DEMOCRACY in ACTION
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Follow the leader

The name of the game has changed

By PAUL GRAHAM

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: No longer only the responsibility of the few at the top.

RODGER BOSCH, Sowetan

POLITICAL leadership has been in the news recently. In Russia, Boris Yeltsin fired the parliament – first figuratively and then literally – and his actions precipitated a debate about the use of authoritarian action to promote democratisation.

In Britain, John Major's leadership of the Conservative Party was being counted down by the media until the party conference where it was "reaffirmed".

In the United States, Bill Clinton decided that the president is not "the country's chief mechanic" while presiding over the first official handshake between the PLO and the Israeli government by the leaders of both. Back home in Israel and the occupied territories riots broke out as followers disagreed with this handshake.

Here at home, stories in the newspapers of a leadership struggle within the Democratic Party have it that Zach de Beer is besieged by the "young Turks" while everywhere political activity is reduced by the press to the watching of an increasingly small group of individuals – the leaders.

This special preoccupation led *Time* magazine to portray some Western leaders as dwarfs in overlarge suits and ask the question – where have the leaders gone?

Those who are elected or otherwise emerge as leaders of countries, political parties or organisations have expectations heaped upon them – yet in an increasingly complex world the ability of one individual to affect the social, economic and political life of a country is limited. One of the dilemmas of the global society is the decreasing territorial sovereignty any government can exercise in the face of international markets.

In 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville travelled through the United States and wrote about democracy as it was emerging there. He wrote, "when the conditions of men are almost equal, they do not easily

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Negotiation News

Over the next 12 months, *Democracy in Action* will be accompanied by *Negotiation News* – a newsletter covering the details of the present multi-party talks and explaining the agreements reached during the process of transition.

***Negotiation News* is edited by freelance journalist Elsabe Wessels. We trust that the additional reading it provides to *Democracy in Action* will be of interest to all our readers.**

As with *Democracy in Action*, opinions expressed in *Negotiation News* do not necessarily reflect those of IDASA.

INSIDE

DEMOCRACY in ACTION

IDASA
WORKING FOR DEMOCRACY

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

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Vanspeak

After addressing town councillors of the teeming metropolis of Alberton on scenarios for the future, Idasa director of policy and planning Van Zyl Slabbert was amused to overhear one remark to another: "Hy praat lekker, maar hy sê alles wat ek nie wil hoor nie" (I like his style but he says everything I don't want to hear).

What's in a name?

For those who have been feeling doubtful, the weird and wonderful coherence of the world is surely demonstrated by the name of the place from which a certain right-wing radio station was broadcasting without a licence until recently: Donkerhoek (dark corner).

Not a sweetheart

In the same vein, is it an accident that the person who so incensed the taxi industry that South African cities came to a smog-soaked standstill is sugar farmer George Bartlett? Someone should have realised that Bartlett would cause trouble as Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs: sugar is hoplessly bad for petrol tanks.

– Cause for a hulett and cry!

Sticks and stones

The poor Black Sash: not only must it endure the media habit of sneering at the entirely imaginary pearls, twinsets and sensible shoes of its members, now the Women's Bureau has put an oar in. The

Ja-Nee

Black Sash could have been part of the bureau, said one of the bureau's loftier personages to the Black Sash member sitting next to her at lunch, if only it had been more "politically correct".

– A case of not casting off pearls before th wine?

Bunny who?

The Broadcast Monitoring Project which, as its name suggests, aims to keep tabs on the electronic media, had an "announcement" to make on the front page of its latest newsletter. "We would like to correct a typing error in the last issue," it said. "We referred to 'the ANC's Benny Alexander'. This should have read 'the PAC's Benny Alexander'.

– Lucky the BMP is monitoring rather tha reporting the news.

Knickers in a twist

Addressing the women of Cape Town in Athlone recently, ANC president Nelson Mandela expressed sympathy for the lot of women who come home after a long day o work, then have to cook, and on top of that have to wash out the underwear of the men in their lives. "It's time men washed out women's underwear," he said, something that did not go down well with his bodyguards, who squirmed unhappily behind him.

– It just didn't wash with the people wearing the pants.

Last obstacles will test dedication, skill

THE passage through Parliament of legislation enabling the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council is a major step towards free and fair elections and forming a government of national unity. Although TEC members will be nominated, it should prove to be an excellent testing ground for sharing power in the run-up to a fully elected cabinet representing the major parties in South Africa.

The often criticised politicians who have been negotiating for so long at the World Trade Centre deserve credit for reaching this crucial stage. Despite the withdrawal of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the sound and fury of the Conservative Party in the dying moments of the current Parliament, a new chapter has begun in the journey towards democracy.

The reaction of the international community, the call by Nelson Mandela for the lifting of all remaining sanctions, the positive commitment by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, all will be of enormous encouragement to embattled South Africans, and assist in moving the process further. The positive economic response can only be a shot in the arm which South Africa desperately needs as it seeks to meet the aspirations and expectations of the deprived and oppressed majority.

It is expected, however, that the understandable euphoria which has surrounded this major move will soon be overshadowed by attempts to overcome remaining obstacles. Two in particular will require all the dedication and skill of negotiators.

Firstly, there is the task of convincing the white right wing, in particular the Afrikaner Volksfront, to participate in further negotiations and to blunt the determination of extremists to halt the movement towards elections by whatever means possible.

Ironically, at the same time that the CP was showing its frustration at the sands of time running out for its separatist and racist philosophy, the ANC leadership was having important meetings with Constand Viljoen and other retired generals. It would appear that there is a greater sense of reality among these former military leaders than in the ranks of CP politicians.

The fact that these talks have taken place is cause for optimism. The Volksfront has demanded that the ANC accept in principle the right of Afrikaners to a separate "volkstaat", and seems remarkably confident that this demand will be conceded. This is inconceivable, however, and some compromise will have to be struck.

The moment of truth will come only when the Volksfront actually presents a blueprint of its proposal in terms of land area and boundaries. A compromise will be helped by serious disagreements within the ranks of the right wing which will surface more concretely when specific boundaries are delineated by the Volksfront.

The ANC is well aware that the more extreme groups within the right-wing alliance are more than capable of frustrating progress towards an election. Therefore it will do everything in its power to meet Viljoen and his colleagues halfway, short of dividing the country into ethnic compartments. Both Mandela and Viljoen will have considerable difficulty in persuading their constituencies to accept whatever compromise is reached.

An even more difficult problem surrounding the final stages of negotiations is the attitude of Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the IFP. Despite concessions made by the ANC and by the government, Buthelezi remains obdurate and obstinate.

Asking for further concessions, from the ANC in particular, is almost asking too much, but the responsibility for attempting to bring the IFP back to the negotiating table rests largely with Mandela and his colleagues. No matter what De Klerk does, and he is limited because of pressures within his cabinet, unless there is acceptance from the ANC, any new deal will achieve very little.

The fact that the ANC seems certain to be the largest single political party in the new government of national unity enables Mandela to meet Buthelezi from a position of strength. This will allow Mandela to be magnanimous in his approach to Buthelezi while keeping in mind his need to sell whatever concession is made to an increasingly impatient constituency.

The difficulty of persuading Buthelezi to rejoin the negotiations is compounded by his apparent growing irrationality and petulance. Buthelezi almost daily appears to be digging a huge hole for himself and those who choose to follow him.

Not only is he losing support in Natal/KwaZulu itself, but the business community which for so long has supported him is becoming restless, feeling that he should return to the negotiating table to present his demands there. This so far has not brought him any nearer to a sense of reality but has made him even more desperate. His constant threats of "a civil war" have brought upon him the ire and criticism of his erstwhile ally, De Klerk, and this bodes ill for any compromise.

The stakes are extremely high. If Buthelezi refuses to take the IFP into the election, and if he is supported in this decision by IFP leaders and the rank and file, will he accept the result of the election? On the other hand, if he reluctantly decides to contest the election, and loses, will he accept the result? Either way, a refusal to accept the result will bring the threats he has made relating to a civil war ominously closer.

There is very little time left to attempt an accommodation with Buthelezi, but it has to be done if South Africa is to avoid the tragedy of neighbouring Angola.

While these final hurdles may appear insurmountable, if one considers the difficulties already resolved there is hope that negotiators, and in particular Mandela and De Klerk, can build on the successes already achieved in order to make a free and fair election possible in April next year.

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

Letters

An unfair replacement?

THE ARTICLE in the August edition of *Democracy in Action* by Shauna Westcott raises some interesting points, not so much in the appointment of Frank Molteno, but in the consequences of "equal opportunity" and affirmative action. For instance, the discussion of promotions at UCT seems to imply that it would have been best to appoint a black woman (probably even better if she were disabled) to any post, irrespective of the merits of the candidate.

Which brings me to affirmative action. The discussions at Kempton Park emphasise individual rights, which I strongly support. Group rights have been regarded with suspicion (quite rightly), since they could be a means of continuing with the privileges of the old apartheid system. Yet affirmative action depends entirely on the concept of disadvantaged groups, even though we all know that it is no guarantee that because someone has a black or brown skin, he or she has been more disadvantaged than someone with a white skin. Statistically, on the basis of groups – yes – but on an individual basis – no.

Then there is the whole question of classification, which in the past had as a natural consequence the much-hated race classification boards. If you had an application for a job from someone who signed him or herself "Y Z Botha", how do you know whether they are black, brown or white? Or do you have a question marked "race" on your application form? And do you have a frothy if the applicant writes in "human"? Do you check up if the answer given is "black", in anticipation that this is an advantage? Are you going to check up on ancestors if you are not sure?

I don't have the answers, but I would hate to see one unworkable and unfair system replaced by another. Would it not be better to make merit the most important criterion?

E H Schumann
Port Elizabeth

DIARY

Highlights of forthcoming events organised by Idasa offices

NATAL

Rural focus

Idasa in Natal will be taking voter education to the remotest areas of the province. The Natal office decided to concentrate on the rural areas because that is where the bulk of illiterate and marginalised people are. The following is the diary for voter education workshops in Natal:

- 2 October – Port Shepstone
- 8 October – Maputoland
- 8-10 October – Durban teachers workshop
- 23 October – Stanger teachers workshop

The office will be addressing Ulundi on 10 November which will shorten the long route to getting to the rural areas under tribal authority.

Violence and the poll

Have perceptions of violence pre-determined the result of the coming election? This is the question which Dr Jannie Hofmeyr will be addressing at the Future Forum at the Edward Hotel on October 20.

Dr Hofmeyr is director of the largest specialist research company in South Africa and has written many articles on social change.

He will be sharing the findings of his most recent research surveys which deals with the impact of violence in South Africa in relation to next year's election. For bookings phone (031) 304-8893 or fax 304-8891.

WESTERN CAPE

Tackling violence

"Images of Violence" workshops will be held on 19 October and 9 November at the St Paul's Church in Rondebosch. These workshops aim to help people confront the fear, uncertainty and powerlessness they experience under conditions of political and criminal violence.

Another workshop in the series, aimed at youth, will be held in conjunction with Peace Visions on 25 October at 2pm.

Calling civics

A workshop for civic bodies in the Cape metropolitan area will be held on 27 October from 17h30 to 20h30 at the Bellville Holiday Inn. It will address issues of common interest, such as the financing local government.

- A "one-city" conference will be held from November 19 to 21. It will be aimed at the "ordinary" people of Cape Town and address the themes of peace, development and democracy in the city. For further information contact Michelle Booth at (021) 47-1280.

Training trainers

The Western Cape office is also training trainers for election monitoring and voter education. Various workshops have been set up. Interested individuals and organisations should contact the office at (021) 47-1280.

PORT ELIZABETH

Voter workshops

Voter education workshops are being organised for the employees of Shell and the Delta Motor Company.

The office remains active in the Eastern Cape Housing Forum which is engaged in negotiations between the community, banks and developers.

BLOEMFONTEIN

Africa report

A report-back meeting on the trip Bloemfontein university students made to neighbouring states will be held at the Vista University campus on 20 October. Further details from the Bloemfontein office.

Lower standards cause alarm

I AM a strong supporter of democracy. However, I am also a strong believer in building a healthier and more vibrant economy. After reading an article in *The Sunday Tribune* my views on promoting non-discriminatory and equal opportunity human resource programmes are being reversed.

The article was on affirmative action and how it will give South African labour relations one of its foremost challenges over the next 10 years. I was alarmed to read about South African Airways efforts to put at least 12 black pilots in their cockpits within the next two years, and their decision to drop existing entry level qualifications.

SAA for many years has set an extremely high standard, requiring a minimum of 1 000 hours flying experience. The new standard, agreed by representatives of SAA and the ANC, has been set at 250 hours along with a South African commercial licence.

My argument is that lowering the entry level will lead to SAA standards and reputation slumping behind other international and local airlines.

If this example is followed by other leading companies, will the development of our economy not deteriorate?

Confused youth
Pietermaritzburg

Thumbs up from those who responded

IT IS one of the peculiar facts of existence that very few people respond to questionnaires sent by mail, even very brief questionnaires like the one enclosed with *Democracy in Action* earlier this year. This is the bane of researchers, frustrates the rare institutions seeking to improve, and leaves open the question of whether those who reply represent that great bulk who do not (apart from offering scope for subterfuge which the fundamentalist right has busily tried to exploit in surveys on abortion, for example).

For those who not only didn't reply but also don't remember, the questionnaire was a card which asked readers what they like and dislike about *Democracy in Action*. Readers were asked to fill in their names, addresses and titles and there was a space indicating ability or willingness to give a donation.

If the 2,4 percent who replied to the survey represent the readership as a whole, *DIA* is a magazine unusually blessed with approval. Readers like its relevant, comprehensive, informative and high-quality content! They praise it for being non-aligned, unbiased and objective! They think it is sensitive, balanced and mature! Some even go so far as to call it "sound".

The staff of *DIA* were further encouraged to hold out for enormous salary increases by the amazing 62 percent of respondents who said there was nothing they disliked about the magazine.

There were the complaints, however, and they directly contradicted the accolades.

According to the carping minority, *DIA* is biased, not objective and concentrates too much on the centre-left and the ANC. Another unkind and probably politically suspect group of readers finds it too academic, intellectual, esoteric – "heavy going" was how one put it.

Then there is the unhappy matter of mistakes in the mailing list, which are defying all attempts to penetrate the secrets of aberrant databases and still irritating a not inconsiderable number of people.

Cheering were the jokers among the diligent few, one of whom wrote in the space next to DONATION: "No thanks I'm doing fine", while another, resident in the crime-ridden left-wing enclave of Observatory in Cape Town, filled in next to TITLE: "Commoner".

Shauna Westcott

Still on the sidelines

By LISA THORNTON

LOOKING FOR the first time at a session of the Negotiating Council at the World Trade Centre, one might be pleasantly surprised by the number of women at the negotiating table. If one listened for a while to what was going on, however, one would have to realise that although women might have won the battle for a seat at the table, they still sit outside the circle of power.

This bleaker view of the situation is not tempered by the provision for a Sub-Council on the Status of Women as part of Transitional Executive Council (TEC) substructures. For it is clear that establishment of the sub-council will entrench the position of women on the sidelines.

It would appear at first glance that the establishment of the Sub-Council on the Status of Women would mean that negotiators were making a serious attempt to address the oppression of women. But a closer look reveals that, while the sub-council appears to give women a role in government, it denies them any real power in relation to any of the issues facing the nation.

The language of the TEC Act is revealing. It makes the Sub-Council on the Status of Women responsible for liaising with and making recommendations to the TEC, the Independent Electoral Commission, other TEC sub-councils, and "policy-making" forums – but gives it no decision-making power on the issues that are the province of these bodies.

It might be argued that the sub-council will have the power to make decisions on issues relating to the status of women. However, apart from the obvious difficulty – not to say absurdity – of attempting to separate such issues out from the rest of the web of socio-political life in South Africa, such decisions will not be binding on the TEC and women will have no power to implement them.

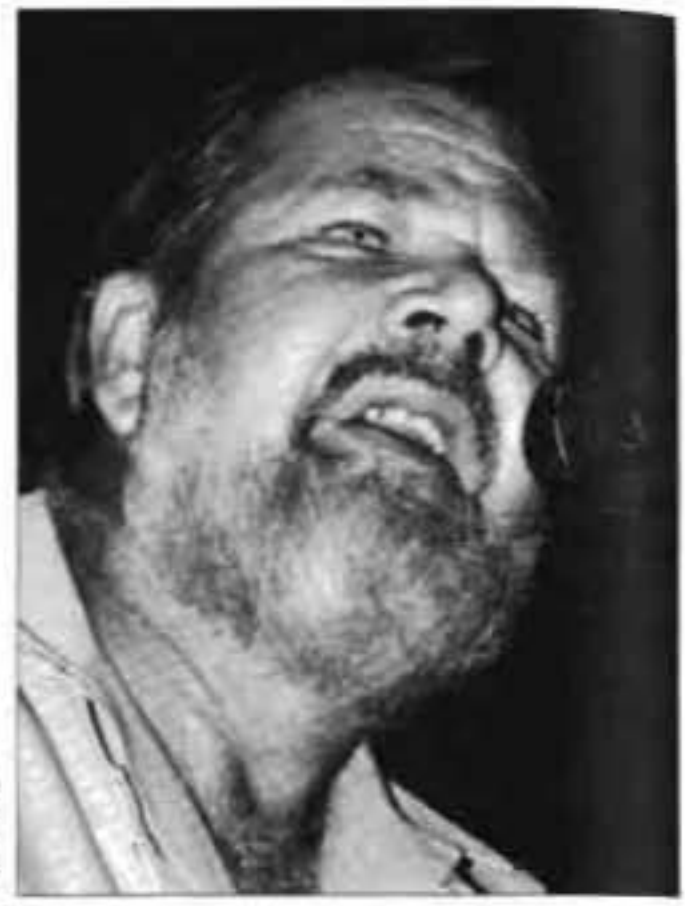
A clause inserted into the seventeenth or penultimate draft of the TEC Bill supports this view of the Sub-Council on the Status of Women as a device to achieve the appearance of inclusion while at the same time ensuring that half the population continues to be confined to a non-threatening position out on the margins, beyond the inner circle.

The clause, drafted in "bilateral" negotiations, provides that the sub-council shall designate from among its members persons who will be entitled to attend TEC meetings and address the TEC on matters that concern the sub-council. This right in practice will be accorded to all TEC sub-councils and is simply a mechanism for ensuring the effective operation of the TEC and its sub-structures.

The position of the Women's National Coalition, however, was that the legislation should ensure the participation of women on the TEC itself. Permission to address the TEC is an insulting substitution.

Lisa Thornton is an American attorney and currently a voluntary worker at Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy.





SPEAKING FOR THE PEOPLE: A more traditional view of the role of leaders

Follow the leader

From Page 1

allow themselves to be persuaded by one another. As they all live in close intercourse, as they have learned the same things together, and as they lead the same life, they are not naturally disposed to take one of themselves for a guide and to follow him implicitly. Men seldom take the opinion of their equal or of a man like themselves upon trust."

Indeed, the virtue of democracy is to put leadership into the realm of the collaborative. People involved in education for democracy encourage "ordinary" citizens to take responsibility and not to allow themselves merely to be led.

Even elections are seen as an opportunity for each person to participate in establishing who will represent them and how that representation will be conducted.

So in a modern world, and in a South Africa in transition to democracy, what do leaders do? And what difference can they make? There are four ideas about what leaders in a general sense do which might help – affirmation, articulation, alignment and administration.

Individuals who inspire people by affirming their actions and contribution to the society can draw out the best in people. Or cynically manipulate people by encouraging them to act bravely in defence of the indefensible.

A more traditional view has leaders articulating the views of people. They become spokespersons for the views, at times inchoate or unexpressed, of others. In cynical moments, leaders are described as people who assess where their followers are going and get to the front of the crowd.

A third possibility is that leaders, by their words and actions, draw together groups of people and align them to a particular direction or vision. The fear of charismatic leaders following egocentric visions and followers merely "toeing the line" is a spectre over all discussions of leadership.

Finally, leaders can administer, manage or organise individuals or groups of people to achieve common goals. While less glossy, the necessity of administration and its potential for changing a society remains a challenge for leaders.

In each of these activities, leaders accept a great deal of personal responsibility. They can engage in these activities for the general good – and probably will where the general good conforms with the interests of those they lead. But leaders are also linked to their followers. While we often assume a very strong relationship between leaders and those who follow them, the unwritten contract can be quite fragile.

So leaders regularly have to juggle the expectations of their followers against their vision of what may be necessary and courageous. In a situation where there is uncertainty, either because of a leadership struggle, or because of general political instability, or – as happens to be the case in South Africa – an impending election, it is very difficult for leaders to also achieve the "statesmanship" which newspaper editors demand. It might just be that the statesmanship might result in the breaking of the contract and the loss of the very followers his or her "statesmanship" is supposed to influence.

In South Africa, leaders are expected to "deliver" their followers – so that we can go through a transitional process agreed by certain parties and so that we can end violence and achieve peace. These seem sensible goals. Leaders who believe in them can affirm those of their followers who act towards them. They can ensure the organisation of people towards these goals. They can, through their actions, align them to ensure they are achieved. And they can articulate the feelings of ordinary people – as expressed in events like the Peace Day – for these goals.

Leaders who remain suspicious of these goals can choose to engage with the process or attempt to lead their followers in different paths – and the conflict between the different paths and the groups of people or parties could result in greater violence unless we are able to provide ritual and non-violent methods of resolving that competition. Democracy is one way of making sure that competition is contained non-violently and unfortunately we are not there yet.

So it is not surprising that there is violence. The transitional mechanisms are attempts to overcome that violence and the potential for still greater violence.

However, if De Tocqueville is correct, and if our recent history of the increasing impotence of the "great man" is right, the responsibility for ensuring peace and democracy will not be that of a few party leaders, no matter how great, but of citizens choosing to participate in the creation of a peaceful and democratic society. The task of empowering those citizens with the necessary attitudes, skills, and political environment is the responsibility of the negotiating leaders, political parties, independent institutes and organised civil society.

Paul Graham is the national programme director of Idasa.

A degree of hope

Recent agreements achieved by negotiators have restored a measure of hope for the future of South Africa. But the reckless war talk of some leaders and the lack of accountability displayed by others endanger the accomplishment of a democratic order, says Black Sash president JENNY DE TOLLY.

HAD I written this article a month ago, my mood would have been different and so too would my opinion of our political leadership.

Along with many South Africans, I have been feeling frustration, despair and anger at the way in which the political future of the whole nation has been held to ransom by a few. I confess to now be feeling a degree of hope because agreements have been reached in the past month that will enable the transition of this country to democratic rule. Thus I am feeling more kindly disposed toward some of our political leaders.

My hope has been restored because it now seems possible that a general election will take place on 27 April next year. It is my belief that an election must take place on that date for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is crucial that the political support of the various parties be tested as soon as logistically possible in order for legitimacy and authority to be accorded to those who make decisions on our behalf.

Secondly, the election must take place in order that all of the people of South Africa are at last given an opportunity to share in the governance of their own lives. By April 1994 South Africans will have waited four long years for the promised chance to vote for the party that they wish to represent their interests in government. Any further delay will dash raised expectations and could well lead to increased instability and violence.

I am therefore feeling grateful for the leadership shown by those negotiators at the multi-party talks who went through many drafts in order to ensure that (overwhelming) consensus was reached on four crucial bills in time for those bills to be considered in the September sitting of Parliament.

Still to be achieved are all of the logistical preparations necessary for elections. Given that we are only seven months away from 27 April, this is a huge though not impossible undertaking.

It is noteworthy that, as the multi-party negotiators came closer to agreement on those bills, so too did the sound of rattling sabres grow louder. Conservative Party leader Ferdi Hartzenberg warned that if the TEC was installed later this year, the CP would regard it as a declaration of war.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Walter Felgate of the Inkatha Freedom Party have both warned of the danger of civil war if the government and the ANC persist in making decisions not approved by the IFP, and go ahead with the April elections. Felgate threatened mass action, a familiar strategy during the past few years. The Afrikaner Volksfront has warned that it would resort to violence and military action in order to achieve its demand for an "Afrikaner volkstaat".

Are these threats a serious danger? Or are they the pressure tactics of those who wish to gain concessions now, before a general election, because they fear that their support base will be exposed as small when put to the test?

'It is time for everyone to play an active role in the transition to democracy'

Are these leaders really expressing the mood and intent of their supporters to engage in war should their demands not be met? Is this talk of war being seen by those on the ground as condoning acts of violence?

A pattern has begun to emerge of an escalation of violence as soon as some breakthrough in negotiations is achieved. Given the volatile situation on the ground, and the horrifying incidence of violence in the country, war talk by leaders is totally irresponsible. It has been said that "while our leaders war with words, we war with our sticks and guns".

Given the fact that the system in South Africa has been a highly authoritarian one, with attendant deference toward leadership, these leaders must accept responsibility for their inciting, intolerant and reckless utterings.

An encouraging sign over the past few weeks has been the commitment of the main political players to keep negotiations on the go through bilateral talks and often tough compromise. The National Party has held talks with the IFP, the ANC with the Afrikaner Volksfront, and Nelson Mandela with the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging in Beaufort West.

Those involved have demonstrated leadership and a clear understanding that South Africa stands very close to the edge; that we have only a very short time left in which to negotiate a deal, and that this is involving substantial compromise on everyone's part. The immediate future is dependent on the maturity, wisdom and skill of the major players in the continuing talks.

However, there is a very real problem with this process of negotiations and dependence on a few leaders. The problem is that while a small group of politicians and technical experts are determining our future at the World Trade Centre, and having behind-the-scenes talks, the general public has been left on the sidelines, feeling excluded from active participation in the process of transition.

There has been a lack of accountability to the groups that these leaders purport to represent, and a lack of transparency in some aspects of the negotiations. This pattern is echoed at the level of local government negotiations. As a result those on the outside feel alienated. We also are left feeling that because the situation in the country is so desperate, we must be grateful for the agreements that are being reached, despite their inadequacies.

We have grown weary of the daily carnage, the acts and utterings of political intolerance, and the posturing and grandstanding. On 2 September 1993 ordinary citizens made it quite clear what they want. On that day millions of South Africans across the country physically demonstrated their longing for a resolution to this country's current crisis and their common desire for a peaceful future.

It is time for everyone to play an active role in the transition to democracy. We must also become a part of the process and demand that mechanisms are set up which ensure that the politicians and leaders account to us in an open and inclusive way. To demand any less will mean that we risk perpetuating the secrecy, abuse of power and violation of human rights that have characterised our recent history.

'Slogans don't kill'

A number of slogans used by political leaders in recent months have caused strong reactions in the media and among sectors of the public. UCT political scientist JEREMY SEEKINGS is sceptical about the emphasis placed on the issue, however. He spoke to SUE VALENTINE.

MOST OF the discussion in newspapers about emotional slogans seem to miss a whole lot of points. Slogans are symbolic and shouldn't be read literally.

Probably the most controversial slogans are "Kill the boer, kill the farmer" and "One settler, one bullet". As far as I can recall, "One settler, one bullet" did not have any currency during the 1980s in United Democratic Front structures, but slogans about boers certainly did.

I don't know where they originated, but I imagine they came out of the freedom songs of the 1950s and 1960s and were given a big boost by the whole experience of Afrikaans in 1976. That particular slogan, "Kill the boer, kill the farmer", as with most slogans and most freedom songs, seems to me to be at such a symbolic level that to try read it literally is nonsense.

This was a big debate in the Delmas treason trial (1985-89) and other trials. The state was trying to say there was a conspiracy between the UDF leadership and the ANC which was causing the violence in the Vaal Triangle and elsewhere, but it was unable to show any concrete connections. And so the state's case ended up revolving around slogans, freedom songs and speeches to see if they included ANC messages, and so on.

The intriguing thing about "Kill the boer, kill the farmer" is that it's translated into English and the translation is what makes it interesting. It doesn't just focus on "boers" and the associations that term has with the state, but it also names farmers specifically.

'Violence can't always be traced to particular slogans or buzz words.' ERIC MILLER, Southlight

The other thing is that there is a perception that farmers are, for the most part, combatants. And it's a perception that is born out in reality – remember the landmines in the Northern Transvaal? There is a real basis for seeing farmers in those areas as combatants.

But doesn't the media attention, coupled with the continued, almost deliberate use of the slogans give their content greater meaning?

I wouldn't look so much at the literal content of the slogan as at what the slogan is saying. Slogans are by definition symbolic and what the slogan is saying is that violence plays a part in the strategy.

This is a point which I'd raise as a limit to the whole focus on slogans. In townships you're not going to find many people who don't believe that violence isn't part of a strategy, and the reason is that violence is an everyday feature of life. Given the complete inadequacy of the security forces in terms of day-to-day policing, defensive forms of violence are very widely sanctioned. In other words, defensive forms of violence are seen as defensive and responsible and all the rest of it, not simply as out-of-control.

That's an issue which I'm sure is endlessly discussed and debated and gossiped about in townships. But if Peter Mokaba stands up at a funeral in Thembisa and says, violence is part of us and it's something we have to take seriously and engage in, he's actually just expressing a reality. It's a reality on the ground, just as much a reality as the multi-party talks at Kempton Park.

There are two responses to this situation I suppose. The first is that, even if it is a reality, Mokaba shouldn't say anything about it and should ignore the reality that is there. That's what the media seem to want. The second involves asking whether talking about it and using slogans in some sense sanctions or perpetuates cycles of violence?

Now I'm quite sceptical about that. Slogans on their own don't kill people. Other things do. The question is do slogans rouse

'Large parts of South Africa are in a semi-war situation. The meaning of liberalism and tolerance in that context is very different from an ideal sense'

people and motivate them to actually engage in violence? I would be very suspicious and sceptical that slogans in fact do that.

What you need to focus on far more are the day-to-day dynamics in which self-defence units and so on are strategising around the ways they'll defend townships, or the way hostel dwellers are strategising on how they'll protect themselves or whatever.

What happens at funerals is far more a reflection of what is happening on the ground than a contributory factor. That would be my guess, anyway. The only way to really tell would be to undertake some very detailed micro study.

But at the moment, certainly in the Western Cape, it would seem that slogans are being used to vindicate people's actions. People are chanting them and acting on them.

I'd have more problems with a slogan like "One settler, one bullet", than "Kill the boer, kill the farmer" because the symbolism in the slogan is very different. Certainly I'd have a problem with political leaders using that slogan because it's saying that my political party is going to condone certain forms of action which follow on from this.

In the case of the PAC, I'd say that the use of the slogan "One settler, one bullet" by political leaders at rallies is probably far less important than the fact that, on a day-to-day basis, PAC leaders are saying to followers, in statements, not in slogans, "go ahead and take action". This is rooted in the PAC's understanding of the struggle.

If we want to know why PAC-aligned youths are attacking whites trying to go into townships, I don't think it's because PAC leaders mouth "One settler, one bullet". I think it's because the PAC articulates a view of the struggle in which violence plays an important part.

The ANC view of the struggle, while ambiguous, has tended to vary according to different parts of the ANC in different parts of the country. In general it has been one in which morality has been recognised in almost Christian, bourgeois terms, if you want to put it that way. It has a much deeper hold and I think that is a key reason why it permeates through to the ANC support base.

You can take another example – a counter-example which is quite illustrative – which is the Inkatha Freedom Party. Inkatha goes around all the time complaining that it doesn't use these vicious slogans and that it's a very upright party – and it doesn't use slogans. But if you want a single case of where a political party has been instrumental in fomenting violence as a result of what's been said at rallies and in meetings, I would argue that it was when the IFP tried to expand its support base and organise on the Reef from mid-1990. There was a great deal of violence.

In June, July, August 1990 there was a whole series of rallies and at those rallies there were no slogans, as far as I'm aware. But the IFP said two things. Firstly, it told supporters they had experiences of being ostracised or intimidated in the past. Secondly, it basically said that the ANC and its allies were out to get you and unless you did something about it, things would go from bad to worse.

That was a statement, an analysis of the situation, not a slogan. The direct result was that when people from IFP rallies went back to the hostels, they barricaded themselves in and started slaughtering anybody who wasn't an Inkatha supporter. Now that's a prime example of the way in which analysis and argument, which resonate with the way in which the supporters see the world anyway, are in certain cases much more dangerous than slogans taken out of context.

I'm sure that if you looked at, for example, racist violence by whites, you'd find a similar thing: systematic violence perpetrated from a basis of racist language and concepts, but which you couldn't trace to particular slogans or particular buzz words.

Do you think that youth today are often ignorant of the context from which slogans originated and that often their use of slogans is expedient? They invoke political language but there is no fresh analysis of changing conditions or circumstances?

I think there is a problem. In the mid-1980s those who would have been described as youths who had a penchant for direct action would have understood this action in ways drawn from the liberation struggle,

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Fear is blinding us

Danish student Henrik Poulsen gives his first impressions of South Africa.

I ARRIVED in South Africa early in September, on a bright sunny day. From my window in the plane I could see the green fields and characteristic mountains around Cape Town, and my expectations about my five-month stay intensified. I had a feeling of coming to a country at peace with itself, even though I knew that it was not true.

But already in the airport that feeling disappeared. The very first news I was told was that a white woman had been killed in the township the day before.

I did not take much notice at the time because I knew that South Africa was experiencing a lot of violence. But after only a few hours I was almost transformed into a nervous wreck. All the whites I met were talking about the murder with fear in their voices. Everybody seemed to be in shock. Later that day I saw a newspaper story about the murder that took up three full pages. Since then the one-sided and inadequate newspaper reporting has become one of the most irritating aspects of being in South Africa. Sometimes I have a feeling of knowing more about South Africa from reading the Danish newspapers.

I think I got what could be called culture shock. I come from Denmark, a very, very peaceful country. You don't have to worry about where you go, and unless you are a woman you can walk alone, even at night. Now suddenly I found myself wondering all the time where it was safe to go. I always ask at least three or four people if it would be safe.

For a while this meant I did not go anywhere, but soon I was forced by those around me to go to more "insecure" areas. Today I have already achieved several things I wanted to achieve; I have been on a short visit to some of the townships and I attended an ANC mass meeting in Elsies River. So in a way one can

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Residents' Association leaders address a meeting at Port Nolloth. PAUL GRENDON, Southlight

Local must be lekker

The acid test of democracy is how people use it at the local level ... in the cities, towns and villages, writes RALPH LAWRENCE.

A PROPER TEST of democracy in a society is how well it is practised at the local level throughout the country, in the cities, in the towns, in the villages.

There are a number of reasons for this assertion. One is the argument that a democratic system can only function as such when all its interrelated parts operate fully and in harmony with one another, at every tier, from national down to local level. Another is that although central government concerns tend to be uppermost in most people's minds, local institutions deal more intimately with citizens' basic needs – housing, health care, services such as refuse removal, and social welfare provision.

Furthermore, there is a need to counter the tendency for the state bureacracy to form what often seems an insurmountable barrier between government and citizen. Local government serves as a prime means to achieve this, by enticing each community to become involved in looking after its own public affairs.

The advantages are manifold. For a start, local government, as the very term suggests, imparts a sense of locale: it is a focal point of the place where one belongs because it gives organisational expression to one's community. Local government is thus integral to one's citizenship, acting as an instrument of participation.

A vibrant democracy is not only receptive to participatory ventures, for this is any citizen's right, but also encourages processes of deliberation. Issues must be raised and debated; community feelings must be expressed. Individuals and organisations operating in the locale are thus enabled to become active in governing their community.

'The puritanical ethos and ideological intolerance of many a civic association bodes ill for democracy'

Tackling matters of governance in one's own backyard is often more appealing, less formidable and certainly less remote than governance at a national level. Furthermore, issues of local importance can be settled with the necessary sensitivity if those responsible for local governance have a personal stake in the community. From this perspective, local government makes for sensible, efficient and flexible outcomes.

Democracy's well-being depends on making participation and deliberation as widespread and constant as a citizenry can tolerate. Without such participation neither the spirit not the practice of democracy can survive. When the cry goes up "return government to the people", the quest is really for government to be more responsive to the needs of the populace. Strong local government holds out precisely this hope.

All these observations apply to the rural areas as much as to the cities. However, the focus here is on cities because it is there that the cutting edge of social change is to be found, for good and for ill. There the issues are starkest, arise first, attract media publicity and receive political attention.

The cities are the destination of those seeking to escape from rural poverty. The burgeoning populations of the cities, notably in the Witwatersrand, strain public revenue ever more, and already-inadequate services and infrastructure – housing, roads, schools, hospitals – fall ever shorter of community needs. This is the timebomb ticking in our midst.

What then are the prospects for democracy taking root in South African cities? Certainly it must be said that we confront the most difficult task imaginable, in perilous political and economic circumstances. Our cities reflect two sharply distinct political styles and credos, each the creature of apartheid, each introspective and essentially alien to the other.

The insiders are the enfranchised, whose interest in their city tends to be parochial and sporadic, enlivened only when a con-

tentious matter agitates them. Hikes in property rates, zoning applications, the burden on ratepayers allegedly subsidising people who won't pay for services, the salaries of councillors – these are common causes of political apoplexy.

Insider local government elections often have extremely poor turn-outs; even by the narrow standards of the insiders, participation is low. Deliberation occurs mainly at the behest of a city council, and within its specialised committees the power politics of the cabal hold sway.

The prevailing concern seems to be with getting central government off the back of local government, and getting local government off individual backs. Local government is viewed mainly as a regulative agency, there to preserve a certain way of life in the city that is wholly congenial to the insiders.

The outsiders are those who apartheid tried to define out of existence in the cities, but couldn't. Economic imperatives dictated otherwise and the administrative and policing chores necessary for another outcome proved to be beyond the state's capacity.

Circumstances have changed somewhat but the vacuum created by apartheid plagues the outsiders still. They are still disenfranchised, for example; still regarded as objects of administration. However, they have proved far from content to acquiesce in the mechanisms of local government thrust on them in the 1980s.

As to participation, outsiders mobilised by means of residents' associations, civics, street committees. However, there is little indication that such organisations embrace entire communities. Scope for participation is thus limited to devotees, and to reluctant converts. In similar fashion, deliberation, while ostensibly welcomed, is determined by the constrictions of membership, and often monopolised by the tight preserve of the leadership.

Of course, one has to remember the hostile political climate in which such organisations began and still find themselves. Nonetheless, the puritanical ethos and ideological intolerance of many a civic association bodes ill for democracy.

Collective action is the urban outsider's most discernible political style, using direct methods of street theatre – marches, rallies, delegations of protest, boycotts, and at times violent shows of strength. For the outsiders, governmental structures are perpetrators of discrimination. Thus no compromise is possible. Outsiders often feel impelled to become outlaws in defence of their communities, in protest at their lack of rights.

While the organs of the apartheid state were the enemy, a post-apartheid society, so it is thought, will convert them into agencies of social justice, designed and equipped to address the basic needs of the citizenry. Here lies the rub. To what extent can the local state provide services and facilities to match the expectations of the populace? And, a related question, to what extent can the worlds of urban insider and outsider converge?

The primary line of demarcation between the two worlds should disappear forthwith. Only when all are enfranchised can we start to conceive of the beginnings of political equality in this country. Only then can a sense of belonging grow in each South African, linking each to a specific locale and community.

On such foundations, agreed terms of participation and deliberation in urban governance can be forged. But getting there is proving highly problematic.

The interim proposal, of merging existing racially defined local authorities so as to yield "single city" governance, has foundered for the moment on the rock of right-wing hositility. The current government has capitulated and, no doubt, the onus will now be on the Transitional Executive Council to find a way ahead.

Very recently, the city councils of Durban and Pietermaritzburg fended off efforts to open mayoral elections to other than the white councillors already in place. The closer to home the imperatives for political change are experienced, the fiercer the reargurard action by those who fear the future. Democracy at the local level is crucial, yet it is the most daunting step of all – for everyone, no matter their political hue.

Still, muddling along towards democracy is preferable to doing nothing. If we can proceed towards this goal in our cities, keeping our aspirations muted despite our wildest dreams, we will crack the shell around the treasure of democracy. For it is a fruit with an urban flavour, and it is not an exaggeration to say that much of our political salvation depends on the fate of democracy in the cities.

Ralph Lawrence teaches political science at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

The buzz about capacity

Building capacity not a simple task

By MICHELLE BOOTH

FOR MANY people "capacity building" is yet another bit of jargon to emerge from the transition process. It has become a buzz-word in many of the forums set up across the country to address a range of issues, but it is used without a common understanding of its meaning.

To assist in the process of developing such an understanding, the Western Cape office of Idasa recently held a workshop on the subject in Cape Town. The workshop brought together a wide range of NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and funding organisations, as well as delegates from local authorities. Several of the organisations are actively involved in both the Western Cape Economic Development Forum and the newly formed Cape Metropolitan Negotiating Forum.

Organisations committed to participating in the numerous forums are under tremendous pressure to "perform", from within and without their structures. Many CBOs damaged by the repression of the 1980s have been struggling to rebuild and strengthen their organisations while at the same time meeting the demands of the various forums.

These demands are stretching the capacity of organisations in many ways, given their often limited human and financial resources. This in turn results in a limited capacity to consult properly with membership, with possible serious implications for accountability.

Effective participation in the transition processes depends not only on political knowledge and experience but also on skills and knowledge to which most communities have not had access as a result of apartheid. Disempowerment is often the consequence of the lack of information, lack of skills and weak organisational infrastructure which bedevil many CBOs.

One interpretation of capacity building sees it as aimed at addressing these lacks so that the CBOs concerned can participate effectively and on an equal footing with better-resourced organisations. In some respects this understanding of capacity building is similar to the concept of levelling the playing fields – addressing imbalances brought about by apartheid.

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Building capacity

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However, critics of this view of capacity building find it problematic, since it implies that capacity and resourcefulness do not already exist in communities. This may lead to a situation where attempts at capacity building increase dependency relations with outside agents, rather than improving reliance on local knowledge and expertise.

Capacity building has been the subject of much dialogue and debate between CBOs and the service organisations often called in to help them acquire information and skills. This can be a problematic relationship, with CBOs becoming dependent on service organisations and the belief being reinforced that community organisations cannot fulfil their capacity needs without other organisations.

But who does capacity building? Do communities identify their own needs and initiate their own programmes, contracting

Workshop in progress

service organisations to provide specific assistance? Do communities and CBOs rely on other organisations to do the whole job? Ideally commmunities will reach the stage where they no longer need service organisations.

Another difficult issue is who has access to capacity building in the community or organisation? It may well be that those who already have power in organisations and communities are first in line for capacity building and thereafter control access to capacity-building programmes.

Ideally, as many people as possible should benefit. However, capacity building can create, foster and sustain powerful elites within community organisations and encourage the development of hierarchies.

Building capacity is clearly an enormous challenge to all those involved in development and democratisation.

Michelle Booth is office co-ordinator in the Western Cape office of Idasa.

Tackling the feverish state of the nation

By ALISON CURRY

VOTER EDUCATION is the growth industry of the moment. The demand is huge and the supply is not always able to meet burgeoning needs. If the whole exercise is to be worthwhile, however, it is important to ask some critical questions about who needs to know, and what it is they need to know.

If voter education is simply about how to make a cross on a ballot paper, then the implications for those involved in voter education are clear: voter education is for those who have never voted before. But, at Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy, we have found that voter education goes much deeper than the mechanics of voting.

If one were to take the emotional temperature of the average South African (if such a creature exists), the reading would reflect a fairly feverish state of fear, confusion, cynicism or disillusionment.

It is quite clear that such feelings exist across the board, although black communities are probably the most traumatised communities, with the least access to support and counselling. No one is unaffected, however. No one is immune, despite the height of their walls or the cost of their security systems.

Although it is the black citizens of this country who have borne the brunt of years of apartheid and now reel under the most staggering levels of daily violence, many whites are traumatised by the fear, albeit less direct, that they too could become victims of an attack like the St James Church massacre; the fear that things will change for the worse after the election; that there will be a slide into chaos.

If one thing is certain it is that the future holds change on a whole lot of levels. For most people, regardless of colour or culture, change is a scary business, even positive change such as promotion or the birth of a baby. Fear of change, a very deep-rooted fear operating on a number of levels, is what we are experiencing on an unprecedented national scale right now. Those involved in voter education therefore need to be sensitive to the fears of all South Africans.

Obviously the people who need the most assistance are those who have never voted before. For people who are illiterate, the thought of having to enter a voting station and make a cross on a ballot paper – in the right place in the right way – is extremely intimidating. Added to this is the often expressed fear of violence on polling day and the related fear of exposure to violence while commuting to and from township areas.

However, to maintain that voter education is a "black" or shopfloor issue is to miss the challenge of nation-building, of shaping a common vision, understanding the real constraints, and developing commitment to the long road.

All South Africans are suffering from different degrees of limited vision. It is a national disease and no one is immune. We all tend to see things from where we are standing and we as trainers are not exempt from the syndrome. We too see only a part of the picture, perceive it from a particular angle.

'To maintain that voter education is a "black" or shopfloor issue is to miss the challenge of nation-building, of shaping a common vision'

But by sharing and discussing our fears and confusions in groups we can help to build a sense of the bigger picture, the process operating behind the events – the headline-making, the tragic, the technical, the traumatic events that are our daily media meal.

I have been deeply moved in training sessions where real honesty has emerged in groups made up of very different people. A white clerk said: "Well, I am a Rhodesian and I lost all my family in the war so I am pretty bitter. I had to start all over again here, and I'm not going to let the ANC take away my assets."

An election training workshop at the University of the Western Cape. ERIC MILLER

A black colleague replied: "Well, I lost the two closest people in my life – my husband and my son – in the struggle for liberation, and still I am not free. My home has been burnt. Every day when I leave for work I don't know whether I will see my daughter that night. But still I try not to be bitter."

This kind of sharing enabled us all to shed a little bit of blackness, a little bit of whiteness, and to engage a little bit more with each other as individual people – a bit more of Mercia, a bit more of Thembeka ...

Then there is, of course, the factual and logistical level to deal with and the fact that the coming election will be different from all previous elections not only because it will be the first democratic election, but on a number of other counts:

- The size of the electorate – 22,7 million as opposed to the approximately 4 million who voted in the last whites-only referendum;
- The scale of the election – there will be between 7 000 and 9 000 voting stations throughout the country, each requiring trained officials, monitors and party observers;
- The number of parties participating – at present there are 26 parties taking part in multi-party negotiations;
- People will be voting for parties, not candidates;
- Parties will have lists of nominated candidates at both a national and regional level;
- People will vote once, but the vote will be a dual vote, counting as both a national and regional vote;
- A system of proportional representation will be used, unlike the previous Westminster winner-takes-all, constituency-based system;
- The voting period could be between one and three days;
- In all probability there will be no voters roll;
- There will be a negotiated electoral procedure, including a code of conduct;
- Party campaigns will be subject to negotiated restrictions.

Thus, the challenge facing us lies beyond ensuring a high turn-out for the election. Certainly a high turn-out will enhance the legitimacy of the elected government, but it is political tolerance before, during and after the election that will legitimise the process. It is only if we really seek to understand one another's fears, for fear is at the root of all prejudice, that we will help to achieve this.

Alison Curry is a tutor in the Training Centre for Democracy.

Voter education 'can work'

By RONEL SCHEFFER

"IN CAMBODIA we learnt that voter education can work," said UN electoral officer Judy Thompson. Later, she added: "But part of our message to Cambodians was that there are no instant fixes."

Right now the latter lesson must stand Cambodian voters in good stead. Four months after a hugely successful election – and on the eve of the departure of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (Untac) – the country remains fearfully fragile. A shaky transitional government is trying to rebuild the country and write a constitution, but the Khmer Rouge still controls some 20 percent of the country and continues its campaign of violence.

On May 23 this year, the Cambodian people – victims of war and terror for nearly three decades – decided that, whatever the difficulties, any election was better than no election. They were determined to complete the final stage of the settlement agreed to by all parties in Paris in October 1991. A 90 percent poll was returned despite a Khmer Rouge boycott.

An atmosphere of violence and intimidation still prevailed shortly before the elections. Yet it seems that the four million voters believed what they had been hearing from Untac over the previous 11 months: their vote was secret and no one would retaliate against them for casting it.

"Under the circumstances it was truly an act of courage to vote," said Thompson. "When Untac arrived the year before we were dealing with people who were full of fear, and there was real skepticism about a secret vote.

"But then slowly the people began grasping the idea that they were going to do it. It was quite amazing."

The government of the day did not win the election and did not accept the results. The vice-president and his army (there were four armies in Cambodia) attempted to secede but the whole exercise fizzled out two days later.

"The voters believed that they had voted and they were not going to give it up. Sooner or later the politicians have to listen," said Thompson.

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Voter education 'can work'

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Canadian-born Thompson served as Deputy Chief Electoral Officer of Untac, directing an intensive voter education programme. She recently visited South Africa to report to the Canadian government on appropriate assistance for South Africa in the run-up to elections.

Thompson says that when Untac started its voter education campaign ("peace and democracy is a viable option to violence") Cambodians did not have a clue about the meaning of democracy. "Being in opposition meant that you got shot or put in jail," she said.

Although conditions were dangerous, Untac had the resources to conduct very effective voter education, largely by means of radio broadcasts and personal contact. While the electoral staff numbered only 650, Untac had its own radio station and hundreds of Cambodian nationals were hired to do personal or face-to-face voter education.

The campaign drew logistical support from some 20 000 Untac staff in Cambodia (civilians, police and soldiers). They saw to it that the trainers were delivered to the voters, "by boat, ox-cart or helicopter", said Thompson.

THOMPSON: Real skepticism about secret vote.

Untac had 11 months in which to prepare a fairly illiterate population for the election. "It was not enough time," said Thompson. "One can never start early enough." Radio broadcasts began at three hours a day and peaked at 15 hours.

"When the UN arrived, there were high expectations that we would deliver peace and prosperity," said Thompson. "Very soon great distrust set in, but we got over that and people started developing an understanding of what we were doing."

She emphasises that voter education is a trust-building exercise. Voters don't trust outsiders and they don't trust state radio services.

Most important was to get across the message that the ballot was secret and safe. This was part of every phase of the education programme, which culminated in an intensive six-week campaign on how to vote and where to vote.

Thompson believes that both political parties and NGOs need to do voter education, especially since political parties can never hope to be seen as non-partisan.

Her experience in Cambodia was that voters had great difficulty in deciding for whom to vote, often because the parties could not provide adequate information about their policies. "Every one of the 20 registered parties, for example, claimed to stand for peace and democracy."

Thompson said she was very impressed by the contribution made by civil society in South Africa, and by the quality of NGO voter education programmes.

From her discussions with South Africans, Thompson gauged significant support for a limited role in the elections for the international community. "In the end though, no outsider group can make it happen for you. You must do it for yourselves."

Welcome waits for 'lost child' of Africa

Tanzania, unwavering foe of the apartheid state, home to thousands of Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres, has long seemed a place that would be unhealthy for white South Africans. Cape Town journalist TONY WEAVER, travelling with film maker Liz Fish to whom he is married, was happily surprised.

KYELA, Southern Tanzania. – This crossing from Malawi into Tanzania is notorious among African travellers. This is the big ugly, where the Tanzanian authorities strip-search you and your vehicle, where five-hour waits are shortened only by the production of reasonable wads of US dollars.

Just a few short months ago, white South Africans stood less chance of getting through than the UN has of bringing peace to Somalia. Getting a Tanzanian visa was easy enough: the High Commisssion in Harare couldn't have been friendlier. The visas took 24 hours to process, despite warnings we'd had from British travellers that theirs took a week.

We drove nervously through the 20 km of no man's land separating Malawi from Tanzania. No matter how good your papers, if a Tanzanian border official doesn't like you and stamps "prohibited immigrant" into your passport, that's it, the end of your African safari. And three days earlier, we'd heard the news on the BBC: Chris Hani assassinated by a whitey. We reckoned we'd be as popular as Joe Slovo at an AWB rally.

The customs man inspected our visas through mirror sunglasses, his face grim and unsmiling. He'd just finished grilling two Dutch backpackers who walked in cocky, stumbled out pale-faced – and they were leaving Tanzania, for heaven's sake.

He thumbed our passports, took off his shades and stuck out a meaty hand. "I am deeply sorry about your loss. Chris Hani was a great son of Africa," he said.

"You know," he continued, "you are among the first white South Africans to cross this border and we want to show you that you have nothing to fear from black Africa. South Africa is the lost child of Africa, the naughty one that strayed. We are all the family of Africa, waiting to welcome you home."

I am recording his words in detail, not only because they made a profound impression then, but because they set the tone for the welcome we were to receive thoughout Tanzania. The customs man pondered a while then said: "Your President De Klerk is a great man of Africa, a man of history. Together, he and Nelson Mandela will change the history of Africa."

We chatted a while. He was amazed to hear that my family had been in Africa for several hundred years. "We thought all whites

WARM HEART OF AFRICA: Anxious that South Africa should pull through.

were wazungus, Europeans. But you are not wazungus, you are watu mw'Afrika, people of Africa, Africans, not like the whites of Tanzania."

He gave a perfunctory glance in the back of our Land-Rover and waved us through. We spent three months there; the memories pile up like favourite old books: drinking whisky with a drunk Catholic priest, sailing a dhow over cobalt-blue and starfish-orange coral reefs with six men all called Ali, sweating out malaria and amoebic dysentery in a fairytale mountain outpost, celebrating Eid in Zanzibar, dining on coconut, pawpaw, giant lobster, octopus and oysters on a phosphorescence-lit tropical beach.

We even ate homemade koeksisters and boerewors, and drank a bottle of KWV Roodeberg with a boeremeisie from Kuils River who travelled on a Norwegian passport and had only been able to admit to being South African in the last six months, after two years of living in Tanzania. But that's another story for another day.

She had an old copy of *Die Suid-Afrikaan* lying around. In it, an article on African cinema deplored the Euro-centricity of white South Africans, and the writer, a white South African, referred scathingly to "restless white youth travelling through Africa in Land-Rovers, carrying cameras instead of guns, not too different from their colonial forebears" – words to that effect.

The poverty of those words came back to us many times as we met other restless white youth, and elders, travelling through Africa, all of them, without exception, overwhelmed by the warmth and welcome with which they were received north of the Limpopo.

One man, a Kalahari farmer from Kenhardt in the northern Cape, with a *brei* thick enough to rope *tollies*, remarked: "Ek wens my mense die goeters jare terug kon gesien het" (I wish my people could have seen these things years ago). "Dis so lekker, die mense het g'n haat in hulle nie" (It's so great, these people have no hate in them).

Without exception, the white South Africans we met had all made a startling discovery: they were Africans and were acccepted as Africans by other Africans: they were not wazungus like their pigment brothers and sisters who came to goggle at the game, videotape the tribal dancers, and return home having been in *Out of Africa*.

But this is not an easy time to be travelling "abroad" as a white South African. The BBC news tells us why every night: massacres in Sebokeng, Thokoza, Kenilworth; Eugene Terre'Blanche telling the volk to "prepare for war".

An old family friend and his brother, committed Africans, committed peacemakers, are gunned down on the Wild Coast where they had holidayed since they were kids. Letters from home are filled with despair and fear. The Prague Spring is over.

A strange thing happens in Tanzania and Kenya, over and over again. A black person asks us: "Natoka wapi?" (Where are you from). We reply, "Afrika Kusini" (South Africa). They grasp our hands and reply: "Pole sana, pole sana." (We are so sorry, so sorry).

Because Africa is in agony over South Africa. Victory was so close and now they see it slipping away, sliding towards the kind of nightmare they knew in Uganda, Zanzibar, that they know all too well in Somalia, the Sudan, Zaire and Angola.

Because South Africa was the symbol of what could be: it is further down the road to democracy than Malawi, Tanzania; there are more basic democratic freedoms than in Kenya; things work "down south"; corruption is still something to be ashamed of; the basic wage is five times that of a professor in Tanzania (incredible, but true) and most of the politicians are in the game for their people, not for themselves.

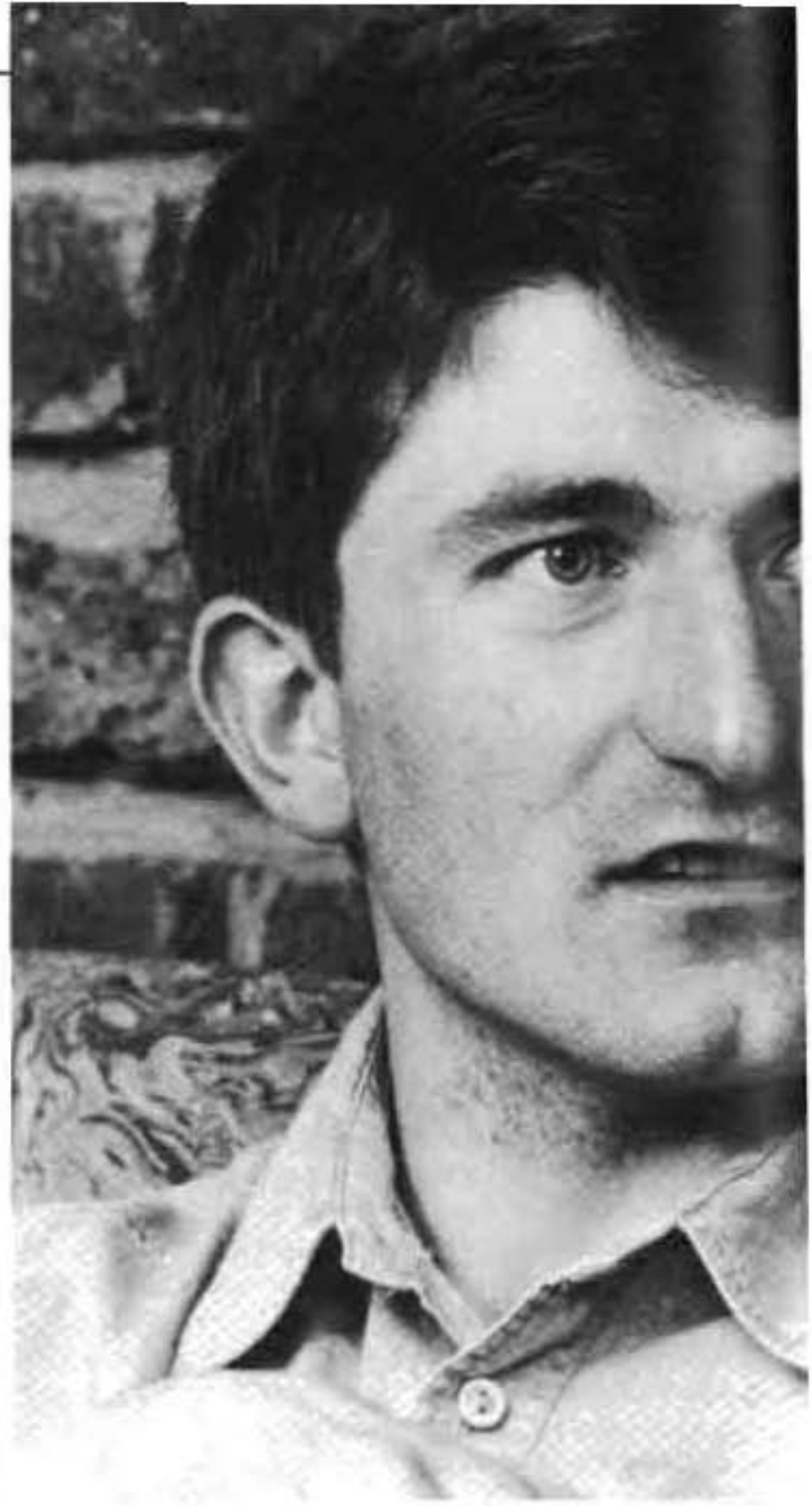
Still, there is hope, and a kind of breathless waiting, a terror of what the next day's headlines will bring from "down south". A Ugandan man whose family fled the terror of Idi Amin and Milton Obote said to us: "If Uganda can go through what it did, and be such a happy place today, then South Africa can pull through."

Meanwhile, the family waits up north, waiting to see if the naughty child will come home, or hover indefinitely at the garden gate.

(This article first appeared in The Cape Times.)

For the sake of Afrikaner power?

The release of racist murderer Barend Strydom was not a mistake, says HANS PIENAAR. Rather it was part of the calculated creation and manipulation of racial chaos for the sake of preserving Afrikaner power.



BAREND STRYDOM: Racist pawn of Afrikaner establishment?

THE MOST distressing thing about the death of American student Amy Biehl was not its suddenness, irrationality, or arbitrariness. On the contrary, it was that she died in the service of a terrible logic, in the playing out of an inevitable and entirely predictable scenario.

Not that there is anything acceptable about the current pathetic politics and puerile pontifications of the parasitic PAC. The logic and rationality is that of the current Afrikaner power elite, which has laid the parameters enabling Biehl's death in a series of calculated acts which, I am sure, will ensure for it a place in history as one of the most evil regimes of the century.

Most of us will fondly remember the goodwill that blossomed after the unbanning of the ANC and other political organisations. The first act that began to erode this goodwill was the freeing of multiple murderer Barend Strydom, the first of many releases of racist murderers, the most recent a policeman who had served only three years of a 20-year sentence.

What these releases did was to write in stone that it was acceptable to kill members of other races. Already at the trials of those accused of the Biehl and Saint James killings placards are being brandished that use Barend Strydom's name as a defence, while across the country right-wing attacks on blacks continue unabated.

Was Strydom's release an error of judgement? A cynical political ploy that went awry? My experience in the bosom of the Afrikaner establishment has led me to believe otherwise: that it is part of the calculated creation and manipulation of racial chaos, for the sake of the quite remorseless promotion of Afrikaner power.

At the time of Strydom's release I worked for *Rapport* as a sub-editor. *Rapport* was the newspaper that gave Strydom money for his "life story", which amounted to a page full of happy photographs and reports written in a style that can only be described as yellow press praise poetry.

I refused to edit any of these reports and wrote a memo to editor Izak de Villiers requesting leave to make my opposition to the newspaper's action public. I also stated that I would desist from this if *Rapport* gave the same amount of money to Strydom's victims, and if De Villiers would prohibit the racism that broke out among staff members at the time.

To my surprise, De Villiers agreed. But after some months it became clear that nothing was going to happen. On the contrary, racist remarks increased and *Rapport* fed readers a steady diet of further right-wing praise poetry.

After the David Webster inquest, for example, most of a page was devoted to Ferdi Barnard of hit squad notoriety, serving also as free advertising for his new business as a private detective. *Rapport* hailed Oupa Gqozo as a leader of the future just before the Bisho massacre. It urged votes for Jonas Savimbi just before Unita refused to accept the result of the Angolan election.

The right-wing sympathies of *Rapport* under De Villiers are clear. Indeed, the tendency has been to write him off as a maverick, because the right wing is so out of touch with reality.

But De Villiers is no maverick. Quite the contrary: he is a member of the Broederbond and seems to enjoy the backing of the Afrikaner establishment.

Complaints from the public about Rapport's engagement with Strydom yielded no fruit, for example. The newspaper enjoyed a technical acquittal on charges of contravening the ethical guidelines of the Media Council, then chaired by another Broeder-

bonder, Kobus van Rooyen.

Indeed, De Villiers himself told me not to make the mistake of dismissing him as a maverick. The Afrikaner establishment was behind him all the way, he said, adding that he would deny saying this were I ever to repeat it.

At a subsequent Afrikaanse Skrywersgilde meeting I heard from writer Braam de Vries that a number of "progressive Broeders" like himself opposed De Villiers's editorship but their hands were tied and they were being sidelined.

I personally am therefore satisfied that De Villiers was telling the truth about having the backing of the Afrikaner establishment. All that remains is to ask what part people like Barend Strydom play in the establishment's plans.

His release could not have been an error of judgement, for there have since been numerous opportunities to rectify such an error. The most recent was Strydom's demented statement on an Australian television programme that he would kill blacks again. Despite this clear violation of parole conditions, he is still a free man.

Again *Rapport* seems to supply an answer. When he was freed, its triumphant banner headline – you can't get bigger – was "Wit Wolf is nog hy". This means literally: Strydom (who belongs to a possibly one-man organisation called the White Wolves) is still the person he was. However, it also invokes the well-known ending of a novel from the 1950s, *Bart Nel*.

This told the story of a participant in the 1914 Afrikaner rebellion, which Jan Smuts called the Sixpenny Rebellion because it started after Boer War hero Christiaan de Wet was fined sixpence for flogging a black man tied to a wagon wheel.

The Afrikaner establishment, especially the Broederbond, has always relied on huge myths, relentlessly propagated, to mobilise Afrikaners. But the problem with mobilising Afrikaners today – and Ton Vosloo of Nasionale Pers, for one, believes Afrikaners can only survive as a group with "power" – is that the huge right wing has only its racism to go on. The only way in which the right wing could be drawn into some kind of unity with the establishment was if the latter accepted its racism.

Thus racism had to be legitimised in some way or other. The "necessary illusion", as American media theorist Noam Chomsky called it, had to be created that the racism of the right wing existed in the service of a greater ideal, that of Afrikaner survival.

When I asked De Villiers how he could do such a thing as give Strydom money, he said one had to have "deernis" (a word meaning both "sympathy" and "charity") with him. Here is the myth: Strydom and people like him are not criminals but tragic victims of history.

This echoes the John the Baptist syndrome in De Villiers's own political writing, in terms of which the Strydoms of today are heralds of future rebellions, unless people stop pushing the right wing too far. However, such rebellions are already being encouraged by the *Rapport* approach – one of making "house friends" of people like Strydom, which is how Wits academic Gerrit Olivier described it.

I am among that handful of analysts who don't believe that such rebellions will occur to any critical extent. But the problem is that this kind of thinking legitimises all other kinds of violence.

In terms of this approach, the continuing mayhem in Natal is not the result of the ruthless terror perpetrated by another fascist organisation backed by the establishment, but the mythic struggle for survival of an ethnic group forced to use violence, just like the Afrikaners.

PAC violence and Amy Biehl's death would fit a game plan of legitimising racial murders perfectly. They demonstrate firstly that racism is a fact of life, which has to be accepted and accommodated in politics. They also show that the unreasonableness of other groups can only be countered by the "purported unreasonableness" of people like Strydom.

When a mob of right-wingers recently besieged the ANC office in Bothaville, new National Party propaganda chief Marthinus van Schalkwyk was quick to assert that the right wing and the PAC desperately needed each other to survive. An ironic statement, because with the Afrikaner establishment around, who needs the right wing?

Hans Pienaar is a sub-editor at *The Star* in Johannesburg and author of the prize-winning *Die Derde Oorlog Teen Mapoch*.

Editor replies

SO, ACCORDING to Mr Hans Pienaar's "terrible logic" I am a kingpin of the "Afrikaner establishment", deeply involved – along with Ton Vosloo, Nasionale Pers, Marthinus van Schalkwyk of the National Party et al – in a racist right wing Afrikaner plot of some sorts. I give Mr Pienaar full marks for his imagination.

As for being an Afrikaner – why should I be secretive about that? And why should I deny it in public?

As for my being a Broederbonder, indeed a rank and file member: that is no secret either.

As for publishing Barend Strydom's story: quite a few publications were after that one, beating on the doors of the Sentrale, ready with their cheque books, I surmise. Those are the ways of a newspaper, as Mr Pienaar should know.

But part of a "plot"!? "Gracious me!" as my maiden aunt used to say. Is Mr Pienaar trying to imitate Robert Ludlum?

As for having the wholehearted backing of the Afrikaner establishment? A wise old cleric of yesteryear, on hearing in a synod that he was the "voice of the church", remarked with a twinkle in his eye: "Ek beswyk byna onder die eer my aangedoen." (And, just to make sure that Mr Pienaar does not completely misunderstand, as in the case of his Oupa Gqozo interpretation, it is meant ironically.)

As for being racist: Even Mr Pienaar cannot believe that. In the hectic days before the referendum when *Rapport* fought tooth and nail for a "Yes" vote, he came to me saying that he saw how I fought the Conservative Party and the right wing and how could he help me nail them still more?

A quick glance at my earliest writings, dating back to the 1960s, should convince Mr Pienaar even more of the errors of his sayings. My lament on the shameful treatment of Basil D'Oliviera should suffice.

As for Mr Braam de Vries and "a number of progressive Broeders like himself having their hands tied about my editorship" – that is news to me. Only Mr de Vries can clarify his "broederskap".

As for Mr Pienaar and his sojourn at *Rapport*: perhaps he may ponder the remark attributed to Prince Talleyrand when told that a member of Napoleon's court was uttering unkind things about him: "How strange," he said, "that this man should indulge in that type of criticism. I have never done him a favour."

Izak de Villiers

'Wrong to focus on whites'

How do black people feel when whites get killed simply because they are white? SOBANTU XAYIYA talked to residents of greater Cape Town and found that, although nobody approves of these attacks, some feel they are an inevitable part of the price South Africans are paying for decades of injustice.

Mongezi Masiza, 24, a final-year engineering student at Leaf College in Rondebosch, said it was wrong to place an emphasis on whites in the current climate of violence. "The question should rather be the killing of South Africans in general, because it is not only whites who are killed, but everybody," he said.

"It is when we have a new non-racial government that these things can be adequately addressed. The reason whites are targeted is because they are seen as the people who are resisting political changes. This is evidenced by the rate at which they are leaving the country."

But you are talking about long-term solutions. What about the interim – between now and that democratic non-racial dispensation? Should we fold our arms and let them be slaughtered?

"You seem to forget that we are in a war, and this war is no different from others – it is governed by its exigencies. I'm not sanctioning the slaughtering of whites, but I'm saying that this question cannot be addressed in isolation from the national question. In the immediate future whites should stay in their places; if they come to the townships they should do so as groups, not as individuals."

What about doctors and other white community workers – do they fall under the so-called exigencies of war classification?

"Those whose work is prominent and beneficial to the community shouldn't be victimised," said Masiza. He described incidents like the killing of American student Amy Biehl and other racial attacks in Guguletu and Khayelitsha as "isolated cases which we cannot help, spontaneous reactions of frustration which should be discouraged".

Nceba Fikizolo, 25, who works as a bank teller in Claremont, said a distinction should be drawn between whites whose presence in the townships is "genuine" and those who do not further the interests of the community. He singled out white police officers in this regard.

"Most of them joined the force when apartheid was brutally enforced. Now they cannot be expected to be agents of transformation and peace custodians. They were trained to perpetuate and preserve the apartheid laws."

He said Amy Biehl should not have been killed and it was unfortunate that she was associated with the apartheid state. He also felt that the government's selective attitude to the victims of violence was fuelling racial tensions.

"There has been so much outcry over the St James church massacre, but little government reaction to the Thokoza, Katlehong and Tembisa killings. The youth is angry over this lack of response on the part of the government. Most of the youth are not exposed to sophisticated definitions of the enemy. As a result they see any white person as the

HUBBARD: the gap can be bridged.

Will to mend dented

The demand that white members of the Internal Stability Unit (ISU) operating in the townships should be replaced by black police officers from these communities, is growing in strength. Nyanga police station commander Henry Hubbard says that would be the long-term solution to better police-community relations.

What in your opinion has caused this outcry against white police officers?

"What I've noticed in the last couple of years is that the public generally does not want anything that is connected to the government. For example, if a person is assaulted and we come to his or her rescue, the officers executing their duty end up being the victims. That is the general approach in most communities.

"As a result the police are sceptical of the community they are required to serve and the community also views them with suspicion – there is no co-operation."

MASIZA: Not only whites who are killed.

GABUZA: Whites associated with the system.

FIKIZOLO: Little reaction when blacks die.

cause of their miseries. So Amy Biehl became a victim of this short-sightedness. It's a crossfire.

"We are also not safe here in the townships. We live under the spectre of death squads. I mean, at any moment they can just burst into this place and open fire on us."

What is your position on ideologies that nurture and encourage these types of racial killings?

"I suppose you are talking about the PAC. Well, as far as my understanding goes, that is irrelevant. To remedy this situation I think we will have to try some of the suggestions that have been made, like that the uneducated youth should be taken to the army."

Martin Tshezi, 22, unemployed, thinks that political affiliations should be put aside in order to address the problem adequately.

"The role that the white police play in this question shouldn't be overlooked. In some cases people kill a white person to see what the reaction of the police will be. It's more of an outburst of frustration. White policemen are committing attrocities in our townships and it's difficult to get hold of them in their armoured vehicles. As a result, individual whites who are going on their normal business in the townships are caught up in this cycle of frustration.

"Personally I'm against the killing of people by virtue of their skin colour. There are many white people who have sacrificed their privileges for our struggle. However, if there are activities in the townships, whites should come in massive numbers in order to close the gap between the townships and the suburbs. Moreover, that will serve to educate people that we are one."

Madoda Gabuza, 41, unemployed, said the killing of ordinary white people working within black communities should be discouraged. "They are killed because they are associated with the system that caused us to starve, to be homeless and unemployed," he said.

Monde Sam, 32, an ANC Youth League member who works at the Eyona Advice Centre in Guguletu, said he felt the ANC could attempt to offer protection to people performing services beneficial to the community.

Are you suggesting that marshals should be deployed in these areas and be at the service of those affected?

"Even that option has problems of its own – it will definitely lead to a direct confrontation with those people or forces perpetrating such killings. Other means have to be explored. The question of non-racialism must not be seen as blacks courting whites, but rather from the perspective of the overall objectives of the organisation. If we protect people we won't be informed by skin colour, but on the basis that they are human beings."

Ntomboxolo Zitha, 37, of Khayelitsha felt that more policemen should be deployed in the townships, not only to protect white people but to combat crime in general. She said in the past two years crime had escalated to the extent that it has become difficult for children to attend local schools or run errands.

Zitha felt strongly that the police should "stay out of politics" and "seriously" get on with policing. However, as regards demands for white officers to leave the townships, she felt that this was not a priority in the Western Cape. Compared to other regions, police in the Western Cape had "not done so much damage", she said.

Sobantu Xayiya is a freelance journalist based in Cape Town.

image of police in townships

What is your view on demands that white officers in the ISU should be replaced by black officers?

"The ISU does not only comprise white officers, there are also brown and black officials. My experience is that if a white police officer's attitude is correct, the response is always positive.

"The gap between white and black police officers can be bridged by negotiating with the affected communities. But this doesn't neccessarily mean joint control of the police force."

Are you personally opposed to joint policing?

"I feel the community should be represented within the policing structures."

What do you suggest could be a viable strategy to improve the very poor community-police relationship?

"Community representation will help to restore our dented image. There are meetings currently taking place between us and the community where we are attempting to thrash out our differences. Although I may say the community is very demanding and is not prepared to compromise on certain issues.

"It might interest you to know that within the police force itself we are facing two major problems with regard to black staff. Firstly, there is a shortage of black officers holding senior positions because most of them are reluctant to hold such positions. Secondly, there are ethnic barriers. The different language and social backgrounds of officers is a problem.

"There are short-term solutions which can be implemented within the force, like introducing language courses for black, brown and white members; teaching them to understand themselves, their community and different cultural backgrounds.

"The long-term solution is to replace white officers with black officers. The peace structures and community leaders should be involved in this. Some problems that are perceived as insurmountable will be overcome once a democratic government is in place."

Transkeians give their views on attacks

It's criminal in fairest Kei

GRACED WITH magnificent beaches, rivers full of trout and dramatic scenic beauty, Transkei is a potential magnet for tourists. However, white South Africans, who make up 87 percent of visitors to the region, are being scared off by an apparent wave of racist crime.

That there have been attacks on white people is a fact. In the past year there have been 10 incidents in which whites travelling through or on holiday in the area have been ambushed, murdered, robbed, abducted, chased or had their vehicles hijacked.

Among the worst incidents was the gruesome ambush in which Grahamstown attorney Allistair Weakley and his brother Glen were murdered while they were returning from an Easter fishing trip between Sinangwana and Port St Johns.

Since then there have been isolated incidents, a number occurring in the Qumbu area, about 58 kilometres from Umtata.

Numerous cancellations of tourist bookings have been the result. Companies running luxury buses are among those who have opted for increased costs and greater distances to avoid routes through the Transkei and the attendant threat of attacks on vehicles and passengers.

Police have attempted to reassure tourists and travellers about their safety in the region. However, they have not been notably successful in apprehending those responsible for the violence.

Transkei military ruler Bantu Holomisa admitted as much in a recent statement. He said the Transkei police force was "lagging far behind" its counterparts "in terms of manpower, strength and modern equipment". He said the ruling Military Council was exploring ways and means of upgrading the force, which needed to be increased in size "to deal effectively with the menace of the rising crime rate".

Transkei Tourism Board executive member Clive Berlyn thinks the attacks are motivated by the fact that "whites are seen as richer targets". While "robbery is the motive" in most attacks, he points out that it would be naive to see them in isolation from the political unrest occurring in the whole of South Africa.

Others living in Transkei are more puzzled.

Sipho Ndunge, a 28-year-old teacher, said: "I would be lying if I said I knew the cause of these killings. I can't base them on anything. I don't think people must be killed. There is no difference between killings in the Transkei and killings in Katlehong. They must all be condemned with the contempt they deserve. I hope things will settle after the elections."

By THANDO DALAMBA

Civil servant Thandi Ngcwabe, 30, thinks the attacks are part of the legacy of apartheid. "People are exercising some kind of revenge. However, these killings are bad. I'm unhappy because the people killed are innocent and have an interest in blacks. That's why they come here. To ensure the safety of tourists and travellers, security forces should escort them."

Nonkqubo Qangule, a 21-year-old student, agrees that revenge might be part of the motivation. "I don't know why people do it. Maybe they are revenging themselves somehow. If that's how they reflect their anger they must do it but, personally, I wouldn't."

Computer specialist Peter Jacobs, 25, thinks the attacks have something to do with anger about the apartheid system "but I don't know why people must still be angry", he adds. He doesn't think the attacks are "just a racial thing", nor that they are planned.

"I've been in Transkei for five years and am white but I'm not perturbed," he says. "Transkei must be reincorporated. We must work together rather than kill one another."

A 40-year-old policeman who wanted to remain anonymous had this to say: "There is no single case in which political organisations claimed responsibility. These killings are carried out by ordinary criminals.

"People are hungry. They think and think about ways to overcome hunger and find no answer except resorting to crime. Whites are thought of as rich. Yes, relatively, some are. Beefing up the police force won't help. Look, South Africa is a police state but it has a far higher crime rate! There must be job opportunities."

According to 22-year-old journalist George Galanakis, however, the whole furore can be put down to the fact that "people like to make something out of nothing".

Thando Dalamba is a freelance journalist based in Transkei.

Mirror, mirror, off the wall?

The perception that violent crime directed against white people is out of control in the Transkei does not reflect a factual situation, but one constructed by the media, argues ZOLA SONDLO.

THE PERCEPTION of Transkei as a hotbed of racist criminals has its roots in the Goldstone Commission finding that the homeland was being used by Apla, armed wing of the PAC, as a springboard for attacks on members of the South African Police and South African Defence Force and white civilians in South Africa.

This soured relations between Transkei and the rest of South Africa and, as a result, SADF troops set up posts on all roads leading to Transkei "to protect South African citizens from cross-border attacks". Transkei military ruler Bantu Holomisa then put his troops on alert, ordered roadblocks set up throughout the homeland, and a war of words ensued.

The South African Embassy in Transkei warned travellers and tourists to avoid Transkei if possible and cautioned those who did visit the area. The media were alerted and the East London-based *Daily Dispatch* responded particularly vociferously, its Umtata Bureau invoking and reproducing prevailing conceptions of the wave of "racist crimes" committed in the Transkei.

Sensational news headlines during the first week of the blockade emphasised the "seriousness of the situation". Certain crimes were highlighted as instances of the racist upsurge engulfing the homeland.

'Violence has engulfed the whole of South Africa and to single out one area is quite misleading'

However, the supposed enormous increase in "racist crime" given splash coverage was not reflected in documented cases. The increase was constructed by the media. There was not a marked increase in incidents of crime; rather there was a marked increase in coverage of criminal incidents.

The opinions of people in the area shed light on the agenda-setting powers that the media wield. Letters from whites poured in to the *Daily Dispatch*. Some expressed fear and horror. Others, like the white woman whose letter was printed on 7 May, accused the South African Embassy of being trapped in a "laager mentality". She said that a major factor behind the warnings issued by the embassy was "white fear based on a distrust of black people".

After the lifting of the blockade, media coverage of apparently racist attacks decreased drastically. The media focus shifted elsewhere. This shift underlines the standardised practices of media institutions. It shows how they tend to construct particular realities, favouring certain societal interests above others.

It is fallacious to see media as passively reflecting the world. The media are active in the social construction of particular realities with particular social and political consequences.

In total, there have been 10 major incidents of violence in Transkei in the last 12 months. A brief glance at statistics on violence elsewhere in the country shows that Transkei is a haven of peace compared to many of the larger South African cities. Violence has engulfed the whole of South Africa and to single out one area, particularly one in which the incidence of violence is relatively low, is completely misleading.

Zola Sondlo is a freelance journalist based in Transkei.

With Daniel Ortega: Mfundo Nkhulu, Faizel Ismail, Bo Petersen, Rob Davies, Laurie Nathan, Saleem Badat, Zenariah Barends.

Nicaragua: Dashed dreams and resilient hope

FAIZEL ISMAIL gives his impressions of a recent visit to Nicaragua by a team of Cape Town researchers.

AS WE approached Nicaragua from Miami, those of us who had been fellow travellers in the mass movements of the 1980s, recounted the hope, the excitement, and the inspiration that the revolution in Nicaragua in July 1979 had provided for a whole generation of young political activists in the early 1980s in South Africa.

No serious activist of the time did not read or discuss some aspect of the Sandinista struggle. Together with Vietnam, the experiences of the people of Nicaragua could be said to have been the leading influence that inspired the many mass organisations – students, community organisations, women's movements etc – that emerged in our country in the early 1980s.

I recounted too the shock, the distress and the dismay when on February 26, 1990 we heard Daniel Ortega announce over the radio that the Sandinistas had lost the elections. The defeat came after waves of protest and opposition in Eastern Europe brought down one socialist government after another in late 1989.

From the air, Managua, the capital, looked like a large village (despite a population of over one million) with no identifiable central area and hardly a building in sight that was more than two stories high. As we were driven through the city we could see the dilapidated buildings, ruined by both the earthquake of 1973 and the ravages of war.

The hotel in which we stayed was fairly modest, but cost $60 per room per night (approximately R200). This is very steep by South African standards and about twice the price of the hotel in which we were to stay later in Rio de Janeiro.

The prices of most consumer goods that have a high import content (most consumer goods are increasingly being imported) were extremely high. Few people can afford to pay these prices.

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Dashed dreams

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thus deepening the country's economic crises.

In a country of only 4,5 million people almost 900 000 are either unemployed or work in the informal sector. The minimum wage is about $60 a month. Even the middle class has been severely affected – university lecturers earn about $300 per month (less than R1 000). I was told about a medical doctor who has to work as a taxi driver part-time to supplement his income.

More than two thirds of the Nicaraguan economy is in the informal sector. People sell anything from fruit to car parts in the streets. Everything appears to be informal – dollars can be freely exchanged on the streets for cordobas (the Nicaraguan currency) at the black market rate. The streets are littered with dollairos (informal foreign exchange dealers).

And these are not the only things on sale on the streets – at night we observed hundreds of young girls barely in their teens selling sex to escape from poverty. Our Nicaraguan colleague explained that this phenomenon has only just sprung up since the new government came to power.

However, in the midst of the poverty there is a significant visibility of a monied class. They drive around in new American and Japanese cars and four-wheel drive vans brought in tax-free by returning exiles.

Nicaragua's economic problems lie both in the unequal balance of power in the global economy and the economic policies of the new Chamorro government. The declining terms of trade for its principal imports, its large debt repayments, and its reliance on foreign aid make it both vulnerable to the major global powers (mainly the USA) and perpetuates its dependence on these powers. The pro-American Chamorro government began to implement the notorious structural adjustment programmes in an attempt to attract international aid and loans from USAID, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

These economic policies have caused great hardship among the majority of the people.

Having lost the election, the Sandinistas (FSLN) decided to form a complex alliance with the government to prevent the right wing from imposing its policies. Furthermore it recognised that the major global institutions would not direct much needed foreign resources into a country that is not stable. Nicaragua needed foreign exchange and the flow of foreign resources to rebuild the economy. The fact that the Sandinistas still had full control of the army, headed by Humberto Ortega (the brother of the former president), did not help to build US confidence in Nicaragua. The mainstream in the FSLN decided to maintain its alliance with the Chamorro government despite its tough economic policies.

The FSLN found itself having to support these economic policies, or at least not stand vigorously opposed. The devalution of its currency, the reduction in social expenditure, the increase in interest rates and drastic reduction of the army from 80 000 to 15 000 by Humberto Ortega caused large scale unemployment. Public and private sector workers were retrenched, and the poor became poorer as their wage levels fell and prices increased.

The crisis has sparked a furious debate within the FSLN and has resulted in wide scale resistance. Workers, peasants and their trade unions which were formerly linked to the FSLN, declared their independence from the party and have been engaged in strikes against their employers. While we were in Managua over 300 retrenched sugar workers were camping outside the parliament building.

'Nicaragua's greatest hope is the will of its people to continue the struggle for human dignity'

The party is divided between those who argue the importance of maintaining stability and keeping the right wing away from power and those who argue that the FSLN should become a real opposition party and break its alliance with the government.

Daniel Ortega, when we met him, was acutely aware of these contradictions. He argued that the FSLN could easily take political and military power. However, they would run the real risk of losing all the gains of the revolution and the United States would have the pretext to intervene directly, together with the right wing, and turn the country to civil war once again.

Ortega argued that the FSLN needed to strike a balance between maintaining its opposition to the policies of the government (by supporting the demands of the mass organisations) and maintaining stability in the country.

Caught in this myriad of contradictions, the society continues to struggle to survive, but there is some hope for the future in all this. Nicaragua's greatest hope is the persistent and unrelenting will of its people to continue the struggle for human dignity.

As we boarded the plane to return and I took one more glimpse at the city, the many smiling faces, new friendships and images of a wartorn country flashed by. I began to understand that although the Sandinistas lost the elections in February 1990, the army that defeated the pro-USA Somoza regime was still in power. Also, just as in Vietnam (where the United States still imposes a trade embargo and crippling economic sanctions), and in Cuba (which has been under a continuing US embargo since Fidel Castro overthrew the US-imposed dictatorship there in 1959), the US security establishment will not rest until they have defeated the Sandinistas. They never forgive or forget those who defeat them.

Faizel Ismail is co-ordinator of the UWC-Central American University Joint Project.

Fear is blinding us

From Page 9

say I got over my culture shock.

I find it very problematic that there is so much fear about the violence, but there is every reason to be scared. The level of violence here is far beyond what I am used to.

The problem with the violence is that it separates people, and this is happening at a time when South Africans more than ever before need to be talking to each other and getting to know each other.

It is therefore a little frustrating to work for Idasa, which has as one of its aims to further contact between sections of the population. What is the use of it all when the "ordinary" white South African is sitting behind locked doors?

Another deeply frustrating feature is the apparently complete lack of concern on the part of most whites about the way the majority of black people are forced to live in squatter camps that are not worthy of animals. How can there be peace in this country when most people are not allowed to live a decent life? How is it possible to sleep peacefully in a good bed when one knows that less than 30 kilometres away hundreds of thousands of people live on a rubbish dump?

My first month in South Africa coincided with peace month, and there has been a lot of talk about peace. But talk is not enough to create peace. Unless South Africans start to take care of each other there will be no peace. There is still a very long way to go.

Henrik Poulsen is spending a traineeship at the Western Cape office of Idasa.

Mending the lives of the destitute

A kibbutz in the Boland

A NOVEL project is taking shape at Worcester in the Boland. Kibbutz El-Shammah is the idea of a handful of individuals who witnessed the intense need of destitute people in their community.

In the years before 1983 gangsterism was rife in the town. People in the lower income areas lived in constant fear of their lives because of gang warfare. Erena van de Venter, then a social worker with the Child and Family Welfare Society, decided to tackle the problem. After four years of working with the different gangs a breakthrough occurred in 1987 when former gang territories were declared open ground. Gang fights ceased and the local community was once again free to live a normal life.

Then a new need was identified. Reformed gangsters expressed concern about the increasing numbers of street children in Worcester. After working with these children for a while a home, named "Moria House", was established to accommodate them in 1990. It was found, however, that when the rehabilitated children returned to their families and to the same appalling conditions from which they had fled, they quickly fell into the same old patterns again. It was then that the idea of starting a kibbutz for the broken and destitute squatter families of Worcester emerged.

Patty Esterhuize and Erena van de Venter on site at the kibbutz.

By SHIREEN BADAT

At this stage Erena van de Venter felt that working in a parastatal was too confining and often limited exploration of new work methods. She resigned her job at the beginning of the year and by April she had assembled a committee of seven people to make the idea of a kibbutz a reality.

Patty Esterhuize, a committee member, says projects like the kibbutz offer real opportunities to make a contribution in the community.

"For too long politicians have been too concerned with politics. They have operated with blinkers and have forgotten about the social problems of the community. I see my work at the kibbutz as a way of changing this and working towards the development of my people."

Their vision for the kibbutz is that it will be instrumental in healing people psychologically and restoring family units. They hope to return to the community eventually whole individuals who are functional in their families and able to make a contribution in the community.

The first phase of the main building at the kibbutz is nearing completion and the committee pays glowing tribute to contribution made by local people. The land was donated by the municipality which also sponsored a security fence for the property. A local architect offered to draw up plans for the buildings which will house 16 families. A donation by Community Chest took care of staffing and running cost.

Some 60 unemployed people were sent on building courses courtesy of the Department of Manpower. They received training in areas such as brick laying, plastering, brick making, carpentry and plumbing. At the end of the training course a project called "Action Employment" was launched to secure employment for those not employed in building the kibbutz.

At Kibbutz El-Shammah ("manifestation of God's presence") residents will be encouraged to live within a budget and be self-supporting. There are plans to establish a vegetable garden, fruit trees and a chicken run to provide food for the kibbutz community as well as generating income. An area has been set aside for a multi-purpose sports field which will serve the surrounding community of Roodewal as well. It is also hoped that some jobs will be created for unemployed people.

The committee feels that the involvement of the local community in the kibbutz is vital to its success. A number of farmers have already become involved in the project. Some have donated the use of their tractors and plouging equipment, others have offered advice and assistance with the design of the vegetable gardens.

The kibbutz will consist of eight accommodation units, each housing two families who will share ablution, laundry and cooking facilities.

The most destitute families will be chosen to live on the kibbutz for between two and five years, during which time they will hopefully acquire sufficient life skills to enable them to return to the community.

The main method of imparting skills is through activity, according to Erena van de Venter. "We believe in working, not in preaching," she said. Families will nevertheless also undergo an intense therapeutic programme.

The vocation training programme will include courses in cooking and kitchen management, gardening, shop management, handcrafts like carpentry and leather work, laundry skills, advanced household skills and obtaining a driver's licence.

Once a family is judged to have acquired enough life-skills they will either be re-introduced to the community or have the option of a more independent lifestyle on the kibbutz in separate residences called moshavs.

Kibbutz El-Shammah has already attracted widespread interest in this country and abroad. A young German nurse recently volunteered her services to the kibbutz and will shortly move into the almost completed administration block. The committee has also organised a conference for the end of October where they will share their experience with people from all over the country who have an interest in community development.

Calling for help with poverty relief in Eastern Cape

OUT OF the Eastern Cape Poverty Relief Forum the Poverty Relief and Development Programme (PRDP) was started and endorsed by all progressive organisations in August 1991. The aim is to integrate the poor into the mainstream of economic opportunity by providing them with saleable skills to help them find ways of generating income either through employment in the private sector or through self employment.

The PRDP operates independently receiving funding and assistance from the DBSA, SA Breweries, SBDC and Nutrition Programme. Since its inception it has undertaken many projects in the area which have been aimed at the local community in providing employment, training, social upliftment and rehabilitation. Although many projects are established additional financial and material assistance is still required.

In New Brighton the PRDP undertook the cleaning up of one of the oldest most well established graveyards in the area, one which had not been maintained since it was closed for further burials in 1969. This project provided work for 175 people over a period of three days. To complete this project the PRDP is looking for assistance in the purchasing of fencing material for the graveyard, or other relevant material to cordon off the area.

Making a difference: members of the PRDP sewing project, with project manager Philip Lubember standing, second from left.

The SBDC has provided 12 industrial sewing machines to the PRDP. In line with affirmative action and the role of women in the community this project employs 14 women as sewers and one supervisor. A well established local company has contracted the PRDP for the production of bath and beach towels and the PRDP is currently negotiating contracts for the production of industrial and domestic overalls and duster coats. Due to demand they need an additional 30 industrial sewing machines to expand their operation.

Eight men were provided with employment by assisting with tiling and renovations to impoverished DET schools. As a future project the PRDP is looking for machinery needed in the manufacturing of cooking oil.

In line with a changing South Africa the PRDP has been progressive in upgrading the PE area, providing work opportunities and minimizing poverty. Anyone who feels they can assist the PRDP, financially or materially, or could make use of their services can contact Amos Dyasi (PRO) at tel (041) 546 285 or fax 522 587.

Sandy Wren
Regional Co-ordinator

SABC board head takes up the new challenge

NEW SABC head Dr Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri recognises that the SABC comes from an unfortunate past. "The SABC has been and still is a state broadcasting service, servicing the needs of the state, rather than the public. We must not let this past hold us to ransom or mortgage our future."

Even the task of unifying the board members is a mammoth one given the fact that they all come from diverse social and political backgrounds. Widely known and highly regarded within black circles at home and abroad she is hardly known within white circles. She says many whites do not know of her because she was a "nothing", until the board's strategic planning exercise.

The SABC is a national resource that reaches far more people that all the other media put together, and as such it faces a daunting challenge.

She outlined the path that this corporation must follow. The "people of South Africa must shape the views of the SABC Board and its management," she said.

"The SABC has an important role to play to assist society to manage tensions and conflict which arise from racial inequality, discrimination and political intolerance and reduce the culture of violence than to promote it. It is one thing to report on violence and quite another to focus on violence because that is news."

She later said the media as a whole must move away from the culture of "bad news is news and good news is no news. Violence in South African radio and television programmes is of an unacceptable proportion in this country. This is an issue the board might have to interfere in and put the situation right.

"We need to find a way to synchronise our message of peace and what we feed our viewers" she said.

Dr Matsepe-Casaburri said "education of the people of South Africa in democracy, democratic processes is crucial. People must be empowered to accept their new responsibility and be given the information and knowledge to make decisions. The focus will be and must be on the illiterate, the poor rural communities, workers, youth and those of suppressed language groups.

"The preparation of society for the coming election is a very important role the SABC must play".

Simon Ntombela
Regional Co-ordinator

Parties join forces for free and fair poll

A TOTAL of 16 political parties have designed a joint programme to advance political tolerance and help ensure a free and fair election. The programme involves training party agents for election day – but with a common curriculum.

The parties are the ANC, Azapo, African Democratic Movement, Afrikaner Volksunie, Democratic Party, Dikwankwetla Party, Intando Yesizwe Party, Inyandza National Movement, Inkatha Freedom Party, Labour Party, Natal Indian Congress, National Party, PAC, Solidarity, United People's Front and the Ximoko Progressive Party.

The programme was launched late in July with a pilot training workshop attended by four people from each party. Representatives from all the parties are now being trained in multi-party workshops with a common curriculum.

Some of the parties involved disagree on the purpose of the forthcoming election, and some are not participating in current multi-party negotiations. However, all believe that the programme can give participants:

- A common understanding of the new Electoral Act, resources available to political parties, access to voter registration, the electoral process, the rules governing it and the code of conduct to which all parties should adhere;
- Knowledge of electoral malpractice: what constitutes electoral fraud, vote rigging, intimidation and how to avoid it;
- An understanding of the role of monitoring in reducing political tension;
- Conflict resolution skills;
- Practical skills for monitoring the electoral process;
- The ability to train others in their organisations as effective election monitors;
- Equal knowledge and a common interpretation of the rules, which will promote acceptance of the notion that the election result, however unacceptable to any particular party, has to be accepted if the election is deemed to have been free and fair.

Participating parties also believe that the programme will help to create an atmosphere of political tolerance, which in turn will help ensure free and fair elections.

Idasa was asked to play a facilitating role in the plenary meeting at which two representatives from each party direct the programme, and also in the implementation of the training programme.

Workshops at a national level, which will be conducted in 24 centres throughout the country, will make sure that each party has the skilled personnel to get the programme going.

Each party will then run its own recruitment and training programme, but they will all use the same curriculum and materials and will share a common understanding of the purpose of the party agent.

Party agents are officials nominated by their parties to monitor voting stations, observe the count and verify at a local level that the procedures for voting and counting have been followed.

Party agents will be able to help deal with problems at a local level, with the agreement of the local officials and the parties themselves.

The programme was initiated at the beginning of 1993 and the collaboration between the parties has been impressive. However, implementation has been hindered by difficulties at the multi-party talks.

For further information on this programme contact Alice Coetzee of Idasa's Johannesburg office, or political party headquarters.

Paul Graham
Programme Director

So long, Sazi. It's been good to know you

SAZI ZIBAYA, regional secretary in Idasa's Western Cape office for the past six years, is leaving Idasa to take up a new position with Old Mutual.

She joined Idasa in its infancy, in the era of path-breaking international conferences, when regional offices were little more than an idea. She has watched the organisation develop and change in pace with the transformation taking place in South Africa.

She helped administer the Writers Conference at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe in 1989. She was involved in the 1990 Lusaka conference which brought former members of the South African Defence Force together with Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres for the first time. She was part of Idasa's shift in focus to negotiating forums and voter education. She has seen many staff come and go.

On her way: Sazi Zibaya, second from left, with colleagues from the Western Cape office, Erika Coetzee, Michelle Booth and Pumla Gumede.

In the three and a half years I have been with her in the office, Sazi has been the calm at the centre of the often raging storm. She deals with all people with respect, compassion and a wonderfully quiet sense of humour.

Exceptional loyalty, commitment, tolerance and reliability are among her many qualities. Above all, she is a person of the greatest integrity, with a powerful sense of right and wrong and the courage to stand up for her convictions.

She will be greatly missed in the Western Cape office and we wish her all the best in the challenges that lie ahead.

David Schmidt
Regional Director

Splintered past comes together in N Tvl

THE INTEGRATION of the administrations of the various provinces and homelands, "independent" and otherwise, is now high on the agenda of negotiators. It is a task likely to prove Herculean and it is difficult for those involved to know what to do in the interim.

What does one do with the profusion of bureaucratic structures spawned by years of apartheid rule? And if the likely option of strong regional government is approved, how do present structures reorganise so that they are responsible for, and accountable to, all the inhabitants of a region? What does one do with "excess" bureaucrats in attempting to rationalise positions and functions?

Finally, does one wait for the demi-god negotiators and the Transitional Executive Council's sub-council on regional and local government to provide a blueprint before attempting to navigate the quandary?

The bureaucracies of the northern Transvaal include the administrations of Gazankulu, Lebowa, the Republic of South Africa (including the Transvaal Provincial Administration) and Venda. There are also an additional three "own affairs" administrations functioning in the region, along with a number of line departments of central government (with regional and national parastatals).

All these bodies have jointly decided to confront the issues now, with as much clarity, insight and grassroots support as possible.

The Pretoria office of Idasa has facilitated a Regional Political Discussion Forum (RPDF) in the area for some time. This forum is broadly representative of the political players in the region (except the CP); and it is this forum which has the task of examining how these regional administrations can be integrated.

At an initial seminar in August the question was "What happens in the Northern Transvaal on 28 April 1994?" It was here that more than 50 delegates tentatively began to discuss means of promoting reconciliation and preparing for impending change without being pre-emptive.

In their inputs on national perspectives fon transitional arrangements for regions, Mathole Motshekga (ANC), Phuti Matlala (DP), Tjol Lategan (NP/TPA) and Mark Shinners (PAC) agreed that structural integration should happen along non-racial and non-ethnic lines, and that careful planning was needed now so that the transition from a pre-election to post-election situation was smooth and efficient.

Representatives from the various regional administrations, the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco), and the TPA's Intergovernmental Committee on Rationalisation, gave their perspectives on a possible integration process.

Sanco's Max Mamase warned that it would be a "painful" process. There would be a need to retain expertise while also making room for those who previously had been excluded from decision-making.

M P Nthabalala of the Venda government proposed a gradual process for powers and functions related to regional "bread and butter" issues which did not require prior guidance from the World Trade Centre negotiators.

The "how" of integration was tackled at a further meeting in September, where participants agreed that reform would involve two components: constitutional and administrative change. The former would emerge from political negotiation while the latter would be the product of management adapting to the demands of the constitution.

It was agreed that the process of administrative rationalisation needed to be directed by those involved in the political process, but advised by experts in public administration and administrators with an understanding of the practicalities of the region.

Political parties represented at the meeting saw as a priority the need to enable the duly elected regional government to govern effectively in the post-election period.

In the absence of an elected government, it was agreed that the the RPDF would be best-placed to initiate steps to provide for continuity of administration. It was proposed that the RPDF elect a representative steering committee for this.

The meeting decided that the steering committee should be provided with a secretariat for administrative reform composed of independent organisations, specialists and administrators nominated by the various administrations, as well as the non-statutory political groups in equitable proportion.

It was envisaged that the new government could disband or reconstitute the steering committee and the secretariat if it so chose.

The RPDF is now seeking formal ratification of this proposal from all administrations and non-statutory political groupings for implementation by early in November. A code of conduct will be drawn up for support by signatories and attempts are being made to bring in "outsiders".

Ivor Jenkins and Kerry Harris
Pretoria Office

Polluter should pay, seminar told

SUSTAINABLE development and public participation in decision making were two crucial principles emphasised at a seminar on the environment co-hosted in East London by Idasa, Corplan, the Rural Advice Centre and the Border Rural Committee.

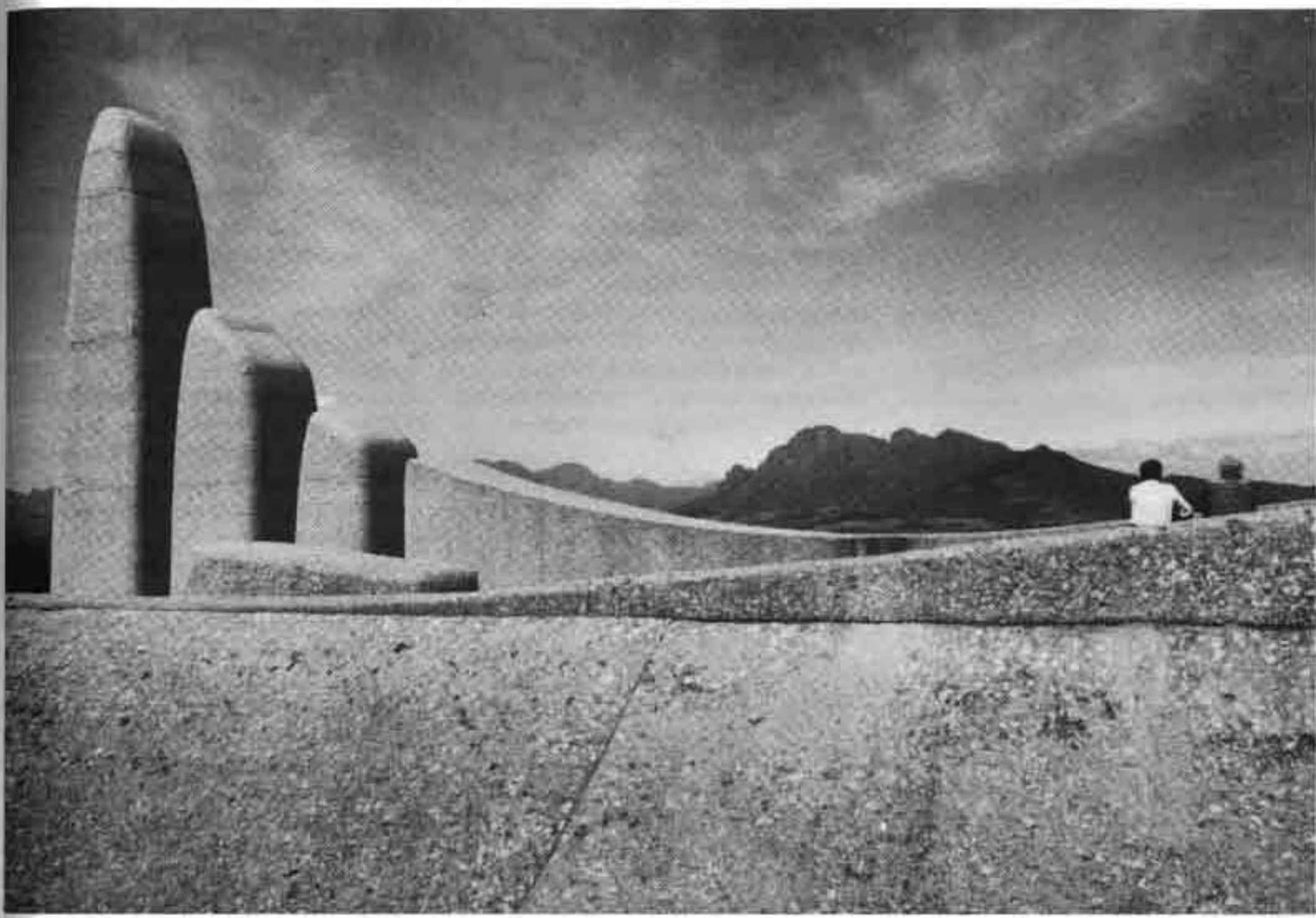
Wildlife Society conservation ecologist Andy Gubb said the importance of the reality of the environment must be recognised alongside the importance of basic human needs such as food and shelter. Sustainable development meant taking into account the needs of the present generation without compromising the abilty of future generations to meet their own needs.

Research director of the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), David Fig, said that the trend away from state ownership to private entrepreneurship in South Africa called for some measure of control.

There were few restrictions on entrepeneurs and, if the country's resources were to be protected, it was perhaps time to consider an institution similar to the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States.

The principle that "the polluter pays" should be considered in South Africa. At present "we allow business to pollute but usually the taxpayer pays for the clean-up".

Both the ANC and Cosatu had research groups looking into economic growth potentials, but unfortunately neither was taking into account the need for sustainability or the danger of environmental degradation, he said.



TAAL MONUMENT: Afrikaners must rid themselves of negative images. ERIC MILLER

Afrikaners 'is nie almal so nie'

How do decent Afrikaners – and Afrikaans – get the troglodytes of the AWB off their backs? Not by avoiding the question of what it means to be an Afrikaner, says HANS PIENAAR.

EARLIER THIS year I found myself staring into a campfire in Maputoland in northern Natal with three fellow Afrikaans-speakers and some black trainee journalists. Conversation carefully turned to ethnic matters and, in jest, one of us asked the black trainees how they would see us, were they to pretend that they had just met us.

"We would think you were members of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging," one said. "Why" we asked, "because we all have beards?" "No," came the reply, "because you speak Afrikaans."

This tallies with research done some years ago by Rand Afrikaans University MA student Mercia Blignaut at an English private school in Johannesburg where she was teaching: more than 50 percent of pupils polled believed all Afrikaners belonged to the AWB. It poses the question: how do decent Afrikaners, ready for the new South Africa, rid themselves of this unfair image? How do they get the troglodytes of the AWB off their backs?

The issue is fraught with dilemmas. Earlier this year I put my name to an advertisement by 150 Afrikaners which called for steps to be taken against the right wing, and made the point that Afrikaners "is nie almal so nie" (aren't all like that), to borrow the title of a recent bestseller by Jeanne Goosen.

Few of us, I believe, foresaw any great reaction but we were surprised that the only aggression came from two friends, who lambasted us in letters to the press for seeking publicity and being guilty of Afrikaner chauvinism simply by identifying ourselves as Afrikaners.

The incident demonstrates the passions involved and the dilemma facing Afrikaans-speakers. "Afrikaner" is still a race-exclusive concept. Very few black Afrikaans-speakers, who constitute 40 percent of all Afrikaans-speakers, have the slightest desire to call themselves Afrikaners.

Peter John Massyn, an Afrikaans lecturer at Wits University, was right: invoke the word Afrikaner, even for the sake of redefining it, and you step right into the old racial trap left behind by apartheid – you are unintentionally propagating a racial concept.

But Massyn was also one of the organisers of a conference held recently at Wits, which in trying to avoid falling into one trap, fell headlong into another – the result of ignoring issues which are of immediate concern not only to Afrikaans-speakers, but also to many of their fellow South Africans worried by the AWB.

Entitled "Afrikaans uit die Doofpot" (after John Miles's prize-winning novel about a hit squad Kroniek uit die Doofpot), the conference aimed to debate the liberation of Afrikaans from its repressive past (the "doofpot" or extinguisher). One would think that

at least 40 percent of the activities or topics of such a conference would involve black Afrikaners, as liberating Afrikaans clearly involves opening it up to the very people whose forefathers created it, and who were suppressed (put in the "doofpot") in the name of the preservation of Afrikaans.

Indeed, if one were to apply the Maputoland campfire test, the Wits conference could well have been branded AWB. Nearly all the speakers were white and lower middle-class to poor and a great number had beards.

Of course it is inconceivable that racism would have motivated the members of a department which has a proud history of fighting apartheid. Rather it was a most peculiar shunning of politics for "true cultural issues", and an ironic one, given the bruising battles fought with academia over the belief that one can keep culture free of politics.

Thus there was an almost obsessive attempt to avoid using, discussing or even mentioning one word: Afrikaner. It was nowhere to be seen or heard before the conference, not on a poster, not in the programme, not in any press release. Very rarely did any of the speakers use it.

However, the audience continuously returned to questions of Afrikaner identity, showing what a miscalculation it was to ignore it, but for them too, blacks and the right wing did not seem to exist.

The survival of Afrikaans was discussed at length, yet again, but there was little awareness that in the townships an Afrikaans word breathed in the dark could threaten the survival of the user. The stark fact of our political life, that in the name of the survival of Afrikaans and its power relations people are being killed, did not begin to feature.

For most conference participants "doofpot" seemed to stand for literature as a kitchen debate, whereas in Miles's novel it encapsulates systematic and prolonged racial and fascist violence.

'Pretending that one's identity is created by oneself, is undemocratic.'

What makes this attitude significant outside academia is that it is symptomatic of the problems most Afrikaners have with their Afrikaner-hood. It also

'For many, ethnic identity would be last or second-last on a list of priorities.'

demonstrates the kind of corner into which members of other ethnic minorities the world over paint themselves.

Ordinary people have numerous sources of identity on which they can draw to define themselves in their daily grappling with life in a fragmented world. For many, ethnic identity would be last or second-last on a list of priorities, pushed there by a dozen other more immediate concerns: work, sex, relationship, parenthood, religion, self-image, neighbourliness and so on.

So, speaking out on issues like Afrikaner-hood often requires speaking of the unfamiliar in practical terms, and even inventing an identity where there is none – which is why right-wing ethnic gatherings are so artificial and ritualistic. When in addition, as is the case with Afrikaner-hood, there has been an association with unsavoury power practices, it is understandable that most become a silent majority on the issue – as most Afrikaners have done.

But there are times when ethnicity does become an immediate, poisonous issue – when members of other groups start looking at you, even around campfires, and see people they fear and mistrust. Then the words of Afrikaans philosopher Johan Degenaar come into play: "Pretending that one's identity is created by oneself, is undemocratic."

The approach at the Wits conference was to sweep black people and the right wing under the carpet. However, this amounts to censorship, even when it is done consciously to demonstrate non-allegiance to Afrikaner-hood. What springs to mind is the way in which Germans, for decades, refused to debate the problematics surrounding the word "German", with the results evident today.

The Maputoland test shows that Afrikaans-speakers, especially those in positions of power such as the Wits conference convenors, owe it to their fellow South Africans to speak up on what it means to be Afrikaners, even (perhaps particularly) if it entails denying that it means anything.

Afrikaans does not yet exist in a normal context. No longer is it the language of apartheid, but it has become the language of the third force and the death squad, which is worse.

Hans Pienaar is a journalist based at The Star in Johannesburg.

At last! Sane analysis of our revolution.

THE NEGOTIATED REVOLUTION: Society and Politics in Post-Apartheid South Africa by Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley. Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1993. (277pp).

By SHOLTO CROSS

THIS IS one the most sane, refreshing and insightful books concerning South Africa and its politics to appear for many a year. It covers a large sweep of history, political theory, and personalities while maintaining a broad central theme; there is an easy command of comparative analysis drawing on experience in Latin America, eastern Europe and Africa; and – above all – the grasp of the basic politics is solid.

The thrust of the enquiry is clear. In an environment apparently classically ripe for revolution, South Africa is embarking on a negotiated transition which falls very far short of the overthrow of the state, which has appeared to many commentators to be the only possible alternative to an obdurate maintenance of the racial status quo, with some grudging cosmetic reformism on the side. How has this happened? Are there international precedents which can help to illuminate the likely course of events which will follow? Where does internal violence – the major threat to the success of this strategy – spring from, and can it be contained?

The theoretical discussion is largely confined to an analysis of the nature of settler states, and the various paths whereby they tend to modulate into polities where the distinctions between "settler" and "native" fade to low levels of significance. This is frankly of greater relevance than the usual caste/class debate which provides the starting point for so much analysis of whither South Africa. By providing this context, current events are set in the "end of empire" mould, preparing one for the detailed comparisons such as that of Zulus and Afrikaners with Serbs, and incorporating events in this part of Africa with wider contemporary themes being played out elsewhere in the world.

The sure grasp of politics is shown in the analysis of the inner workings of the politics of the ANC, Inkatha, and labour. The discussion of the politics of the white right points up the complex checks to unfettered action by the National Party produced by the right's connections to the security establishment. It might perhaps benefit from a deeper analysis of the impact of urbanisation on Afrikanerdom, and the hollowing out of white platteland social cohesiveness following the slow but inexorable economic decline of maize-based commercial agriculture. Yet the main focus is the world of negotiations itself, and here the study provides a convincing explanation for the scenario which has in fact unfolded since this volume went to press. That is quite a tribute.

What of the internal consequences for a negotiated unwinding of apartheid? The enterprise of negotiation upon which the main players have embarked has left not only the Cassandras and commentators flat-footed. There are many constituencies within the country, notably on the white right, among the alienated black youth, and among the ranks of the politically correct, who stand to lose by the success of these negotiations. The authors judiciously consider what opportunities these groups have to jolt the negotiatory enterprise off course, and what political role they may have left after a relatively successful transition.

This analysis will perhaps be the most informative to readers tired of the superficial generalising and moral piety which has traditionally dominated so much of the discussion on South Africa. The motives, manipulations and mores which Adam and Moodley ascribe to the actors are the recognisable ones of the universal search for power and status; they are the weaving and shifts of politicians through the ages, rather than some romanticised version of a mediaeval morality play. The wryness – and occasional cynicism – of tone helps to give this dispassionate analysis much of its appeal, yet one senses that the authors are very far from being unmoved or impartial observers.

Indeed, a criticism of the study is that their final suggestion that the most relevant international comparator for a post-apartheid RSA may be the tripartite pact between labour, big business and the state as evidenced in Germany is surely over-optimistic. In the latter case the historic enterprise of rebuilding (and ultimately re-uniting) a volkstaat provides a very different culture for bringing about the compromises upon which social democracy may be constructed.

The tilt in favour of the benefits likely to be derived from South Africa's highly organised labour sector also leads to some judgements which may be questioned. Adam and Moodley have an impressive track record over the last two decades in getting their analysis, and the predictions, which flow from this, right. However, there are some hostages to fortune which the authors have offered which will be carefully watched. In contrasting the likely developments in South Africa with Zimbabwe, they state:

Because of the much greater dependence of the South African state on its economy

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Sane analysis

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and its tax-conscious managers in Johannesburg, the post-apartheid government will not be allowed to sabotage the prospects of economic growth through poor governance. The realistic hope remains that mutual incentives remain strong enough to prevent profligate overspending by the new South African government.

Well, let us indeed hope so. But such is the narrow base of the black bourgeoisie, which must form the long term constituency of the ANC, that the fledgling new government may yet be tempted into populist adventurism or undue favouritism towards the interests of the employed, rather than the unemployed. The power of organised labour, dominated by the South African Communist Party, has yet to show precisely where it will head once it achieves its desired seat at the left hand of government.

But where the authors are surely correct is in looking in their comparative analysis towards Europe, rather than to Africa. The oft-drawn comparison with the transition models to the north is rightly dismissed. In a particularly hard-hitting sketch of the kleptocratic one-party states of neighbouring Africa, the authors dismiss the likelihood of a flipover from the corruptions of white nationalist party rule to that of black, depicting the very different balance of forces which are likely to eventuate from the current transition, far removed as it is from the flag-down flag-up models of departing colonial rulers.

All in all, this is a stimulating and highly readable analysis which is required reading for every serious citizen.

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Strength, pathos and misery

By KARINA TUROK

WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA – THEIR FIGHT FOR FREEDOM: Photographs by Peter Magubane, Little, Brown and Company. 134 pages. R69,99.

AT THE innumerable rallies and workshops of the 1980s the common wisdom was that most African women suffer triple oppression – oppressed as blacks, oppressed as working-class, oppressed as women. There is an irony, perhaps, when these women become the subject of a photo-documentary that is the result of the work of a man.

One can only speculate about how a woman photographer might have taken these photographs. The obstacles in the path of black women starting out as photographers in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were enormous: the patriarchy within their own community, family responsibilities, racism in the general population, police brutality, exploitation at work, lack of community support, and little access to resources. The irony is possibly inherent in any photo-documentary where the photographer is in some way an outsider – in this case in terms of his gender.

Magubane has photographed the private and mundane as well as the social and political activities of the ordinary working woman's life in a sensitive and unobtrusive style. His gender does not appear to interfere much with his subjects; he simply observes the suffering – and the strength – of the women of his community.

The women of these images are dignified in their struggle, not without the anger, pain and loneliness of what that means in South Africa's uniquely tormented society – torment with which Magubane is quite familiar, having been through years of imprisonment, months of solitary confinement. Examples are there in the sensitive attention to the detail of an old grandmother's wrinkled hands threading the eye of a needle that she can barely see; the hands that wring out wet washed clothes; the brutal reality of the *makgotla* or kangaroo court, where a young woman lies on a narrow wooden bench in the backyard of a Soweto house, surrounded by the patriarchs of the community, her face contorted in pain and terror, as the whip wielded by a man rises over her again.

I have seen this photograph published before, but it remains one of the most powerful and horrifying images in the book. It epitomises the dilemma of women fighting for the survival of their community but at the same time having to deal with the oppressiveness of that same community towards themselves.

Magubane's study of a 75-year-old woman from Jabavu.

Nadine Gordimer's insightful introduction makes the point that one doesn't know whether Magubane's photographs were the result of his personal admiration for women or whether "the role of women in the struggle for liberation emerged more and more inescapably in the eye of his camera".

The photograph of the 1956 protest, when 20 000 women marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria, is an example of the overwhelming courage and strength of the activists of the era. Although this photograph is not particularly unusual in photographic terms (composition, ironic juxtaposition, and so on), it is an invaluable piece of visual history, a testament to the role women have played in bringing about the demise of apartheid.

It is not often that Magubane strongly imposes his own vision of composition, as he does in the photograph of a Diepkloof mother and child used well across two pages of this book. The mother's anxious face at the top left of the rectangular format gazes across the

Slogans don't kill

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and would have been encouraged by the ANC during that time to pursue the aim of making townships ungovernable.

There was some clear linkage between liberation struggle and direct mass action. Now, however, the groups engaging in mass action no longer have a moral reference point. Things are much less predictable – whether you're looking at university campuses or whether you're looking at whoever in townships.

This is a cause of concern. What you do about it is another question. But I think that making a big song and dance about Peter Mokaba and "Kill the boer, kill the farmer" is blaming the messenger for the message. Ultimately there are much more fundamental things which are going to have to change before the problem can be addressed.

This brings one back to what are the main causes of violence in townships? The main cause of violence in townships isn't the fact that you have leaders sloganeering on occasions. There are other factors and some of those factors aren't going to change very fast.

One thing is a prerequisite: people often say this and it sounds a bit trite and clichéd, but having some kind of democratic, representative dispensation is actually a prerequisite for introducing reasonable law and order – for more stable daily lives in townships and elsewhere.

The important thing to bear in mind is that there are large parts of South Africa which to all intents and purposes are in a semi-war situation. The meaning of liberalism and the meaning of tolerance in that context is very different from an ideal sense.

If we really want to have much impact, we need to transform the structural constraints that are holding us back. There are two which are reachable targets. The first is trying to ensure democratic forms of representation so that there are legitimate representatives in areas to whom one can voice grievances and so on. Democratic local and central government is a prerequisite.

The second is transforming those structures in institutional society which are responsible for policing. This might mean transforming the South African Police or South African Defence Force, or it might mean trying to build alternative types of structures.

There are also issues of political education. I'm in no doubt that very large numbers of South Africans have a view of South Africa which is very much derived from their particular experiences. While these experiences might be very real, they are not always a very good guide to understanding the way in which South Africa as a whole is moving.

Simply saying "be tolerant" or "tolerance is important" is unlikely to have much impact. What you need to do is broaden people's understanding of what South Africa is all about, and how different people have very varied but equally "reasonable" perspectives.

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frame towards her baby, lying on the floor of her one-roomed shack, bottom right. The baby stares out at the viewer, completing a triangle which includes the viewer. A few basic cooking implements sparsely occupy the bare space in which they live.

Magubane has many strengths as a photographer. His sustained commitment and courage and also his ubiquitous presence have resulted in a record of the moments that add up to a history of a country. My lasting impression of the photographs in this book is of strength accompanied by pathos and misery; it is filled with portraits of serious women – little joy or frivolity appears in these pages.

The images are placed in context within a brief historical account written by Carol Lazar. It relates the political role of women over the period starting with the formation of the ANC Women's League in 1943, and includes the personal histories of prominent women activists, situating their stories in the broader socio-political context up until the Boipatong massacre in June 1992. A rather depressing conclusion quotes an unconvincing Gertrude Shope of the ANC Women's League: "We have hope".

With a body of work as substantial as Magubane's, chronological editing of photographs should have been relatively easy. However, the editing of this book is not always coherent For example, Helen Joseph is mentioned in a section dealing with the 1940s to 1950s, but the photograph of her is one taken in 1978, out of place among the other images used.

It is a sad state of affairs that a book like this was not published by South African publishers and that a foreign publishing company had to be responsible for this important document of our history. Perhaps this explains the disappointing lack of care and quality of reproduction of the prints – they are grey and flat, with dust specks which should have been spotted out. This poor finish does not do justice to the work of a photographer of the calibre of Peter Magubane.

Karina Turok is a freelance photographer based in Cape Town.

South Africa must get a little more playful

By ED TILLETT

AS KEN Owen rightly pointed out in his weekly Sunday sermon, it would be easy to dismiss the massive outpouring of emotion on National Peace Day on September 2 as "a dangerous illusion, as mere frippery" (*Sunday Times*, September 5). But many hearts were touched by the formation of human chains and other activities that added up to a rare display of solidarity.

Sceptics may have scoffed at its value, but there is no doubt that Peace Day succeeded in reinforcing the peace message, elevating public awareness and creating a national "peace" consciousness.

But to what extent the alienated imbibed the peace message is a moot point. By all accounts, South Africa's disaffected black youth are prone to pursue violent solutions to their problems, represent a sizeable proportion of the body politic, and have the capacity to sabotage any peaceful transformation of society.

To what extent National Peace Month consolidated the national healing process is equally uncertain. The yardstick by which its success must be measured is the degree to which its message had any visible impact in the townships. Did its activities – forgive the marketing metaphor – penetrate the target market?

After all, it is pointless aiming peace activities at persons far removed from the violence – at the sofa-bound, safely ensconced in their suburban comfort zones, with their thoughts focused only on activating the television remote control. The relevant questions are: was there any visible decline in the intensity of violence? Did township communities feel any less vulnerable, any less threatened?

The carnage after Peace Day was far from reassuring.

The challenge for peace workers remains. The quest is still for means to span the gulf that divides communities, to create unity between seemingly incompatible enemies, and to make the peace message omnipresent and sustainable.

Hobbling the current national peace programme is its bias towards the "symbolic", an emphasis which tends to trivialise and dilute the influence of peace initiatives. Symbolic activities encourage passivity, can reduce potential participants to bystanders, and use "soft mediums" to transmit their message – hence, peace walks, peace pledges, peace songs, minutes of silence, and the wearing of peace ribbons.

If this distortion is to be corrected, the nature and form of peace efforts need to be revisited. The desperate situation calls for creative solutions – what I would call "synergising", with symbolic and interactive activities dovetailing with each other.

A pioneering concept developing impetus in black townships is the role of sport and music as instruments of peace. Sport and music are widely recognised as universal cultural equalisers and tend to contribute meaningfully to peace efforts where other, more symbolic, activities fail.

The football, arguably, is emerging as the peace mascot of embattled Natal/KwaZulu. In the past three months, at least three pilot soccer projects have been launched in the region, including an ambitious multi-million-rand coaching programme in Umlazi, Durban's largest formal township.

The status of the soccer ball as an instrument of peace was affirmed in July this year when the community of Malukazi celebrated the signing of a peace pact with a friendly soccer match between the ANC and the IFP. Soccer was the one factor which both sides in the conflict identified as an interest.

The Malukazi soccer tournament was hailed as a first because it brought warring factions together in a fun day aimed at reconciliation. It highlighted the fact that a community polarised into two camps, with slender resources at its disposal, can plan and implement joint projects.

Sports psychologist and author Ken Jennings, who flew from Johannesburg to observe the match, hailed it as a model for other communities to emulate and said South Africans needed to get "a little more playful".

Just as communities need to become active participants in shaping their own social and economic development, so do warring communities need to participate in forging their own ceasefires (with a little discreet intervention to facilitate the process) if peace is to percolate down to grassroots.

In his book *Mind in Sport – Directing Energy Flow into Success*, Jennings examines the role of sport as an alternative to violence. He observes that sport can break down barriers and transcend the constraints of ideological heterogeneity.

Violence and play are mutually exclusive concepts. The informal atmosphere during friendly, contact sport is conducive to building community relations, not destroying them. As Jennings points out: "A playful context allows for opportunities to build relationships in a natural, non-threatening way."

Play liberates individuals from the confines of political affiliation – of belonging to opposing political parties that are locked into a contest for power. While it would be naive to suggest that sports programmes, on their own, would heal the kind of rift tormenting Natal, it is certainly true that sport emphasises common humanity and shared experience rather than differences.

Reconciliation, by means of participation in sport, takes place on a subterannean level, more intimately and subtly than can be achieved by more symbolic practices. Individuals are not even aware it is happening.

Jennings points to the Springbok cricket tour of the West Indies as an example of how sport has broken more racial barriers in our communities than any speech from a politician. "Sport administrators need to work hard at bonding communities," he says. "Sport should show politicians the way."

Self-conscious attempts to hard-sell peace will not bring about the desired change in attitude. The time has surely arrived for a comprehensive and imaginative package of peace measures, which incorporates both practical and symbolic elements. Only then will the process deliver tangible fruits.

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