutual, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, Southern Life, Engen, Lonhro, PAC, Civilian Blind Society, Anchor Yeast and many others. To help us meet this need we contacted six freelancers, to whom we will be forever grateful.

In all our voter education workshops we found both positive and negative feelings about the coming election. People's concerns included the escalating violence gripping the country, the right-wing threat, loss of houses and jobs after the election, obtaining ID documents in time and whether the new government would be able to deliver the goods.

We tried to respond to most of these, but isolated two issues of grave concern. Firstly we needed to address the high expectations of people who hoped for houses and jobs immediately after the election. Secondly, many participants were concerned about the future of coloured people when a black government came to power. We needed to allay these fears and affirm each person's role after the election.

Despite these fears, there was always an atmosphere of excitement and energy during voter education workshops. Participants expressed great joy at the chance to vote for the first time for the government of their choice.

Idasa was trusted for its non-partisan approach and professional voter education package, and was well received by all groups, including political parties who approached us for advice. Participants knew we were interested in their learning and growth and were not trying to win a quick vote. Our non-partisan position enabled us to speak freely and to convey information sincerely, without having to justify party political positions and decisions.

A central theme of our voter education was to emphasise the secrecy of the vote. This concept was challenged by people who firmly believed, for example, that the *tokoloshe* would know who they voted for and would tell someone who might then harm the voter.

We could not counter these beliefs merely by dismissing them. We needed to approach people with sensitivity and openness. We found that the only workable response to the *tokoloshe* question was to affirm its presence on voting day, but point out that it too had sworn an oath of secrecy, just like all the other election officials. Although the *tokoloshe* might know who voted for whom, it would not tell anyone.

The proliferation of small parties was another factor that confused a number of potential voters. At one of the mock elections we held on a farm in Prins Albert, a woman stood behind the ballot booth for a long time, pondering her choice. After a while, with a look of bitter disappointment on her face, she called me ("the presiding officer") and a monitor and asked why the POC was not on the ballot sheet. She wanted to vote for this party and no one else. Confused, I asked her what the acronym stood for. Astonished, she replied: "What! Don't you know the POC? Man, it's that rap group every morning on the radio!" So the Prophets of the City have a fan in the rural Karoo!

Widespread excitement about voting for the first time provided some unexpected challenges to voter educators. Weary and exhausted on 14 December 1993, I was packing up my voting materials after a three-hour workshop at a medi-clinic in town when three people came running up the stairs and burst into the hospital ward. Excited expressions changed to confusion when they saw me heading for the door.

In one voice they said: "We came to vote, we want to vote now." I explained that the workshop was over, but that the others who had attended the session would share the relevant information. But the three became angry and demanded to vote. They formed a semi-circle around me and prevented me from leaving. This was my third workshop of the day, and I took a while to register that they thought it was election day. We sat down and after an hour of "deliberations and negotiations" my three besiegers apologised for their behaviour and left, saying "see you on 27 April".

I had a similar experience in Oudtshoorn where we ran a mock election for 85 illiterate voters. One woman waiting patiently behind the ballot booth called for assistance from the "presiding officer" and monitors. She wanted to know if the voting was for real. When we explained that it was only a mock election, she started to cry and said: "mister, I don't know where to place my cross. I only know that I don't want to vote for the whites."

For us as voter educators this was not an example of racism. The woman's anguish was about her desire to participate actively in her own future, and not allow people who were not democratically elected to determine her life.

Unfortunately, we also encountered many stories of intimidation. People were bribed with money or threatened with losing their jobs if they did not vote for a particular political party. Some were afraid of gangsters, some of farmers, and some were afraid of extremely autocratic spouses.

However, fear did not deter people from attending our voter education programmes, even in areas where the level of intimidation was very high. There was great interest in the election process, and how to prepare for election day.

We learned so much from the participants and met so many from all walks of life. We got in touch with their and our own fears, concerns, pain and laughter. On April 27 and 28 we saw our hard work come to fruition. A big thank you to all.

Charles Erasmus
Regional Co-ordinator
Western Cape

VOTERS' VICTORY: When 27 April dawned voters across the country queued in large numbers, equipped with the correct documentation in hand and generally confident about voting procedures.

Voter education worked!

ANY review of the strategies adopted to prepare South Africans for the election must acknowledge the outcome of the election itself. No one can fail to be impressed by the extremely high voter turn-out in all parts of the country. Equally remarkable was the small number of spoilt ballot papers, which must have come as a considerable surprise to the prophets of doom. In only one area, KwaZulu/Natal, did the number of spoilt ballots exceed one percent of the total number of votes cast. Everyone now agrees: voter education was a success!

It is with some relief that voter educators can evaluate their efforts, concentrating less on problems and failures, and attempting rather to analyse exactly which strategies were most effective in equipping the large majority of voters to exercise their hard-won freedom.

In the ebb and flow of emotion prior to the election, it was often difficult to gauge the extent to which voter education organisations were managing to reach people on the ground. In some areas, voter educators worked themselves to a standstill, struggling to keep up with the demand. In other cases, individuals who had been trained as voter educators found themselves looking around for work to do.

The most concerted attempts to co-ordinate voter education took place under the umbrella of the Independent Forum for Electoral Education (Ifee). Ultimately, electoral education forums existed in 18 different regions, covering the entire country. With varying degrees of success, these groups co-ordinated the distribution of voter education materials, the deployment of trainers and the itineraries of mobile video units.

Ifee structures were not all-inclusive, however. Voter education initiatives multiplied in business, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other sectors. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) mounted an education programme of its own. There was a proliferation of voter education media, and finally the parties themselves became involved in what they too called voter education.

A post-election survey conducted for the Ifee Media Commission indicates that voters learnt the most about the election from programmes on radio and TV. Only 25 percent of the participants in the survey attended workshops, and by far the majority of these workshops were conducted by political parties as part of their campaigns.

As we know, the end result of all this work was that people turned out in large numbers to vote, with the correct documentation in hand, and when they at last reached the front of the queue, they knew exactly what to do. Election observers report that voters requesting assistance were generally unconfident, but by no means completely ignorant of what voting involved.

An obvious question is raised: what in the world are voter educators going to do now? There is no doubt that the election provided a new focus to many a tired NGO. It also gave birth to a range of new organisations, provided jobs for many, and breathed life into small business, notably through the production of print and audio-visual media. Understandably, there is a strong desire to maintain this momentum, and to consolidate a number of structures and trends.

Many argue that voter education should continue on a large scale and without interruption, in preparation for local government elections next year. Other groups, including certain donor agencies, believe that what has almost become a voter education sector needs to be slimmed down.

Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy is now set to resume the broader task for which it was originally established: education for democracy.

Four different constituencies have been identified for their particular potential in the promotion and consolidation of democracy in South Africa. These include schools, the police and defence forces and the corporate world. A more broadly defined community services programme will enable a number of other community-based groups to participate in democracy training.

The forthcoming local government elections will present opportunities for a wide range of training interventions, stretching well beyond voter education. Citizens need to be empowered, through an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as well as an appreciation of the functions of governments, to participate actively in public affairs.

Marie-Louise Ström
Curriculum research and development programme, Training Centre for Democracy.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

The South African Conference on Truth and Reconciliation

From 29 to 31 July, the **Justice in Transition in South Africa Project** will be hosting a major conference in Cape Town on the crucial issue of dealing with past abuses in South Africa.

Key international and South African commentators will speak on topics such as:

- Dealing with the past: The challenge facing South Africa
- Building tolerance and civil society
- Facing the past in Chile and Argentina
- Beyond negotiations – coexistence and community
- Reconciliation and reconstruction: The task for civil society
- Memory and acknowledgement: The way ahead

Anyone interested in attending should contact Paddy Clark (021) 689-8389

Course in local govt

WHEN Port Elizabeth became the first city in South Africa with a non-racial Transitional Local Council (TLC), Idasa was called in to provide training for those members of the new council without experience in local government.

The TLC consists of members from statutory as well as non-statutory bodies. The latter come from groupings such as civic organisations and often have little experience of local government. So it was that Idasa took some 50 non-statutory councillors to Mpekweni for the weekend of 13-15 May.

The keynote speaker at the workshop was none other than the former co-director of Idasa's Port Elizabeth office, Max Mamase, now Eastern Cape Minister for Local Government and Housing. He said that although transition had taken place at national level – by way of the April elections – it still had to take place at local level.

He dealt with the Local Government Transition Act and its implications for the Port Elizabeth One-City Agreement (an agreement that the city must operate as a whole, with a single tax base). He encouraged the new councillors to ready themselves for drafting the 1994/5 budget, as this would be their first task.

Mamase emphasised that voter education was still necessary – to teach citizens about the differences between the forthcoming local elections and the national election.

In order to avoid domination by any party at local level, he said, forty percent of the councillors would be elected by proportional representation and sixty percent on a ward/constituency basis.

Lechesa Tsenoli of the South African National Civic Organisation and now also a member of the national parliament urged councillors to view civil society as a means to bring about sustainable development and a deeper democracy in our country.

Tsenoli hoped that if local authorities recognised the role of civil society they would commit themselves to transparent structures.

Tsenoli further emphasised capacity building through the use of local skills, expertise, knowledge, experience and resources in development.

Sandy Wren
Regional Co-ordinator, Port Elizabeth

Role of the Zulu monarch

THE role of the Zulu monarch in the new constitutional order was the topic of a forum organised by Idasa's Natal office on 20 April.

The speaker at the forum was Sibusiso Bengu, now Minister of Education in the ANC-led government of national unity.

Bengu added that a reconciling provincial constitution would need to embody the aspirations of the wider population, not just those of a section of the people. In this regard it was important that the king's ceremonial and unifying role included all people living in the province, even non-Zulu speakers. However, the king's role should not impinge on the basic rights of anyone.

He said the distinction between compromise and secession should be made clear. While there was a great willingness to accommodate the king, there was a strong objection to greater autonomy for KwaZulu/Natal. The IFP's misuse of the "Zuluness" of some South Africans was unacceptable, Bengu said.

Dumisani Phungula
Regional Co-ordinator, Natal

Irreplaceable (c)hunk

IDASA lost its longest-serving regional director when Maxwell Mamase left in May to take up his elected position in the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature. Max, as we all knew him, initiated rather than joined Idasa, when he began in the Port Elizabeth office in November 1986. That office was where Idasa started, and Max played a huge role in that start.

Who will forget those early days of wide consultation, carried out under the most repressive circumstances imaginable? Together with the late Wayne Mitchell, and assisted in no small way by the famous Watson brothers, Max addressed meeting after meeting of suspicious, dubious, curious, and probably security-infiltrated Eastern Cape audiences.

Max never allowed an incident or experience to leave him unchanged, and that is probably what helped him to develop so enormously during his stay with Idasa. Assisted by his ongoing studies at tertiary level, he emerged as a well-known and authoritative speaker on public administration, housing, economics and tourism. It was thus that he was catapulted into the national structures of the South African National Civic Organisation.

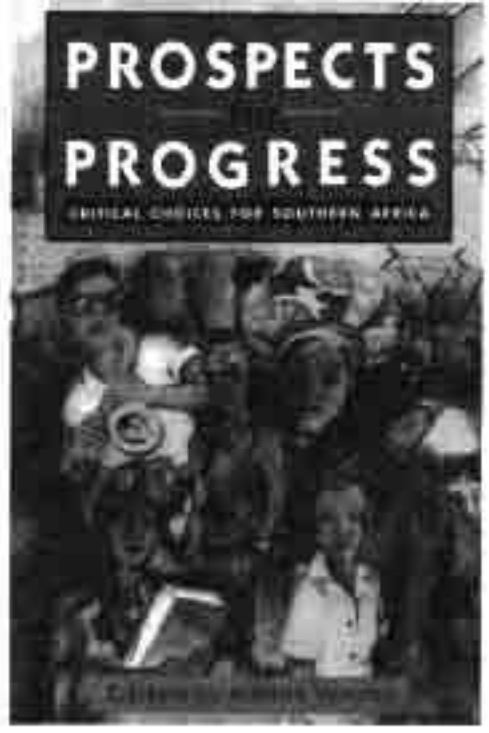
His widely regarded expertise ensured that the Eastern Cape's new premier, "Oom" Raymond Mhlaba, not only insisted on him taking a position in the provincial cabinet, but presented him with one of the most demanding portfolios – Local Government and Housing.

Idasa has lost an irreplaceable chunk with the departure of Max. We wish him well.

Keith Wattrus
Regional Director, Port Elizabeth

MAXWELL MAMASE: Long-serving regional director.

BOOKS



'Remarkably accessible' work on southern Africa

By Gail Jennings

I HAD always suspected that economics must be more interesting than bank statements, but it took the lively and unintimidating cover of *Prospects for Progress* to encourage me to delve into the realms of the unknown.

This is the third volume in a series of publications produced as part of the Critical Choices Research Project. It explores the crucial issues facing southern Africa, not only South Africa, and seeks to provide information and promote debate. It poses such questions as: What models of regional co-operation would work in southern Africa? What is the effect of population growth on regional economic development? How can regional co-operation improve health?

The authors are all from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, and these particular articles have not yet been published elsewhere. Their 23 chapters are organised into four sections: regional organisations and their impact on economic growth; the road to regional stability; economic issues; and socio-political issues. The book includes a 53-page database – tables detailing such areas as southern African geography, government structures, export and import figures, debt, revenue, population growth, labour force and employment structures – as well as a comprehensive index.

Prospects for Progress was written with the academic market in mind, targeted at planners, parliamentarians, opinion-makers and students. As a merely curious, if apprehensive, reader I found it remarkably accessible and informative, however. Sub-editor Mignonne Rodel has successfully de-jargonised the text, which the numerous tables embellish and clarify.

Editor Minnie Venter recognises that "to the rest of the world, southern Africa is characterised by poverty and under-development, and risks being overshadowed by a post-apartheid South Africa. Unless attempts to address the region's ills are founded on sensible public policy, the decay and misery will remain. Looking at what choices the region has if it is to elevate itself out of its economic quagmire involves looking at the region from a political as well as an economic and social viewpoint. Neither economic nor development policy can be disentangled from political policy."

It is her hope that this publication will contribute to the debate that will formalise "sensible public policy".

In the first section on regional organisations and their impact on economic growth, Robert Davies examines the role existing organisations can play in post-apartheid southern Africa. He reflects upon the reform and development needed within the SADC, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the Common Monetary Area (CMA) and the Preferential Trade Area (PTA).

A regional economic programme is not an optional extra, he says; it is essential for growth and development.

Attaining national and regional stability are challenges facing southern Africa. Jakkie Cilliers compares expectations with reality. In the Western world, he says, a "new thinking" on security and stability now confronts menaces such as economic crises, ethnic conflict, trans-border pollution and international terrorism. Security has become based upon inter-dependence, with a blurring of the distinction between national and international concerns.

Southern Africa, however, is still beset by security problems, and common social restraints on violence and killing have often disappeared. Cilliers believes that the structural and predisposing factors for violence will endure for a long time yet, and that for many years conflict management rather than conflict resolution may be the reality.

Without electricity, there can be no real form of modern economic activity and growth. Charles Dingley says Africa has the resources and the technology to generate all the electricity it needs. In a most encouraging chapter he shows how both natural and human resources can be used to bring power to all southern Africa.

Henk Coetzee tempers this optimism with a warning, however. The desire within southern Africa to emulate the developed world is not necessarily realisable, because of the limits imposed by natural resources. The limiting natural resource here is water. Limits apply in terms of availability, the problem of supply and the maintenance of water quality. Although it is unpopular to talk about limits to growth, water policies must acknowledge this shortage, he says.

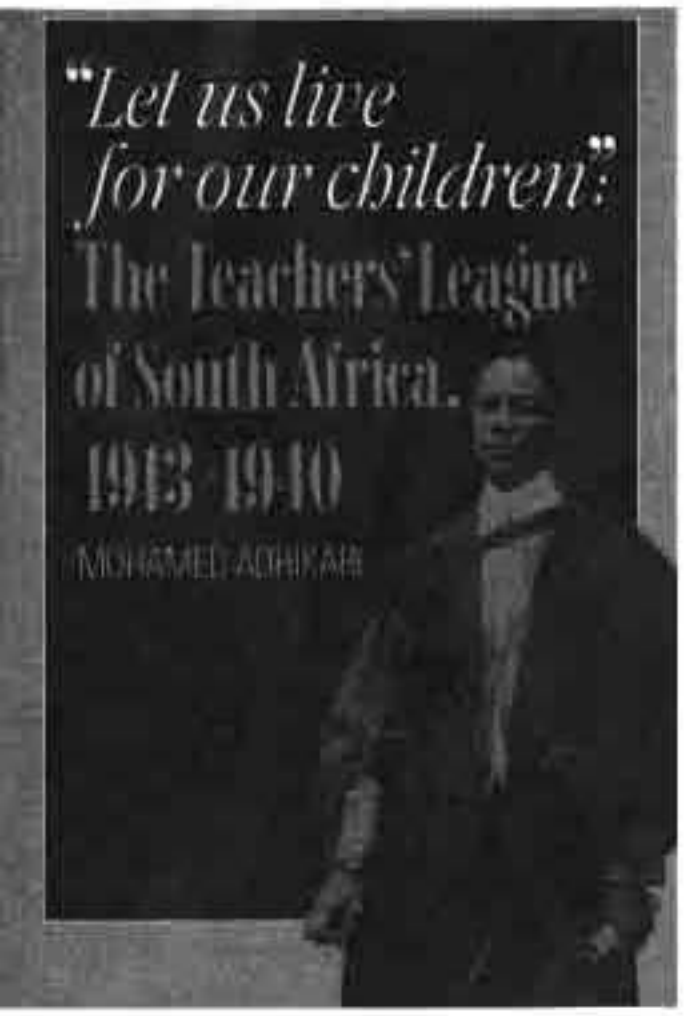
Women form the bulk of the southern African population. If development is to address the practical and strategic needs of women, it must bring empowerment. Legal, policy, educational and health reforms are crucial. But according to Venter and Martha Funk-Bridgman, reform means no less than abandoning the accepted power relations between men and women and the dominant position men enjoy in patriarchal societies. In the absence of this radical change, development will not contribute effectively to improved quality of life.

One area of critical choice not developed in this volume is education. The original manuscript contained a further 30 or so chapters dealing with the substantial education crisis our region faces. Rather than condense and summarise the material, Venter opted to hold on to this research until a volume dedicated to education becomes possible. I look forward to reading it.

PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS: CRITICAL CHOICES FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA, edited by Minnie Venter. Maskew Miller Longman, 1994, 398 pages, R49,95.

BOOKS

Ironic career of coloured elite



MAJOR LEAGUERS: Harold Cressy is pictured on the cover of Adhikari's book.

BELOW: The 1934 executive of the Teachers' League of South Africa.

By Peter Kallaway

THE results of the election in the Western Cape give particular relevance to Mohamed Adhikari's history of the early years of the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA), for it highlights an important aspect of the unique history of the coloured peoples of this region and their specific social location. It throws the spotlight on the ambiguities and contradictions of the educated elite, and specifically the core of teachers who at one and the same time shaped the identity of the coloured community as a distinct social formation within South African society and rejected the racism that would seem to be implicit in accepting such a categorisation.

Adhikari's objective is to demythologise the TLSA for friend and foe alike and in this he is to be congratulated for succeeding handsomely. He manages to rescue the TLSA from what he sees to be a bad press in the light of the non-racial ethos of the United Democratic Front-style of politics of the 1980s. He also helps us appreciate the history and evolution of the organisation without the harsh judgments of hindsight.

As the representative of the educated elite, the TLSA reflected a strong identification with a form of moral politics that emphasised "pragmatic incrementalism" (p. 58). While stressing the norms of "Western civilisation" as a means of assimilation to the white society that increasingly rejected them, Adhikari points out that coloured leaders in the TLSA "tended to react to white prejudice by adopting a civilising mission towards the coloured masses".

"Realising that they would not be able to disassociate themselves from the coloured labouring classes in the minds of whites, League leaders resigned themselves to the task of raising the entire coloured community to the 'level of civilisation' where there would be no justification for discrimination against them" (p. 155). This implied developing a "non-political" approach to educational change which would not offend the authorities, while maintaining a constant discourse about moral politics and human rights as part of the great tradition of Western democratic history.

In the process of developing their own institutional and social identity to cope with their intermediate position in the society, the members of the TLSA also helped to develop a variety of mechanisms for distancing themselves from Africans and working-class coloureds.

They developed a degree of social "refinement" (through debating societies, sports clubs, ballroom dancing competitions, and so on) which reinforced their self-proclaimed "mantle of leadership" within the community they served.

At the same time they developed an elaborate rhetoric of discussion, complaint, analysis and the passing of resolutions regarding the welfare and upliftment of the coloured people, which has had a powerful effect on Cape politics to the present day.

Adhikari notes, however, that there was very little action by the TLSA to address these social problems. The means of salvation lay in education, not in direct political action or even welfare or charity.

What I found particularly important and

LETTERS

Write to **Democracy in Action**,
Albion Spring, 183 Main Road,
Rondebosch 7700

Adhikari has made an important contribution to the history and sociology of the society in which we live. Most striking for me is that this publication marks a significant advance in writing about the much neglected history of teacher politics in South Africa.

fascinating about the book, which Adhikari adapted from his MA thesis, was its attempt to elucidate the problems and tensions which beset an organisation with both a global and a particular mission.

On the one hand, the TLSA managed to develop a global rhetoric identifying itself as part of the emerging liberation politics of the inter-war years. On the other hand, it sought to further the aims of a conventional teachers' organisation in terms of improvement of salaries and service conditions for coloured teachers.

The major irony of this history is that the TLSA "saw itself as being in the vanguard of the fight against racism and for Western political values in a South African society increasingly beset by racism, while at the same time seeking to elaborate and amplify coloured identity", in order to secure its own elite position and specific professional identity within the coloured sections of the society (p. 149).

Adhikari has made an important contribution to the history and sociology of the society in which we live. Most striking for me is that this publication marks a significant advance in writing about the much neglected history of teacher politics in South Africa.

This book in no way undermines appreciation of the importance and uniqueness of the contribution of the TLSA to our heritage in this area. Rather it creates awareness of the complexities of the conditions under which the TLSA operated in the years prior to 1940. Indeed, appreciation of this early history makes it possible to understand the later history of the TLSA during the era of the Unity Movement. A doctoral dissertation on the subject should be equally fascinating.

A few words of criticism. I felt that the researcher could have used a wider base of archival resources. As it is, his research is based almost exclusively on the *Educational Journal*, which is an extremely important but limited guide. Much more extensive use of the Cape Education Department archive and a wider reliance on interviews might have helped to bring out some of the texture of school and social life more vividly.

I longed for something of the atmosphere of those meetings that resounded to the "declamatory style so beloved of members of the League" (p. 82); those schools that were driven by the ardour and commitment of educational leaders that would surely provide a monument to the young teachers of today; and the social events that clearly were the nexus of the elite family intercourse over the years.

I would also have appreciated a more personalised and individualised history in which the key characters and actors were identified and constructed more sharply. As it is, most of the people who populate the pages of the book emerge as cardboard cut-outs in a massively institutional or sociological history.

Finally, I felt that Adhikari could have touched on the origins of the radical tradition towards the end of the book. Although he notes the establishment of the Lenin Club, the October Club and the Soviet Union Society, he provides no clue to the radical Marxist seeds of the future Unity Movement/ TLSA orientation.

This omission, which the author could redress in a sequel, rather impoverishes the present story.

As a distant and occasional observer, from the 1970s, of the remains of the TLSA tradition, I was always inspired by visits to TLSA schools where a characteristic educational ethos was always noticeable, whatever complexities and critiques of the tradition there might be. ■

Peter Kallaway is professor in the Department of History and Philosophy of Education, University of the Western Cape.

"LET US LIVE FOR OUR CHILDREN": THE TEACHERS' LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1913 – 1940, by Mohamed Adhikari. UCT Press/Buchu Books, Cape Town, 1993. 204 pages, R56,00.

Council for wise women

THERE were women at the top of party lists, but none at important negotiating summits. The Women's Lobby chair, Babette Kabak, made this point on Agenda on television on 3 April 1994. Speaking from the audience, she proposed to the panel of women politicians that a Women Leaders' Council be formed.

It could consist of two or three women from major parties who would explore and negotiate solutions to national problems as they arose.

Women leaders with different life experiences from men, debating national problems independently of men, may bring another dimension of thinking into the political process.

They would focus on critical issues such as peace, violence and other stubborn national problems. The council could function as an ad hoc structure of women drawn from the new parliament and interested political groups outside. It would not deal with women's specific concerns – as no doubt the proposed Gender Commission or the Commission on the Status of Women would do.

Such a council would present its ideas to the male leaders; or delegations of men and delegations of women could negotiate separately and then meet to reach decisions.

Babette Kabak and Doris Ravenhill
The Women's Lobby

Old rogues?

MAY I suggest that the painting of the 1984 Nat Cabinet by Fleur Ferri (photograph published in *Democracy in Action*, 15 April 1994) be consigned to the Rogues Gallery of an Apartheid Museum.

A N Ozzer
Knysna

MY VIEW

Surviving

crazy insects and crooked human beings

By Shireen Badat

DATE: 27 April, 7.30am, outside a voting station in Victoria West. Mission: to observe voting in the rural Northern Cape and find out for *Democracy in Action* whether life in rural South Africa is changing.

Voting officials have decided to allow 10 voters into the hall at a time. By coincidence a group of 20 voters arrive. The first 10 are white, the second 10 are black. Is this some sort of sign?

The police outside are very friendly and greet all voters by name. The queue trickles off. Now there are only two white people standing in line. A black man in overalls joins the queue, doffs his cap politely and greets those in front of him, "Môre, baas Piet, baas Koos."

Two more white men join the queue and the man in overalls politely steps back to allow them to pass him. This continues until I decide to bring the situation to a nearby policeman's attention. The nice policeman then explains to the man in overalls that on this day everyone is equal and that he needn't give way to his superiors.

We move on to the voting station in the local coloured township. A long winding queue stretches over the dusty hills. There are hundreds of people in the queue, but they're all very quiet. Inside the voting station people sit on chairs waiting to be helped (with anxious expressions on their faces).

A local official says there is a high level of illiteracy in the area and not much voter education has taken place, so most people have to be assisted with voting. However, the entire community has turned out to vote because people think they will go to jail if they don't.

The night before in the local pub, disgruntled party agents tell us strange things are happening at a voting station on a local farm. Locals give us directions to the farm and tell us it is not far from the town.

Over an hour later, after being bumped and tossed around on the dusty gravel road and attacked by giant, kamikaze locusts, we arrive at the farm. The presiding officer is a local farmer. He says things are going slowly. He has told his workers to come and vote the next day, but if things get too boring he'll just whistle and his workers will come running.

The farmer says he has been running elections in this area all his life and he can't understand why the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is creating such a fuss about this election. He says the coloured farm workers have voted in tricameral elections before and all they did then was point out who they wanted to vote for and he would make the cross for them. He can't understand all this "secrecy business".

We head for the next voting station along another dusty road. A sign outside the little town welcomes all visitors. Everything seems to be going smoothly at the warehouse which houses the voting station. The presiding officer says most residents have voted already. He knows all the locals and says that only 30 more people have to vote.

On our way out of the town we stop at a picturesque little hotel to quench our thirst. The hotel keeper says only residents are allowed inside. If we want anything to drink we have to use the door around the corner.

On the way back to our hotel we give a stranded driver a lift. He turns out to be one of the few coloured organisers for the ANC in the area. He teaches at the local school and is also a lay preacher in the Apostolic Church. However, because of his involvement in the ANC, the church has suspended him from preaching. They will reconsider his suspension after the elections.

The following day our journey takes us 250km north to the next town. Along the way we encounter giant, cannibal crickets. Is this another sign?

Outside the voting station we come across more disgruntled local observers and party agents. They are not happy about the way things are being run inside. The presiding officer says, however, that things inside are going very smoothly. The only problem is the party agents who keep on questioning him.

The team splits up to talk to other officials in the station. One of the local IEC officials, obviously put out by this intrusion, points to my Xhosa-speaking colleague and tells the presiding officer that these "kaffirs" have been speaking too long in the voting station.

We travel further north until we reach the Orange River. The entrance to the little coloured community is festooned with political posters and banners. The tiny coloured and African communities are separated by a church which serves as the voting station. Inside the church we are surprised by the obvious unity between the two communities.

At the voting station in the white part of town the National Party voting agent says this election has cost us all a lot of money, but at least now it's over and done with and life can go back to normal.

About 3 000km later I was still trying to work out what was normal in the rural Northern Cape. Were the paternalistic attitudes we saw a sincere attempt to overcome problems of bad education and the other ills of apartheid, or were they racism in disguise? ■