

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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Tricky last lap

The last stage of South Africa's transition to democracy may be the most difficult. The problems facing soon-to-be-appointed interim local government structures include lack of legitimacy and rent and service boycotts. VAN ZYL SLABBERT, co-chairperson of the task force planning the next local government elections, details the difficulties and suggests some solutions 5



Not such fat cats?

If the pay packages of South Africa's new parliamentarians are examined fairly, unemotionally and in context, it becomes clear that the outcry over an alleged gravy train is unfair. This is the view of University of the Western Cape policy coordinator ALLAN TAYLOR, who comes to the defence of embattled MPs 16

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Includes Negotiation News



NOW WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?

**DEMOCRACY
IN ACTION**

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COMMENT

Social reformers face no mean task

THE government of national unity has defined some admirable social goals, such as the elimination of poverty, and has articulated many of these in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Progress has, on balance, been better than can be expected under the circumstances.

Presidential projects have been initiated and others await the necessarily slow and cumbersome passage of government – green papers, white papers, cabinet approval, standing committee hearings, parliamentary debate and so on. The important point is that there is progress, not paralysis.

Problems exist, one of which is that at a general level the government faces a classic social democratic dilemma. It is trying to mobilise an economy that is privately owned and privately run to embrace social goals. Simultaneously, this economy must remain profitable and competitive, a problem which is exacerbated by globalisation and its consequences.

What makes the South African case doubly difficult is that the state administration is not well geared to service the RDP. Proper delivery presumes co-operation and bureaucratic persistence from the civil service, neither of which seem to be readily forthcoming. It also presumes the existence of functioning provincial governments and managerial expertise at local government delivery end, which, as we know, are far from being in place.

Instead of recognising the progress made in the face of certain obstacles, or of simply providing an account of the obstacles, sections of the press have focused on the salaries and perks of elected and appointed officials.

This, of course, is a legitimate preoccupation, especially when the new government commits itself to openness, transparency, accountability and good administration. The contrast between the lifestyle of the new political elite and the misery of the squatter camps makes for some powerful and painful imagery. The people who need the most have to wait the longest, while those who need the least are instantly gratified.

It does not help much for government officials to be hurt, bitter and defensive about the contrast implied without providing the

public with a convincing philosophy about the structure of state salaries. Full disclosure is not enough. One wants the benefit of an argument. But having said that, the obsession with salaries has the deeply undesirable effect of confirming negative stereotypes about what happens to people, particularly black people, when they begin to run a country.

It is also a distraction from the real problems of a democratic South Africa. A hesitant and truculent civil service must be persuaded to genuinely throw its weight behind the RDP. The development ethos of the RDP has to become part of the bureaucratic culture of every department of state, such that the bureaucratic state also becomes a developmental state.

Down the road, the intended beneficiaries of reconstruction and development must ultimately receive their just desserts, an outcome that depends on an efficient, competent, honest and dedicated delivery route.

We must show some appreciation and insight into the extraordinary difficulties faced by social reformers within the state. It must also be pointed out that efficient delivery is not all that matters. It is also fundamental that the process of social reform be conducted in a democratic fashion.

I am worried by all the injunctions to the effect that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) must shape up and rationalise to assist in RDP delivery. This smacks of central planning and of making civil society an extension of the state. Some NGOs and CBOs should and must service the RDP, if they have the capacity and inclination to do so; others play a different role and have varied functions.

For the sake of democratic values and practices, the latter should remain independent of the state.

*Wilmot James
Executive Director*



Idasa's mission:

- ▶ **What** To promote and consolidate democracy and a culture of tolerance.
- ▶ **How** By designing and facilitating processes and programmes that transform institutions and empower individuals and communities.
- ▶ **Why** As the basis of sustainable development.



ja-nee

Considered response

What's in a name? A reply to a *Democracy in Action* readership survey suggests an answer. Sent out in August last year, the survey was all but forgotten when a last response arrived 11 months later – from one Slowly Mhlongo.

– *Speed kills!*

Sweet Pete

Ageing ANC Youth League enfant terrible Peter Mokaba has been crossed off another Christmas card list. A rural NGO worker who phoned Mokaba's office to request his presence at a meeting was not pleased to hear the great man saying loudly to his secretary "tell them I'm not here".

– *Engaging signal.*

Pallotive measures?

A refreshing informality is blowing through the Department of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting. Television coverage of the recent strike by workers in the sector showed one and all to be on first-name terms with their minister. "Pallo must attend to this" and "Pallo must fix that" they said.

– *A Pallo to one is a Pallo to all.*

Idasa survey to reveal voters' thinking

By Moira Levy

VOTING records of the April election showed a resounding ANC victory in terms of tallies, percentage polls and majorities. But what did it really reveal of the South African electorate and the mandate it gave the ruling coalition?

The figures tell us something, but they don't tell us what we really need to know as we move into a period of post-apartheid reconstruction. We know what the electorate voted, but we don't know why.

With these questions in mind, Idasa commissioned a nation-wide post-election survey, conducted by a Cape Town research company, Market and Opinion Surveys. Between August and September, 2 507 people were interviewed – male and female, from all races and regions, representing all political opinions. The results are due this month.

Star turn

"What do you think about equality?" and "What do you think about dagga?" were among questions from an earnest SABC reporter that had visiting reggae stars UB40 in stitches. Participating in a press conference before the group's first concert, the reporter's final question was "What is the funniest thing that happened to you in your 15-month tour?" Their answer: "You are!"

– *UR?*

Acronym city

The UB40 concert was clearly the occasion for a particular kind of abbreviated hilarity. Grooving quietly away all by himself in Green Point Stadium was a fan waving a placard that said "IB40-2".

– *Do UC the point?*

Womb with a view

According to a *Weekly Mail & Guardian* report, Idasa's new executive director, Wilmot James, has been active in politics since the 1950s. Idasa prides itself on employing people who excel but this was stretching a point – James was born in 1953.

Cellular view

Rejoice in the far-sightedness of the Department of Correctional Services! Hot on the track of drug-taking athletes, no doubt, the department has requested permission from the Cape Town City Council to put up a prison opposite land earmarked for Cape Town's Olympic stadium.

– *Keeping their sites on a progressive approach to perks for prisoners, perhaps.*

Trick of the trade

The struggle for human rights has a long way to go in Africa, according to a delegate to a workshop on the topic held in Durban recently. The delegate told workshop participants that he had been consulting widely in the process of setting up a human rights institute in his country. Among those consulted was a government bureaucrat whose view was that "the objective of your human rights institute is obscure".

– *A blind spot?*

Can a national election really reveal what the people want of their government? Can it give a clear indication of majority opinion on the issues of the day? How do we account for the poor showing of parties like the Pan Africanist Congress?

Now that the dust has settled on the post-election euphoria, and the government of national unity is getting down to the task of delivering on its election promises, these and other questions must arise.

A view currently gaining ground in South Africa is that the election was not a "normal" poll in that it did not represent a choice of policy so much as a symbolic break with the past. In terms of this thinking, voters reacted emotionally, placing their cross beside the party they most strongly identified with. The Idasa survey sets out to investigate whether South Africans made rational decisions on 26 April that accurately reflected the mood and demands of the population.

Rocky road in next lap to democracy

By Van Zyl Slabbert



Local crisis

Process of local government change

PRE-INTERIM PHASE		INTERIM PHASE	
<p>Phase of negotiating forums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Negotiating forums have been established for every economically and historically bound area. ☛ Membership has to be inclusive and representative of communities in the forum area. ☛ Forums negotiate on the establishment of appointed councils. 	<p>Phase of appointed councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ After agreement has been reached in the forum, councillors are appointed by the forum. ☛ New councils will assume responsibility for the functions of local government. ☛ The appointments of councillors will extend until local government elections. ☛ Appointed councils will prepare the way for democratic elections. 	<p>E L E C T I O N S</p>	<p>Phase of elected councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Elections will take place on the same day throughout South Africa. ☛ Elections will fully legitimise local government in South Africa. ☛ Elected councillors will remain in office for three to five years until new elections are held in terms of the final Constitution.

TRANSITION at the local government level is still saddled with a crisis of legitimacy. We came through the legitimacy crisis at the national and regional levels with such flying colours that it is almost assumed now that we have solved the problem at the local level as well. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Constitutional transition at the local level follows very much the same logic as it did at the national level. At the national level we first went through a period of negotiation, then a brief period of government by appointment (the so-called Transitional Executive Council phase) and finally the phase of elected government.

The Local Government Transition Act determines the same three phases for transition at local level. In the negotiation phase, local government players must negotiate the establishment of a Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) or a Transitional Local Council (TLC), depending on whether theirs is a "stand alone town" or a metropolitan area.

Once this negotiation has been completed, the appointed phase follows. An appointed TMC or TLC effectively governs at the local level until local government elections. These

elections seem likely to be held in October or November next year.

Despite a similar logic, there are important differences between transition at the local level and transition at the national level. One of the most significant differences is that far greater responsibility for finalising transition at the local level rests on the people who have to negotiate. For example, at the national level, small expert teams settled such contentious issues as the number of provinces and the contents of the Bill of Rights and, in fact, most of the clauses of the interim Constitution. The full plenary of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process was seldom involved in prolonged debate about problematic or contentious points.

When national negotiations were concluded, there was an Independent Electoral Commission to oversee the process of elections in terms of the Electoral Act. The elections were conducted on the basis of proportional representation within regions and nationally, and the interim Constitution provided the framework within which the newly

The future at a glance

elected government could begin to govern.

The situation is far less organised at local level. Negotiating forums (or smaller negotiating committees) and/or the subsequently appointed TLCs or TMCs will have to determine a number of crucial issues, including: the powers and duties of the TMC in relation to metropolitan sub-structures; the number of metropolitan sub-structures; and the number of wards within sub-structures.

Appointed councils, with or without input from negotiating forums, will also have to organise the drawing up of voters' rolls and preparations for local government elections.

In other words, the Local Government Transition Act expects ordinary people to take a range of critically important decisions, without the technical competence to do so. For example, should all the services listed in Schedule 2 of the Act – such as the bulk supply of electricity, water and sewerage; maintenance of cemeteries; administration of libraries – fall under the TMC, or should responsibility for some services be devolved to metropolitan sub-structures? Such questions must be decided by negotiating forums and/or the transitional local or metropolitan council appointed after negotiations.

Another important difference between the transitions at local and national level is that the public were reasonably well-informed by the media about progress in negotiations and the issues that were involved at national level. Local government negotiations have not enjoyed similar media attention. It is likely that responsibility for the vast task of informing people about such changes will fall to the transitional councils.

Perhaps the most important difference of all is that transition at the local level will affect people in a very concrete and immediate sense. It will affect them in terms of basic services that they have taken for granted or expect to be improved. The redistribution role that local government will have to play, in order to abolish the very severe inequalities and imbalances inherited from the past, will have a particularly dramatic impact.

This brings me to the final difference between the transition at national and local level. At national level, the legitimacy crisis was solved before the problem of delivery – in terms of promises made by leaders and expectations held by the mass of the people – had to be faced. At local level, the problems of legitimacy and delivery will have to be confronted at the same time.

BEFORE local government elections take place, some structure must prepare for the elections and manage our towns as effectively and democratically as possible. This is the job of the transitional local and metropolitan councils (TLCs and MLCs) that are being appointed now.

These are temporary structures. When the elections happen, they will be replaced by non-racial, democratically elected councils. But even these new councils will only be able to last until the South African Constitution is finalised by the Constitutional Assembly. For this reason they are referred to as interim structures even though they will be elected.

Everybody will elect councillors for a structure which will govern their town. In a large, heavily populated city (which is called a metropolitan region), there will also be a structure which draws together a number of linked towns or municipalities. These are called "metropolitan substructures".

Every town or metropolitan substructure will be divided into wards. These are smaller geographic areas (like a neighbourhood) and everybody living in that ward will have a chance to elect a councillor to represent them.

Sixty percent of the council seats will be filled by these ward councillors. The other 40 percent of seats will be elected in the same way as the national and provincial MPs were elected. That is, by voters choosing a party and that party getting seats in proportion to the votes cast for them.

After this election, every town council will have these two types of councillors, so people can feel that they have a local councillor representing their area, and also know – because areas are still linked to apartheid divides – that the council represents the broader interests of black and white people living in the same town.

In a big metropolitan region, the metropolitan council will also have 40 percent of the councillors who have been elected by proportional representation. And 60 percent of the seats will be filled by representatives of the metropolitan substructures.

Because voting takes place in wards, it is going to be necessary in this local government election to have a voters' roll. People will only be allowed to vote if they are on the already approved list of voters. So during 1995, everybody who wants to vote will have to register. ■

The major vehicle for delivery of an improved quality of life is the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). But the RDP is formulated at a fairly high level of abstraction at a national and regional level. It is at the local level that it will enjoy concrete manifestation and at the local level where the crisis of delivery will be felt most acutely.

Let me give a concrete example. Since the middle of the 1980s there has been a rent and service payment boycott in most of the black townships. The boycott is most often justified on the basis that existing local authorities in the townships enjoy no legitimacy.

The argument has always been that once the crisis of legitimacy has been solved, then people will return to the practice of payment for such services. Well, we are now beginning to approach the resolution of the legitimacy problem. But before elections at the local level can take place, we have to move through an appointed phase, and we move into this appointed phase exactly at the time when expectations for delivery are at a premium.

It will be the difficult task of an appointed local government body to tell township residents not only that they will have to pay for services, but that they will face punitive action if they fail to pay. What is worse is that this potentially fraught process will have to take place during the run-up to local government elections and at the same time as appointed transitional councils try to implement the projects and programmes of the RDP.

It does not take enormous intelligence to conclude that somewhere along the line people are going to turn around and say to the appointed councils: "But who are you? Who elected you? What legitimacy do you have to demand of us that we should do these things that you command us to do?"

There is no doubt that some tough and unpalatable decisions are going to have to be taken, at local or national level, if we are going to have effective reconstruction and development. For example, there is no way that an effective housing programme is going to get off the ground if the government is not prepared to take a tough line on people who invade vacant land destined for development purposes, or who illegally occupy houses intended for people on waiting-lists.

Is there a way out of this dilemma? I believe there is and it is of a two-fold nature. In the first place, the legitimacy that national and

The South African defence force is more democratic than ever before. It is weaker than ever before. This tension emerged at a recent conference on democracy and the military.

RONEL SCHEFFER was there.

Forceful views



Picture: SOUTHLIGHT

CIVIL-MILITARY relations are shaping up positively in a new, democratic South Africa in spite of signs of uncertainty about the implications of integration and change in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

On the positive side, the SANDF has thrown its weight behind a new structure said to significantly extend civilian control over the military. This must be a final signal that right-wing elements in the force do not intend challenging the democratic government, speculation to the contrary before the election notwithstanding.

The down side is scepticism that a restructured – and apparently weakened –

defence force has the capacity to guarantee security and stability during the transition. However, top defence figures were at pains to reassure delegates to a recent Idasa conference in Cape Town that the military would rise to whatever challenge the new democratic order produced.

The one-day conference looked at the relationship between parliament, democracy and the military and attracted senior military personnel, ministry of defence officials led by Deputy Minister Ronnie Kasrils, parliamentarians involved in defence matters, foreign diplomats and organisations engaged in defence policy issues.

A progress report from the SANDF revealed unqualified support for a model of civil-

military co-operation, the so-called "balance option", which has already been accepted by the government and is being implemented. The model was born out of a long process in which the full spectrum of civilian, government and military interests were represented, beginning with the formation of the Joint Military Co-ordinating Council by the Transitional Executive Council's Sub-Council on Defence.

A major structural shift involves the defence secretariat. Previously part of the defence force, this has become a civilian structure headed by a defence secretary. Another important change is the creation of a parliamentary joint standing committee on defence, with wide-ranging powers of oversight,

investigation and recommendation to strengthen military accountability to the elected government.

According to SANDF chief director of communication Major-General GN Opperman, who spoke on behalf of defence force chief Georg Meiring, the advantage of the "balance option" is that it conforms fully to the principle of civilian control of the military. It provides transparency and separation of powers, making civilians responsible for the politics of defence policy, programmes and budgets, while the military retains professional responsibility.

Disadvantages, in Opperman's view, are bureaucratic complexity and the possibility of conflicting roles, duplication of functions and activities, and a critical mass larger than the status quo.

Opperman emphasised that the separation and hierarchy of authority between civilian and military leaders in a democracy did not imply that the armed forces were merely a neutral and passive instrument for implementing executive decisions.

Senior officers would invariably attempt to advance their institutional interests in competition with other groups, and would naturally seek to contribute to the formulation of defence policy on the basis of their professional expertise.

It was therefore misleading, he argued, to portray the quest for stable civil-military co-operation simply in terms of maintaining civilian control over the armed services. The challenge was to ensure that the services participated in the development of defence policy without undermining or usurping the authority of the civilian decision makers.

Opperman said tensions between military and civilian leadership in

emerging democracies often resulted from a lack of expert skills and knowledge within the relevant civilian bodies. Lack of experience in ministries of defence and parliamentary defence committees gave rise to frustration within the armed forces and inhibited effective management of defence. This could also create space for soldiers to engage in politics.

He made a number of recommendations for avoiding these problems in South Africa, including programmes on democracy and civil-military co-operation for SANDF personnel; training in military planning and analytical budgeting skills for members of the joint standing committee on defence and ministry of defence staff; and structuring the relationship between military high command and civilian defence bodies to ensure regular and dynamic interaction and co-operation.

Former defence force chief and Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen told conference delegates that it was wrong to imply that defence management and policy had not previously been under civilian control in South Africa. He described the creation of a civilian defence secretariat as "an over-reaction based on emotion" which would cause tension and undermine the position of the chief of the defence force.

However, Viljoen said the appointment of Lieutenant-General Pierre Steyn as Secretary for Defence would "make a wrong thing work at the beginning".

Laurie Nathan of the Centre for Conflict Resolution argued that the

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Training a force of good citizens

DASA is making a bid to implement a long-term citizenship education and value orientation programme in the defence force as a contribution to the process of making the force "constitution friendly". The bid is supported by the Military Research Group and the Institute for Defence Policy, both of which have been deeply involved in defence policy activities in recent years.

The programme will involve reshaping the value system of the defence force to bring it into line with democratic principles.

Citizenship education in the defence force is seen as essential in the short-term in order to promote a general sense of stability and legitimacy, according to Geoff Brown of Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy, who is co-ordinating the bid.

An enduring democracy would require the development of new values and attitudes within state institutions, particularly the defence force with the enormous power at its disposal. Effective citizenship education – involving experiential learning, lectures, debate and reflection – should be directed at all levels of the force. The curriculum would include democratic theory, the role of a defence force in a democracy and international law.

Idasa has proposed that an organisation like itself should either conduct the programme throughout the defence force or train the staff of a permanent citizenship education unit within the force.

The issue of value education was also raised at Idasa's recent conference on civil-military relations by Paul-Bolko Mertz, an inde-

pendent defence and security consultant.

Mertz said the image of a soldier in a democratic society was exemplified by his service for the common good and the protection of the human dignity.

He said emerging democratic societies like South Africa needed a politically educated military consisting of responsible citizens who acknowledged the political consequences of the military action they took.

He warned that questions around changing the present defence force culture would not be settled overnight and that leadership development and civic education would be a long process that would grow with the emerging democratic state. The integration process of former political adversaries and military enemies put great pressure on every member to act with tolerance, to cultivate friendship and mutual understanding and to practise professionalism that emphasised ethical and moral norms more than technical standards.

As regards obedience and discipline, Mertz said modern democratic constitutions and international law limited the enforcement of authority which meant that soldiers had to obey legal orders but could disobey illegal orders.

"Any order which demands from the soldier to commit a crime – killing of unarmed civilians, harassment, rape, plunder, torture of prisoners, refusing to render medical assistance – are illegal and are to be refused both on moral and legal grounds," he said.

Mertz argued that these limits on "unconditional obedience" did not reduce combat efficiency; rather it was unconditional obedience that destroyed the initiative, creativity and mutual confidence which formed the basis of good military leadership. ■



Mertz

'Mr Clean'

Military Intelligence expert **in from the cold**

Pierre Steyn speaks to SHIREEN BADAT and GEOFF BROWN about his new position as defence secretary.



TWO years ago Pierre Steyn was given the task of investigating "dirty tricks" in Military Intelligence. In his new post as defence secretary, he will have to persuade those reared on the *kragdadigheid* of the old defence force that the time has come for democratic relations between the force and civilians.

Steyn has cut short his early retirement to take up the new post which has been created by the government and is seen by observers as an essential step in asserting civilian control of the ministry of defence. Steyn's new duties include being principal policy adviser to the minister of defence, controlling the financial accounting of the department of defence and providing a civilian balance to military issues.

He is confident of fulfilling his obligations. "I believe that the defence force as a whole has no problem with the establishment of this new structure," says Steyn.

"However, there are individuals who fear for their positions. Many of the powers vested previously with the defence force chief have been transferred and in setting up the structure and having to populate it with 450 staff, some people fear they might be left out in the cold.

"The necessary co-operation required is forthcoming and will continue, provided that the pace does not quicken. I believe that we can effect changes by the end of the financial year."

Steyn brings to the job 34 years of experience in the military. Trained as a pilot in 1960, he rose through a succession of appointments which included chief of staff operations in both the air force and the defence force.

Tipped by experts to become chief of the old South African Defence Force (SADF), his premature retirement at the end of 1993 surprised many. He had earned the respect of both the SADF and former enemies in Umkhonto we Sizwe and was known as "an officer and a gentleman".

"A new breed of personnel, not soldiers," are the people Steyn is looking for to staff the defence secretariat. He says the unit's

organisation will have to reflect the roles and functions given to it by the Constitution, primarily to act as the interface between the citizenry and defence delivery.

"We have to respond at the highest level to formulate policy for military defence, solicit resources from parliament in order to meet the demands of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), and effect mechanisms over the control of money. We need to translate the social needs of people who serve in the part-time forces. In order to do all this, we need to employ specialists."

Steyn believes that the defence force will have to rely significantly on part-time forces, which means tapping the human resources of the private sector. "There is furious debate on the impact this will have on the private sector. I believe that we have to institute some kind of body or forum to debate this impact."

He also sees it as his job to attract business investment in the SANDF but appreciates that such an enterprise will be evaluated on the basis of potential returns. "It is one thing for parliament to decide on an issue and another for business to take risks," he says.

Steyn feels that it is unfair to expect the defence force to assume responsibility for demobilisation. "A programme similar to those instituted after World War II and the Korean War needs to be instituted. Whether the conflicts which occurred during the apartheid years are seen as war is another issue, but people on both sides were affected."

He believes that another ministry should look at the welfare of veterans because "the ministry of defence only knows one thing and that is how to handle a rifle". There should be liaison between this ministry and defence "but a ministry other than defence would assume responsibility in a more objective way".

As regards South Africa's continued arms trade with other countries, he supports an arms industry run along business lines but feels that a code of conduct should be drafted. Without an arms industry the country would need to import arms in times of war. "We will not be able to blame other countries for selling to us - how can you argue to the

contrary in our case?"

Asked what South Africa's response should be to foreign requests for military aid, especially with regard to the Haitian situation, Steyn replies: "The answer to this question lies in foreign policy not defence policy. Defence policy is an aggregate of other policies. If you consider that foreign policy acknowledges membership of bodies like the Organisation of African Unity and the Southern African Development Community, we have to exercise our responsibility and international social conscience."

However, he adds that South Africa has demonstrated to the world that the most terrible conflict can be resolved in a peaceful manner. "I will support the application of force only once all other measures have been exhausted. Haiti can be isolated in order to effect changes. I believe that the use of force at this stage is not appropriate."

On the issue of the military participating in non-partisan civil liberties education, Steyn says, "I believe that a soldier, being a citizen in uniform, should be afforded the same rights as other citizens. Conditions of discipline inhibit individuals in the military but I still believe that soldiers should receive such education."

He is more conservative on the question of whether soldiers have the right to strike. "I cannot imagine a soldier laying down his gun. Soldiers should be taught this within the confines of their duties," he says.

Asked for his thoughts about the imminent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he says: "It reminds me of a bomb with a very short fuse. While the fuse burns shorter you think you are in control. Once it ignites, you lose all control over it. I am confident of the future. I am not saying that we must not correct the past. But the architects must be skilled enough to make a difference. I am concerned but I am not saying that it cannot be done."

Finally, we asked *the* question. Could we have a copy of the Steyn Commission report? He smiles, shrugs his shoulders and - like all the others before us to ask this question - we leave empty-handed. ■

Plugging into SABC language tangle



The SABC is in the unenviable position of having to be the first, as well as the most visible and audible, agency to define a plan for implementing the principle of equity of 11 official languages.

KATHLEEN HEUGH reports.

THE SABC's lengthy deliberation and hesitancy over language policy formulation in recent months must be seen against the background of the national language policy set out in the interim Constitution. Also important is the historical context of a *menage a trois* involving an obsessive identification of language and culture by the powerful Afrikaans language lobby; a non-existent lobby for African languages; and the powerful hegemony, both hidden and explicit, of English.

The language clauses of the interim Constitution reflect a statement of good intent in terms of policy formulation. They do not provide any guidelines for implementation. Language policy has not yet been translated into a coherent implementation strategy by any sector. From the public's point of view, the SABC's plan will determine how much time is to be allocated to each language and on which channels.

The SABC's task would have been made much easier had the negotiators at Kempton Park been able to produce a strong language policy focusing on the resources which the South African languages can offer this country. Instead, we have a weak policy which is difficult to implement.

There was an understanding that, for symbolic reasons, 11 languages had to be afforded official recognition in the Constitution. The practical application of this arrangement was never entertained as a serious option. So we have a situation in which language is seen as a right yet it is not clear who, if anyone, has the responsibility of effecting it. In other words, it is not clear

whether language rights are to be treated in a passive manner or whether they are to be taken more seriously and proactively. This is the primary dilemma of the SABC.

The second issue it faces relates to the fact that policy is not cast in stone and that creative policy makers understand that it needs to change as social conditions change. On the one hand, the interim Constitution may alter in the near future, and language clauses may change accordingly. In addition, the Independent Broadcasting Authority has yet to determine its language policy.

Consequently, any SABC language policy articulated now will have to be dynamic and flexible.

The public furor around the perceived threat to Afrikaans represents an aspect of the third issue facing the SABC, namely, the historical and unequal relationship between Afrikaans, English and the other South African languages.

An inseparable relationship has been nurtured over the years between Afrikaans, the identity of the *volk* and its culture by the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings and the Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns. More recently, the Stigting vir Vriendelike Afrikaans has tried to bring a new more inclusive dimension to this process.

The net result is that a powerful lobby backed by large Afrikaans-owned corporations has been established to protect the privileged position of Afrikaans. This lobby functions on a number of levels to pressurise the SABC board. Firstly, it has an historical grip within the inner sanctum of Auckland Park in terms of the composition of staff and existent language policy. Secondly, the financial might of advertisers tapping into the Afrikaans-speaking market, so necessary to the cash-strapped SABC, cannot be discounted and is acknowledged by board member Fatima Meer. Thirdly, this lobby has ample access to the print media and has successfully drummed up massive press campaigns to preserve the position of Afrikaans.

For reasons of historical inequity, there is no effective lobby representing either individually or collectively the African languages and they certainly do not have any financially powerful backers either. At this point they only have the language clauses in the Constitution which may ultimately prove to be too weakly symbolic to effect genuine equity. Without a clear language plan to effect an elevated status for African languages, it is likely that only lip service will be paid to establishing equity for these languages. Since the Afrikaans lobby has done little to court African languages interest groups in order to shore up resistance to the growing dominance of English, it is unlikely that there will be a strong enough lobby representing African languages to insist on equity for these languages.

The consequence is that Afrikaans is undoubtedly going to lose ground across all sectors of South African life, not so much because of the rise in stature of African languages but because of the more intangible ways in which English is on the ascent. Whatever the language policy statements of the SABC, its practice of language use will reflect the power dynamics operating among our languages in the wider context of the country.

Thus the third factor in this unhappy language relationship is the uncontested position of English. While English does not have a visibly organised lobby per se, its international position has made it possible for a number of popular misconceptions to take root about this language in South Africa. These relate to the belief that most South Africans understand English, or that English is widely used as a lingua franca. Discourse during the negotiations at Kempton Park did, and now in parliament does, largely take place in English. This creates an impression that English is a viable language for widespread communication.

The international position of English has made it possible for a number of popular misconceptions about this language in South Africa to take root. These relate to the belief that most South Africans understand English, or that English is widely used as a lingua franca.

These misconceptions have been reflected by recent comment emerging from the SABC. For instance, the SABC has considered a survey on language use which suggests that 69 percent of South Africans can understand English. While it is possible that 69 percent of people may have very limited and rudimentary social language skills in English, only 34 to 40 percent have sufficient English language skills to make sense of news broadcasts and political debates in English. There is a vast difference between being able to understand and utter a few perfunctory greetings in a language and being able to engage in a more complex conversation.

When the SABC's Wynand Harmse argues that the language of politics in the country is English and that television debates on political issues therefore have to be in English, he is both correct and incorrect. He is reflecting popular thinking about the role of English. Political discourse among the leaders does take place in English. No amount of angst from the Afrikaans lobby will change this. But at least 60 to 65 percent of the population cannot understand this discourse in English.

So the question becomes, who is the SABC's audience? If it is the entire population, the perceptions around the communicability of English needs to be revisited.

The overt process of formulating a language policy within the SABC has been to work with the principles outlined in the interim Constitution. In addition, it has received more than 4 500 submissions from the public on the matter. Thirdly, there has been a democratic internal process of deliberation among the staff. Fourthly, the board has had to contend with the lobby around Afrikaans and, lastly, it has been influenced by the more covert pressure towards English.

The draft language policy of the SABC recognises the following principles:

- that the policy is an interim one;
- that there has to be a commitment to the equity of languages;
- that the 11 official languages will be treated with due regard to fairness in terms of allocation of resources and time of broadcasting;
- that the SABC will both protect the languages and reflect the changing use of languages.

Translated into practice this means that there will be at least 11 national public broadcasting service (PBS) radio stations. Board members recognise the problems around keeping languages discrete and separate, but this reflects to a certain degree where the public's wishes lie at present as well as an overt demonstration of the principle of equity. In order to finance the cost of this programme, commercial radio stations will also be run by the SABC and their language profiles will be market-driven.

There will be two PBS channels which, for financial reasons, will focus on shared language use although greater linguistic variety will be possible on a regional basis at certain times of the day. The third television channel will be a commercial channel and the languages in use will be entirely market driven.

What this means is that since English and Afrikaans are the two primary languages of the advertising market at present, these two languages are likely to dominate on the commercial channels although Zulu, understood by two-thirds of the population, is a viable third option.

English will effectively get the lion's share of time, Afrikaans will have a less but still disproportionately large amount of time, and African languages will enjoy a greater share than before, varying according to perceived numbers of speakers.

The new SABC policy then reflects the first stage in an ongoing process which parallels the slowly changing status and use of languages in wider society.

Kathleen Heugh is Language Policy Researcher for the National Language Project and the Project for the Study of Alternative Education at the University of Cape Town.

Local crisis

♦ from page 6

regional government enjoy will have to be used to assist the appointed bodies at local level to deal with some of these problems.

Appointed bodies at the local level cannot be expected to take tough decisions without legitimacy conferred on them by the national and regional structures of government. Firm guidance on land invasion, illegal occupancy of houses, and arbitrary and destructive political populism will have to come from the national and regional governments. If the national and regional leadership avoids coming to terms with these tough decisions, they will make the task of the appointed bodies at the local level virtually impossible.

Secondly, civil society also has an important role to play at local level. It is the task of voluntary associations and organisations at the local level to come forward and assist the appointed councils to function with the co-operation of communities in these difficult areas of decision making.

There must be effective community mobilisation around issues such as housing, payment of services, and the illegal action of certain groups, to ensure that delivery can take

place and that there is stability in government at the local level.

It is essential that elections take place as soon as possible. Again, here we face some grave logistical problems. Who, for example, is going to be an eligible voter at the local level? What about the foreigners who have settled in towns and metropolitan areas? How does one distinguish between them and genuine citizens of South Africa? How do we set up effective voters' rolls after wards have been demarcated?

Because of these and other problems, there is some trepidation about the possibility of holding elections at all in 1995. There is even talk in some quarters of postponing elections to the first quarter of 1996.

Whenever elections are held, appointed bodies will have the task of maintaining stability at the local level and providing efficient government services until then. This is indeed a daunting challenge.

An additional and perhaps complicating factor is that different political parties are in control at regional level in the three major metropolitan areas: the National Party in the Western Cape, the ANC in the PWV, and the Inkatha Freedom Party in the Durban/Pinetown/Westville area. The political differences between the three will impact on the manner in which transitional local government is implemented and works until the elections. There is also the danger that local government

issues will be exploited for short-term political purposes and partisan gains.

It is necessary for us to have the kind of multi-party accord for local government elections that we had in the April general election. The accord, underwritten by a code of conduct and consultative structures, ensured that all parties contributed to stable, legitimate and – as far as possible – fair and free elections, so that we could tackle the problems of delivery with a high degree of legitimacy.

Of course, if we have this kind of commitment at the local level, many of the problems outlined here can be overcome. But, we have not got the luxury of being able to solve the crisis of legitimacy before tackling the problem of delivery at the local level.

It is often very hard for politicians to resist the temptation to use delivery issues to compound a crisis of legitimacy at the local level. It is going to take a strong commitment from all parties to prevent delivery problems from bedeviling our ability to solve the crisis of legitimacy at the local level. But, it can be done. ■

Van Zyl Slabbert is director of policy and planning at Idasa and co-chairperson of the task group that will plan the next local government elections.

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The political settlement delivered by negotiation in South Africa has won the admiration of the world. The related arts of mediation and arbitration have achieved similarly spectacular success, writes SUE KING.

A decade of solutions

THE Independent Mediation Service of South Africa (Imssa) has been instrumental in resolving 7 787 conflicts, mainly in the industrial arena, since it was founded in 1984. Initially offering only industrial mediation and arbitration, Imssa has grown enormously over the last decade to meet the increasing demand for the range of neutral third-party interventions it offers.

As management and unions were increasingly exposed to this kind of intervention, their misgivings about it were largely allayed. Mediations (in which a third party helps groups settle a matter) and arbitrations (in which the third party rules on a matter) became accepted as a collective bargaining resource, an established component of the South African industrial relations system and a credible alternative to the Industrial Court.

By 1990 collective bargaining in South Africa was well-established. During July of that year, about 160 000 workers were either on strike, involved in strike ballots, or had recently returned to work after industrial action. Imssa was asked to intervene in almost every major industrial dispute of this period.

This trend continued into 1991, with mediators again involved in the settlement of a number of highly charged industrial disputes. The vast majority of mediations in this period occurred over wages and substantive conditions of employment.

A shift from position-based bargaining to interest-based bargaining began at this time. Common interests began creating the capacity for mutually acceptable settlements. This trend continued and is very evident today.

The 1990s have seen increasing use of arbitration. Many of the over 2 000 industrial arbitration awards delivered by Imssa arbitrators can be found in its publication, *Arbitration Digest*. Arbitrations rose steadily from 430 in 1991, to 656 in 1992, 859 in 1993 and 520 up until September 1994.

This increase may be due to the greater sophistication of the parties who do much of the negotiation themselves, going to arbitration only over unresolved issues.

By contrast, the demand for mediations has fluctuated since 1990. Mediation figures tapered off slightly each year, from 621 in 1991, to 464 in 1993. This trend appears to be reversing again, with the number of mediations increasing to over 400 so far this year.

At this stage it is too early to determine the reason for the increased call for mediation. One possibility is the recent expansion of industrial rights beyond the traditional enterprise structures, to include the public and agricultural sectors. Many recent interventions have involved these new entrants to the collective bargaining system.

A second reason might be that adversarial industrial relationships are being tempered by a growing recognition of the strategic need to build consensus around industrial renewal and growth. Although fundamental industrial conflicts remain, there is a growing demand for integrative bargaining around issues of industrial restructuring and expansion.

Debates dominating the agenda relate to industrial and economic policy and growth. Tripartite engagements between the state, trade unions and employers, inconceivable in the recent past, are now evident. Traditional bargaining issues are being expanded to include questions of industrial restructuring, productivity, human resource development, participation, job creation and employment security. Parties appear to be turning to mediators to help them in these areas.

In line with this trend, there have been an increasing number of requests for joint management and union training by Imssa in negotiation and mediation skills and arbitration processes. Imssa training courses are directed at building capacity and self-reliance in conflict management among unions and employers, peace structures, community and political organisations, other non-governmental organisations and state structures. The need for neutral third party intervention still exists, however, as recent industrial events have shown.

Compared with the early days, mediators are now required to be more sophisticated and to have more content knowledge. Process

skills alone are not sufficient to carry them through. Imssa mediators continue to participate in major dispute-settling interventions and have facilitated groundbreaking agreements on job flexibility, picketing guidelines, productivity, training and job security. These developments indicate a broadening focus in industrial relations, beyond distributive bargaining to a whole range of collaborative issues.

The boundaries between industrial, political and community conflicts are often blurred. Many disputes cannot be addressed in isolation. Since Imssa expanded into the area of community and political conflict resolution in 1992, it has been involved in almost 300 interventions.

Mediators, arbitrators and facilitators brought with them the dispute resolution skills used in industrial disputes. But they were challenged to adapt these to the unique requirements of community and political intervention, while still maintaining their reputation of non-partisanship and integrity earned in the industrial sphere.

Community disputes in South Africa exist in an extremely unstable political environment. While this is also true of labour disputes, there is usually a marked difference of degree between the community context and the labour context.

Unlike industrial disputes, parties and issues in community disputes are seldom clearly defined. The areas of dispute are often broad and complex. There are usually few, if any, established procedures for dealing with such conflict, which is often further complicated by violence.

The challenge has been to develop innovative ways of basing dispute resolution skills in the communities themselves. This has entailed a shift from reactive involvement to sustainable, consensus-building initiatives. The move from crisis intervention to construction is evident in the projects now underway in the education sector, the taxi industry and the police-community sphere. ■

Sue King is a researcher at Imssa.

South Africa faces a water crisis of staggering proportions.

CATE BROWN looks at the causes of the parched future that awaits us.

Running on empty

THE MOST frightening of projected figures for our new democracy are those predicting our water demands into the early part of the next century. There can be no doubt that South Africa is facing a water crisis of staggering proportions: without desalinisation or recycling, we are likely to deplete our available water resources within the next 15 years – and this is the scenario even with careful use and management of water supplies as well as the addition of exploitable groundwater resources.

South Africa's population, which stood at 31 million in 1991, is growing at an annual rate of between 2,3 and 3,6 percent. This translates into a current annual water demand of between 25 888 and an alarming 49 000 million kilolitres (1 kilolitre equals 1 000 litres) by the year 2110.

Add to this the fact that there are now 12 million people without access to clean drinking water and over 20 million without adequate (water-borne) sanitation. On top of this, consider the following statement made in May by the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Kader Asmal: "The immediate aim of the department is to establish a national water and sanitation programme which will assist in all households securing a clean, safe water supply of 20 to 30 litres a person a day [the World Health Organisation recommends 50 litres a person a day] within a 200-metre reach and adequate safe sanitation facilities. The long-term goal is to ensure that every South African has accessible water and sanitation."

This begs the question: where will the water come from? In South Africa, almost all water comes from rivers, which are fed by less than 470mm of rain a year, compared with a world average of 857mm. Sixty-five percent of the country gets less rain than the amount usually regarded as the minimum for successful dry-land farming, and 21 percent less than 200mm a year. The resultant amount of water in all South African rivers is, on average, about 53 500 million kilolitres a year, including that flowing out of Lesotho. In total, this forms not quite one eighth of the water in the Mississippi River in the United States.

Apart from a fluctuating rainfall which affects the reliability and variability of river flow in South Africa, there is the additional complication of inordinately high annual evaporation rates over most of the country. These range between 1 100mm and 3 500mm a year (for example, 2 000mm at Cape Town, 2 400mm at Pretoria and 35 000mm at Upington), well in excess of annual rainfall.

The result is that only about 33 000 million kilolitres of the annual runoff can be economically exploited. This amount is further reduced by land use practices such as commercial afforestation, the construction of farm dams and artificially inflated evaporation losses from the myriad of storage dams on rivers around the country. For example, the soon-to-be renamed Hendrik Verwoerd Dam, our largest reservoir, which can hold up to 5 673 000 kilolitres of water, annually loses an average of 500 000 kilolitres through evaporation.

Furthermore, the regions of economic growth are poorly distributed in relation to the available water, and water has to be transported for great distances to areas of increasing demand. Even Cape Town, with a relatively high annual rainfall, has outgrown its local water supplies and relies on water piped in from as far afield as Franschhoek.

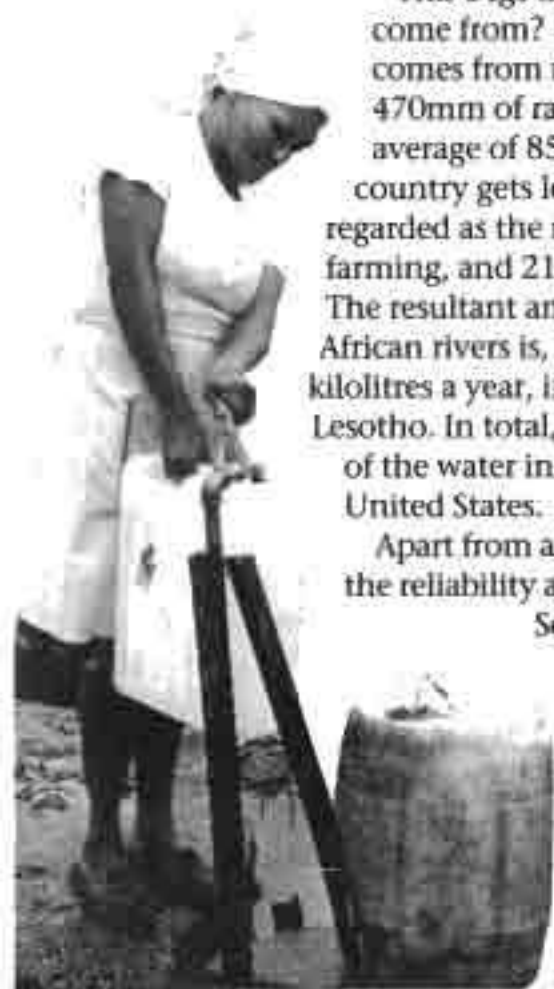
Who, one wonders, is using all of this water? Latest available figures show that 52,4 percent is used for agricultural irrigation and stock watering, 12 percent for municipal and domestic purposes, 7,6 percent by industry (it takes up to 500 000 litres of water to produce one motor car), 2,7 percent by mining and 2,3 percent for power generation. Of the remainder, one percent is used directly for nature conservation, 7,51 percent is taken by forestry plantations before it reaches the rivers and 14,5 percent is allocated for ecological uses, such as maintaining estuaries (the nursery areas for many of the inshore marine fish species on which our recreational and subsistence line-fishermen depend). Future projections indicate that the percentage of the total water used by agricultural practices will effectively reduce (45,9 percent in 2010) in comparison to domestic consumption, which will increase to 17,3 percent by 2010.

When things get a little parched, the slice of the pie most often grumbled about is that allocated to rivers themselves for ecological uses. Water rights of various kinds are set to become one of the most controversial issues of the next few decades in South Africa and rivers will feature prominently in such a controversy. Thus, the way they are managed is critical, for if they are managed badly the costs could be exceedingly high in both environmental and human terms.

Rivers themselves are not simply drains transporting water from the mountains to the sea. They are complex, living systems, and are perhaps our most valuable resource. Sustainable utilisation of this resource for future generations demands that we allocate enough water for systems to continue functioning.

More people, demanding more water, means pollution. Evaporation from water stored in dams exacerbates the pollution problem by increasing the concentration of pollutants, particularly salts, in the water, and nutrient build-up has caused toxic algal blooms in many of our storage dams. The bottom-line is that the quality of what little water we have available is steadily declining. Clearly, we have to reduce the amount of pollution entering our rivers and, at the same time, we are going to have to look elsewhere to augment our water supplies. ■

Cate Brown is scientific officer at the Freshwater Research Unit, Department of Zoology, University of Cape Town.



The first sermon delivered by a woman in a Cape Town mosque provoked an outcry from certain quarters.

TAHIRA JOYNER argues the case against the fundamentalist position.

'Shadow side' of Islam

HISTORY was made on 12 August when Claremont Main Road Mosque invited Amina Wadud-Muhsin, an Islamic theologian at Virginia University and author of *Qur'an and Women*, to deliver the weekly sermon – the first woman to be invited to do so. However, the response from some sections of the Muslim community was venomous.

The imam of the mosque received death threats and a newly formed body, calling itself the Forum of Muslim Theologians and backed by prominent members of the long-established Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), condemned the invitation.

Yet Imam Rashied Omar has defended the decision to invite Wadud-Muhsin's contribution on the basis that it was taken by the mosque's board and congregation "as part of our ethos to campaign for the improvement of the position of women in Islam".

Serious investigation reveals that it is the approach of Imam Omar and his congregation, rather than the fulminations of the so-called Forum of Muslim Theologians, that is in tune with the original spirit of Islam and its scripture, the Qur'an. In essence, it seems that the Qur'an had the potential of being interpreted to support women's rights, but that prevailing patriarchal norms and structures disallowed this.

The historical exclusion of women from the priesthood and the domination of women by men within the family seem to be the inevitable consequences of a religion in which maleness is the only symbol for divinity and all spiritual authority rests with men.

It is, in fact, extremely ironic that Allah – the Muslim name for God – has always been referred to and revered as a male force, for the two attributes most closely associated with Allah are mercy and compassion, both of which are derived from the word *rahim*, a feminine root noun meaning "womb".

Thus the primary metaphor for Allah is not male. Rather it is maternal. And this connection of the divine with the idea of the womb holds another important idea: that we

exist in the natural world, in the whole of nature, in the same way as an unborn child exists within the womb of its mother. Abuse of nature is therefore tantamount to abuse of Allah.

Despite this primary identification of Allah with the feminine, and despite the obvious fact that Allah as Supreme Being must be beyond gender, must transcend the splitting of being into male and female, Islam has always imaged God as a male force, and has portrayed the female as inferior.

In fact, the Qur'an not only states that women are inferior to men but endorses violence against us. Surah 4:34 reads: "Men shall take full care of women with the bounties which Allah has bestowed more abundantly on the former than the latter ... and as for those women whose ill-will you have reason to fear, admonish them (first); then leave them alone in bed; then beat them; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek to harm them."

Nature has suffered the same fate. Flying in the face of the Qur'anic challenge to humanity to be caretakers of Mother Earth, is the imaging within the Islamic tradition of men as the dominators of creation. Surah 14:32-3 reads: "It is Allah who ... has made the rivers subservient to you; and has made the sun and the moon, both of them constant upon their courses, subservient to you; and has made the night and the day subservient to you."

As far as the relation between men and women is concerned, this ideology of domination perpetuates from generation to generation a grotesque imbalance. The result is visible for all to see in the rising incidence of violence against women – rape, assault, battery, emotional abuse. Less visible but equally grave is the markedly inferior and often profoundly self-hating way in which Muslim women learn from their leaders and teachers to perceive themselves.

The situation is as serious on the ecological level. The planet is groaning under the violence done by the ideology of domination. The hole in the ozone layer, global warming, the destruction of forests, escalating

pollution, and so on all spring from the same disastrous attitude.

Yet only a handful of imams across the land are challenging the community about the Qur'anic teaching that human beings are intended to be caretakers of the earth. Only a handful are open to the idea that the use of exclusively male-defined imagery for the divine, and the role misogynist symbols and stories play in perpetuating the institutionalised sexism of Islam, urgently needs to be critiqued.

In this context, the work of Harvard psychologist Carol Gilligan is particularly relevant. Gilligan has shown that, as the traditional caretakers, women tend to identify with others, value other people's feelings, and base moral codes on the good of the entire group. Eco-feminists argue that these female values, which recognise and support the essential inter-connectedness of life, offer the best hope for achieving the transformation of consciousness necessary for the survival of the planet.

In the light of all this, it is vital that we recognise how the fundamentalist backlash in response to Wadud-Muhsin's sermon reflects the shadow side of Islam. This shadow side – essentially a lack of consciousness – is not only doing great harm to human beings, it is also threatening the very planet.

We need to open up our understanding of the divine to include the female and the natural world on which we depend. In the words of Jungian analyst Christine Downing: "To be fed only male images of the divine is to be badly malnourished. We are starved for images which recognise the sacredness of the feminine and the complexity, richness and nurturing power of female energy."

On a political level, women – and their male allies – need to ensure that the struggle for female liberation is not confined to secular space. It needs to be taken into the mosques, the temples and the churches. Much work has already been done in these domains. But much remains. ■

Tahira Joyner holds an honours degree in religious studies.



Angry cries of 'gravy train' and

Not such fat cats?

But, argues ALLAN TAYLOR

deserve the pay

He dissects

THE first warning signs of controversy around the Melamet Committee's recommendations was a comment by the Chief Whip, the Rev Arnold Stofile, to the effect that the proposed salaries for ordinary members of parliament were not market related. The resultant exchange between the press, parliamentarians and the general public has been less than helpful. Of particular concern is the way in which parliamentarians have failed to objectively present their case; it has been a public relations disaster.

It should be remembered that the Melamet Committee was appointed by the previous state president on the advice of the Transitional Executive Council. The committee's report was signed on 26 April and presented to the president. Among the signatories was recently appointed Minister of Finance Chris Liebenberg.

The questions about the market-relatedness of the packages is probably the most tricky. The Melamet Committee relied considerably on the advice of consultants Ginsburg Malan and Carsons, who said the time available did not allow for the positions ranging from president to member of the provincial legislature to be determined through a reliable job evaluation method. However, they drew on the recommendations and experience of the 1985 Schiebusch Commission which commissioned Hay-MSL consultants to evaluate similar positions.

Based on the 1985 exercise, Ginsburg Malan and Carsons determined a relationship between the various positions and compared these with management or professional level jobs in the private sector. The packages were reduced by 25 percent and applied to the various public representative positions.

Many MPs feel uncomfortable with private sector comparisons because it conflicts with their traditional view of capitalist employment practices that lead to high wage differentials. Interestingly though, most of the non-governmental organisations that implemented flat salary package structures in the past have been forced by market conditions to abandon these structures in favour of hierarchical ones. MPs' salaries are similarly affected by such market forces.

It is inappropriate, and often bordering on racism, to suggest that MPs should be paid relative to the salaries they were accustomed to before their election. Many indeed earned little or no salary, but the overriding factor should be the need to attract a cross-section of good and experienced people to parliamentary service. This includes trade unionists, community workers, doctors, lawyers and accountants who come to parliament with widely differing salary packages and expectations. Some will take a drop in salary; many will take an increase in salary. Parliament

should not intentionally cater for the highest common factor but it still has to pitch its salaries competitively with the private sector.

An examination of the salary package shows that the figure of R193 200 a year, which has frequently been given as a basic salary, is actually a gross figure that includes two major allowances totalling 35 percent of the amount. The first is a R32 200 car allowance which provides for a small to medium motor car plus running costs. It is taxed according to the normal schedules applicable to motor vehicles and, to receive any substantial tax benefits, MPs have to maintain accurate travel logbooks.

The second allowance of R36 000 is perhaps more controversial and provides for work-related expenses of attending parliament such as subsistence costs (more than 90 percent of MPs have to maintain a second home in Cape Town), secretarial services, stationery and related office expenses. Fringe benefit taxation provides for tax deductions of R150 a day for accommodation, meals and incidental expenses by those who are away from their normal place of residence on normal duty. Various other work-related expenses may also be claimed as deductions. Again, MPs would need to keep substantial records for claiming purposes. If not, they face paying full tax on this allowance which, when added to their taxable income, is likely to be taxed at a marginal rate of 43 percent (plus the five percent transition levy!).

Clearly Cape Town-based MPs are at an advantage since they do not have to spend money on running a second home. Out-of-town MPs who choose to stay in one of the state-provided compounds such as Acacia Park are now required to pay market-related rentals.

Leaving aside these allowances and a small annual entertainment allowance of R2 500, an average MP's true basic salary would be R122 500 a year or R10 208 a month. This would be less if MPs received a 130th cheque or bonus, which is normally the case in the private sector.

The only other benefits received are two free return flights a month, the normal employer contributions to medical aid and pension, and subsidised meals from the parliamentary dining room.

Deductions from salary include: 7.5 percent of gross salary (less car allowance) for pension purposes, this being the employee's contribution, of R12 075 a year; the employee's contribution to the medical aid scheme which for a family of four is R5 076 a year; and PAYE tax of about R40 000 to R50 000 a year (excluding the current transition levy).

Net income after tax and deductions, and assuming that the allowances are used for the purpose for which they were allocated, amounts to about R60 000 a year or R5 000 a month. From this MPs have to pay the full cost of a bond or rental for their normal place of residence since

have resounded in the debate about new government salaries.

have failed dismally in explaining to a sceptical public why they

ended by the Melamet Committee.

salary packages and finds that an MP's net income is R5 000 a month.

They do not receive any housing assistance or subsidy, an allowance frequently provided in the private sector.

The advantage of Cape Town-based members was recognised by the Melamet Committee but they felt that determining a different salary package for these MPs would be difficult (and probably encourage them to move outside of Cape Town!).

A horde of hard-sell sales people are offering newly elected MPs, many of whom have never owned houses or decent cars before, deals on a wide range of goods and services, including houses, cars and investment opportunities. The most recent entrepreneur to try his luck in parliament was selling crocodile skin shoes!

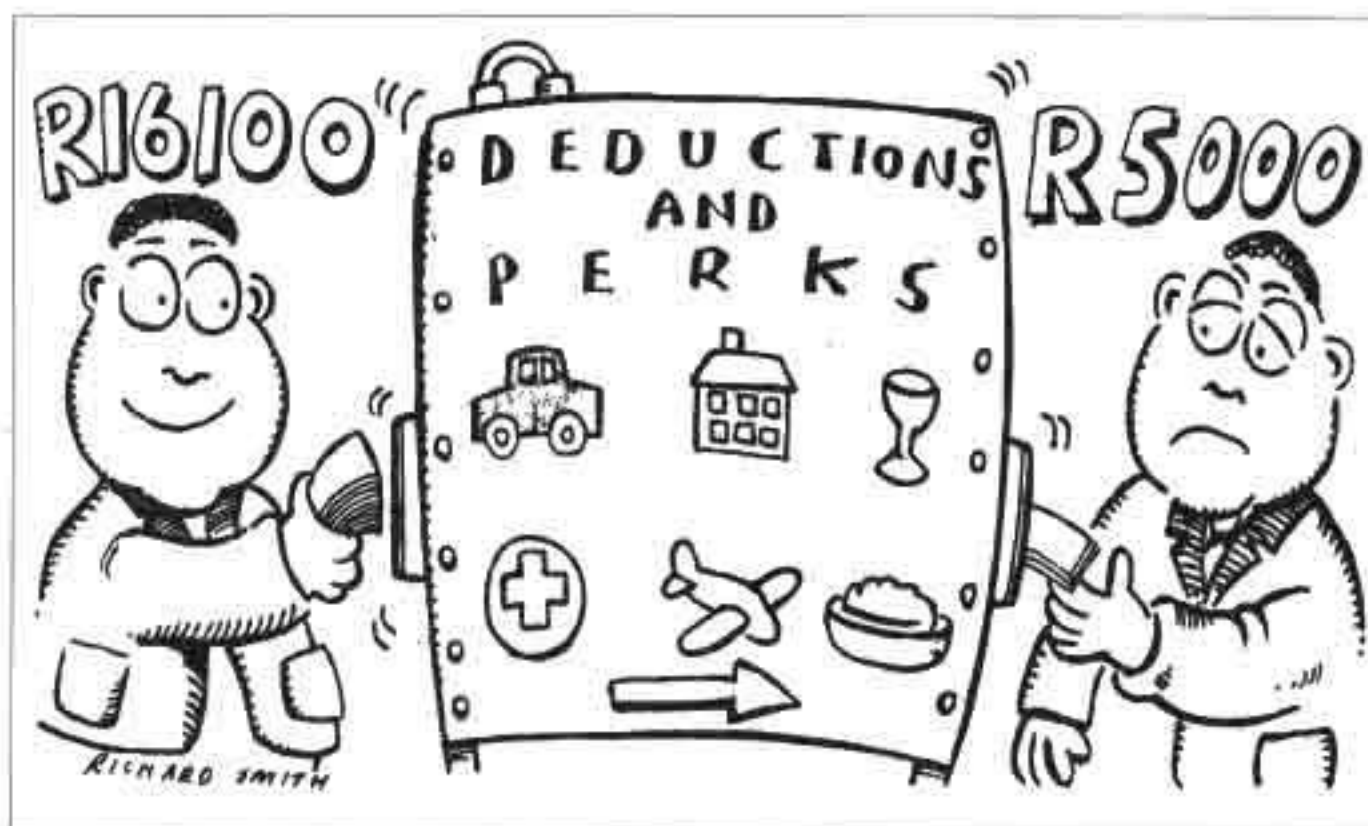
The net salary takes into account the fact that MPs do not get any other substantial cash or non-cash benefits besides those mentioned here. It also assumes that the packages are pitched at a high enough level to ensure that they will serve without having to "moonlight" for additional remuneration.

Those MPs who claim they cannot make it on their present salaries are often forgetting that many of the costs they are now facing are actually the initial non-recurring costs of having to set up homes in Cape Town. It was never intended that out-of-town MPs should be able to buy homes in the city, but rather that they would be renting.

Further demands for bigger packages would be regarded as inappropriate and give rise to more allegations that parliamentarians are creating an increasingly large gulf between themselves and their constituents, especially those elected from the ranks of the liberation movements.

Some parties, such as the ANC and Inkatha, levy a party contribution on their MPs. This is R750 in respect of the ANC and R600 in respect of Inkatha. Although deducted by the employer, there is no favourable tax relief in regard to this amount. Since it was an internal party arrangement, it was obviously not taken into consideration by the Melamet Committee.

Similarly, the committee specifically made no allowance for MPs to do constituency work because they were elected on a basis of proportional representation. Here the voters must be the losers because it is an



important democratic practice to be able to sack your local MP at nomination time if he or she has not performed during the previous period of office. Political parties have started to address this by allocating MPs to specific areas of the country to do "constituency" work. They have successfully claimed R3 000 an MP a month to cover this work. These funds will be paid directly into the account of the MPs' political parties and should be used to cover the cost of setting up and running constituency offices, holding report-back meetings and generally staying in touch with the electorate.

A common criticism of MPs is that they get paid simply for sitting (and sometimes sleeping) through session after session of parliament. All legislatures do, in fact, end up with their fair share of free-loaders but in the main this should not be allowed to happen. Most MPs are allocated to a number of committees (and a resultant number of sub-committees) and other duties. The parliamentary day can begin early in the morning with a series of meetings and end sometimes after seven in

the evening when parliament adjourns for the day.

The problem of accountability and assessment of performance which, to continue the analogy with the private sector, requires systems of appraisal and time-keeping will need to be reviewed and adapted to encourage voter confidence in public representatives. Much of this is the responsibility of the political parties concerned, but parliament as an institution can also establish checks and balances and has started to address this question by instituting a form of clock-in system for MPs. (One sometimes wonders where an MP has been when he or she wanders into the assembly for the first time three or four hours after the session has begun.)

This article has focused on the remuneration of ordinary MPs and not the packages of the cabinet, chairpersons of committees, whips and the like. There has been considerable criticism both from within and from outside parliament about the size of the packages allocated to these categories, especially to the cabinet.

What has happened is exactly what the

Melamet Committee wanted to avoid. Its intention of devising an open and fair remuneration system with similar rules and regulations covering taxation to those in the private sector was achieved – but then it was lost in uninformed argument in the press and elsewhere.

It was fascinating to learn that when a number of non-Cape Town based parliamentary media correspondents recently started adding up the value of their salary packages they soon realised these were not very different to those paid to MPs.

Current legislation before parliament is likely to affect the overall package, with a review of the basic salary and two allowances taking place. A draft bill provides for a commission of non-parliamentarians to make recommendations on remuneration packages, thereby ensuring that MPs do not decide on their own salaries. ■

Allan Taylor is Policy Co-ordinator in the Registrar's office at the University of the Western Cape.

Forceful views

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approach used to arrive at the "balance option" of civil-military co-operation should also be used for further policy development. Ad hoc responses to complex defence issues should be avoided at all costs.

Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils emphasised that members of the military were not servants of the government of the day but of the Constitution. If the forces were called upon to defend the Constitution in South Africa today, they would be defending democracy.

Responding to comments about problems around the integration of former Apla, Umkhonto we Sizwe and homeland defence force personnel into the SANDF, Kasrils said the force was more democratic now than ever before. It was essential that the integration process worked, but this would require the co-operation of all parties.

"There are tensions. We are not sweeping them under the carpet but we are trying collectively to solve them," he said.

The problem, according to defence standing committee chairperson Tony Yengeni and PAC member of parliament Richard Sizani, was that erstwhile cadres of the liberation movements were being absorbed rather than integrated into the defence force. The process

was taking place entirely on the terms and standards of the defence force, which was also imposing its organisational culture on new members.

Jakkie Cilliers of the Institute for Defence Policy countered that the integration process was imperfect because it was the result of a political deal.

"It is not cost-effective because it is a political deal – but it had to be carried out. There is great scope for criticism but it had to be done."

Opperman urged delegates to have regard for the difficult conditions on the ground and said mechanisms were being created to deal with problems. The legitimacy issue would not be settled until the process was complete, he said.

However, Cilliers painted a bleak picture of defence force capacity in his paper on prospects for stability. He said that he, personally, was "not lulled" by reports that good progress was being made in consolidating the security forces. Indeed, he went so far as to say that a crisis appeared to be in the offing.

"South Africa may be well on its way towards a single, integrated socio-economic policy in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) but there is no sign of

a concomitant national security plan, without which the RDP will certainly fail," he warned. "Security and development go hand in hand."

Cilliers drew a picture of a discredited and demoralised police force in the throes of a massive transition and without a credible public order force, and of a defence force required to support the police but suffering itself from all the trauma of transition and a decreasing ability to rely on call-ups to augment its full-time strength.

The critical issue, according to Cilliers, was the recently announced moratorium on prosecution of part-time members of the Citizen Force who failed to respond to call-up papers. This effectively deprived the army of a large portion of its mobilisable operational strength at a time of possible instability.

However, Kasrils made it clear that he did not share Cilliers' alarm. He said the defence ministry was committed to maintaining voluntary part-time forces in one form or another and that the matter was still under consideration.

Opperman conceded that the challenges in relation to SANDF capacity were daunting. However, he said the will of the defence force to rise to these challenges should not be underestimated.

He echoed Kasrils's declaration that the retention of part-time forces was under consideration but warned that further cuts to the defence budget would have "dramatic if not catastrophic" consequences for the effectiveness of the SANDF. ■



PROFILE

ALICE COETZEE speaks to the person charged with ringing the

changes in unjust education in the PWV region and finds that calm,

collected Mary Metcalfe is an open book.

Schooled for success?



Metcalfe

DIEPKLOOF principals have been locked out by the community, white parents are fuming about education plans for the future, university students are marching over fees ... and the PWV region's unflappable Mary Metcalfe admits with engaging honesty, "This is a terrible job! Who would want it?"

Observing the vigour with which Metcalfe, Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Education, is confronting the injustices of apartheid schooling, one is surprised that

initially she saw more of a back-room role for herself. "When the party election lists were being drawn up I kept on saying: 'Put me in the bureaucracy. I'll be happy there.' But the ANC leadership was emphatic that I should take a political position because there was no guarantee of ANC posts in the civil service."

Metcalfe is one of two women in ministerial positions in the PWV government. Interestingly, both she and Jessie Duarte, MEC for Safety and Security, occupy the two hottest seats. Both are seasoned activists who are now being watched, not only for how they will deliver politically, but because they are women.

Sipping coffee from a polystyrene cup while her visitor uses the office china, she talks of not allowing the gap between her and those she serves to widen. She is also aware that in the face of a tidal wave of expectation, she has the "frightening" task of helping to reverse a systemic problem that has developed over 40 years.

She likens the restructuring of education to the task of building a new house over the shell of an old one that is in a state of collapse: as the old house caves in there is a danger that the new will be dragged down with it. In practical terms this means that the flashpoints of daily experience – lack of books, apartheid curricula, authoritarian attitudes – ignite the educational undergrowth, drawing the fledgling PWV education department into mediating sit-ins, defusing angry marches and diverting chalk-downs. Unlike its predecessor, the response is one of understanding and empathy for the anger.

"But the solutions cannot be ad hoc," says Metcalfe, "we are in danger of being sucked into crisis management. There has to be a balance."

All this is putting strain on a department which, on paper, does not exist. Take the lift to the seventh floor of 30 Simmonds Street in Johannesburg and you walk into a room full of people, telephones ringing, computers clicking.

"Technically, there are only three of us in the department," says Metcalfe. The other members of her strategic management team have been begged, borrowed or stolen from educational non-governmental organisations. Members of the transitional task team are drawn from this group – and they face a January 1 deadline for the integration of the education system. Creating a single education department will be relatively easy; a single system will be quite another thing. Just one

aspect – the setting up of standard regulations across the board, from Department of Education and Training (DET) schools in the townships to state-assisted Model C schools and private schools – will be a political obstacle course.

The defiance of school regulations was a major thrust in the resistance strategy of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union. Reversing this when so little on the ground has changed will require sensitivity in consulting with teachers' organisations about new ground rules.

Among those to have come up against the Metcalfe determination are white parents who are outraged by her insistence that from next year pupil numbers in mainly white schools will increase to at least 30 for every classroom. Metcalfe understands their anger but believes she is absolutely correct. By the same token she believes there are many schools which are committed to using their facilities for the benefit of those who were previously excluded.

In Diepkloof, Soweto, principals were locked out by the community after allegations of corruption. Metcalfe is adamant that principals must return to schools and that due process must be followed.

The conflict between old and new styles of administration influences every aspect of Metcalfe's work. Senior bureaucrats continue to pursue their policies; communities continue to refuse to work with the DET; the Public Service Commission continues to use the same criteria that sidelined the majority of people for decades. The result is frustration, adversarial relationships and a feeling of powerlessness.

The schoolyard is where Metcalfe feels at home. A trained teacher who was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, her educational experience spans the full spectrum, from remedial through to teacher training, with lecturing posts at Johannesburg College of Education and Wits University. From 1986 her work took a community-oriented direction with her involvement in the Black Sash, the All Schools for All People campaign, educational support to the Free the Children Campaign and Detainees Support and then into the National Education Crisis Committee, Southern Transvaal, and the ANC education committee.

Never part of Johannesburg's white left clique, Metcalfe's rise within ANC ranks to the regional executive committee of the ANC PWV surprised some into asking, "How did you get in?"

She laughs, "I was always clear about the issues and the projects that had to be done. I never had time for the social scene. I was too busy." So busy that she became legendary for her working days which started at 4am. The job at hand was the ANC educational policy document and she would usually work for four hours until 8am so that her family would not miss her.

With the future of so many children in her hands, it is no wonder that MEC for Education was not a responsibility Mary Metcalfe chose lightly.

Alice Coetzee is based at Idasa's Pretoria office.



Police in South Africa are beginning to operate under a new ethos but in a context

fraught with difficulty. Minister of Safety and Security SYDNEY MUFAMADI sketched the way ahead in a recent speech to the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa.

HAVE often been asked whether it is possible to reduce levels of crime in South Africa when many of the promises made in the form of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) have not yet materialised. The Ministry of Safety and Security is of the view that there is an important relationship between stability and development. For a reasonable level of safety, the success of the RDP is necessary.

When we examine the challenges facing the new South African Police Service (SAPS), therefore, we shall have to do so in the context of this programme, which quite clearly seeks to ameliorate the conditions in which our people find themselves.

One of their legitimate expectations was that, in the immediate aftermath of the non-racial democratic elections, all conflicts – in particular, political violence – would disappear from the face of the country. Although we have seen reductions in levels of violence, we should not assume that violent crime will disappear. In fact, levels of interpersonal violence may increase because of anxieties and apprehensions which are attendant problems of processes of transition.

The interim Constitution puts forward the vision of community policing, a notion that is not new in the South African vocabulary. But many previous efforts to improve police-

community relations have fallen victim to the view of police officials that such efforts were mere window-dressing.

It is clear to us, therefore, that community policing involves more fundamental transformation of the police organisation than was envisaged previously. The police service must be organised in such a way that police officials at all levels can define priorities which are attuned to the needs and sentiments of the community.

This implies a consultative approach to police work, an approach which sees a police-community partnership as an essential ingredient for effective crime prevention. As I see it, there are two basic obstacles which stand in the way of realising such an approach.

The first is that the current structure and culture of police organisation does not facilitate a consultative process of police work. Decision-making powers in the police force are so centralised that police officials on the ground are not empowered to exercise their professional discretion. This culture is so deep-rooted that the new approach is viewed as a loss of authority.

The second problem is the historical lack of police training and skills in such important areas as conflict resolution, problem solving and communication. The oppressive political dispensation of the past, to which police work was functional, did not have to expose police officials to these universal, non-enforcement functions of policing.

Partnership is path

This legacy will be with us for some time to come. It would be naive, therefore, to expect the police to immediately become accustomed to playing a conflict-solving role when history has made them one of the parties in conflict.

Another potential source of conflict is the increasing awareness of personal and fundamental rights among the public. To some police officers, this constitutes a challenge to authority and they feel compelled to respond by exerting more authority, at times through the use of force.

The interim Constitution is the supreme law of the land. We are in government to uphold the law. The Constitution says, among other things, that workers have a right to strike as part of the collective bargaining process.

Recently truck drivers decided to exercise this right by blockading highways because that is their workplace. A snap debate was introduced in parliament on the issue.

After the debate I asked the Commissioner of the SAPS to send the police to the highways: Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and Labour Minister Tito Mboweni were going there to negotiate with truck drivers and their employers, and I considered it important for the police to be there as observers.

It is now a matter of record that the conflict was resolved because both the employers and the union agreed on the formation of an industrial council. Negotiations would continue within that framework.

I have yet to receive a report from the police officers commanding the units deployed on the highway, but from that report I will assess the extent to which they learnt from the negotiations facilitated by the two ministers.

However, there are times when members of the public exercise their rights in a manner which does not suggest sufficient appreciation of the rights of others.

These cases include situations in which striking workers believe, quite erroneously, that their right to picket entitles them to use force to prevent others from doing business with the companies they work for. This explains why neutral third party intervention will remain necessary for some time to come.

The role to be played by service organisations cannot be confined to mediations, given the picture I have just painted. It will have to be extended in a big way to include education and training. And I see the major stakeholders in matters of safety and security, namely the police and the broader community itself, as the prospective students.

The following story illustrates this point. An activist told me he was trying to set up a community-police forum in White City, Soweto. He complained that the station commander was not co-operating with him in this regard: he was being reactionary. In fact, said the activist, the station commander was undermining the RDP because he disagreed with the activist's suggestions.

This points to the important role to be played by service organisations in encouraging a more nuanced, sophisticated and profound interpretation of some of the important things that are being

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Police, community at odds in Harare

By Sobantu Xayiya

THE call for greater co-operation between police and communities is clouded by the mist of the past. Many communities are still haunted by experiences of harsh police treatment and as a result remain sceptical of working relations between them and law enforcement agencies. Attempts to draw them into contributing towards the process of reconstruction are therefore often unsuccessful.

Harare, a site-and-service squatter settlement on the fringes of Khayelitsha in Cape Town, is one of many communities struggling with this legacy in relation to co-operation with the police. For most of its residents, the line between past and present police services is blurred, if not non-existent.

Residents have been locked in a bitter struggle with the authorities over a police station built for the area in 1992. The squatters demanded that the structure be converted into a hospital, which they identified as a facility more urgently required in the area. According to some, residents were never consulted, or informed, about plans to build the police station in 1992.

After a series of confrontations, the authorities responded by starting to build a hospital - opposite the police station. The hospital is nearing completion but the police station is still not functioning, as residents remain implacably opposed to its presence. The police station is deserted. The only people there are two police guards.

Most of the people I spoke to see the police station as a potential threat to their survival. "Should it start functioning, we stand to lose greatly," is the view of one resident, a man who makes a living by smuggling dagga. He says unemployment and inadequate skills are the reasons for his illegal line of work.

But it is not only the police station that is disturbing many Harare residents. It is the whole idea of community policing. They are far better informed than the police about who is involved in illegal businesses. But the shared need to make a living somehow, in the context of massive unemployment, is behind their unwillingness to respond positively to the call for greater co-operation with the police.

For example, there is the man who says he survives by stealing cars and selling them. Like most self-confessed thieves, he sees himself as a Robin Hood. He does not steal from township residents, whom he regards as poor like himself: his "business" operations are conducted outside the townships. Naturally, he cannot imagine co-operating with police.

Nor can the taxi driver whose vehicle is not roadworthy. Plagued by traffic fines, he is opposed to co-operation with the police on the grounds that it would "complicate" his life.

Harare is no different from any other squatter settlement in the Peninsula. Most residents come from the Eastern Cape (recorded as the region hardest hit by unemployment) in search of jobs. Unable to find employment, they seek alternative ways of making a living.

Harare residents make it clear that they believe in democracy. But, to most of them, the idea that the police are a vital component of democracy is inconceivable at this stage. The bottom line is survival. ■

to peace

ALICE COETZEE explains how a community-policing initiative is bringing hope to an area where poverty and mistrust are rife.

Small peace blooms in Bekkersdal

Row upon row of corrugated-iron shacks, bleak and encircled by dust, lead you into Bekkersdal, a small, treeless West Rand township outside Krugersdorp. Outwardly, it's a stark picture of hopelessness, yet this little place was the first township in 1990 to unite supporters of the ANC, Inkatha Freedom Party and Azapo into a working relationship aimed at building the community.

The accord was shattered in the run-up to the April elections, with Internal Stability Unit (ISU) intervention fanning the flames. But a fragile peace has returned in the wake of the formation of a peace committee led by local leaders. The restoration of peace is all the more remarkable in the new context of mushrooming informal settlements around Bekkersdal, with new communities with their own needs and leaders asserting themselves.

The Bekkersdal community is now on the brink of officially launching its own community-police forum, but police and community representatives have different views on how it will work. For the police, the forum will give the community a role in solving crime. For the community, the forum has a much broader purpose: to change the nature of policing in their township.

A champion of the process is Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Cole, unit commander for community liaison on the West Rand. In his view, the community has been more open to dialogue with the police, including the ISU, since the elections. "Through the forum we hope the community will feel free to report crime and to bring problems with the police to the police," he says. Aware of long-standing community mistrust of the police, Cole hopes trust will be built once there is a "solid mechanism in place".

Chairperson of the Bekkersdal Development Campaign Committee Vusi Dhlamini agrees. "The most important thing is to build trust and communication between the police and the community. Since the fighting, there have been no-go areas and the amount of crime is increasing. We hope the forum will be able to stop this. The police attitudes are changing."

Azapo activist Violet Mogone is not so sure. "I don't see any difference between the past and the present police," she says. An opponent of the forum, she believes the community should do its own policing. "By including the police, the community will be divided because people will be encouraged to inform on one another," she says.

Mistrust of the police and the need to deal with it through the forum appears to be high on the community's agenda. This is expressed through fear of police dominance of the forum and anger over what is perceived as continuing police harassment, in contradiction of the forum's objective of building relations between the community and police.

"The police from Krugersdorp work here and when they ask you to show the policeman who beat you up yesterday, you cannot tell the difference between the white policemen. They hide their name tags," says Simpeo Mpothsana, of the Bekkersdal ANC

marshalling structure.

The apartheid legacy of the police and attitudes instilled during their training is what worries James Ngoko of the ANC. He says that if the forum's aims of uniting, educating and building a positive relationship between police and community are to be achieved, police should be recruited only from the community: "If we can work with the local police and not the police from Krugersdorp, we will be able to solve problems with the police because we can go to the house of the police officer and raise the matter with him."

Nellie Mathikge of the Concerned Women of Bekkersdal agrees, calling for the upgrading of Bekkersdal's single satellite police station into a full station. She thinks it should be operational 24 hours a day and should have adequate resources, including transport, so that police can respond to emergency calls.

Both she and Azapo's Mogone are particularly keen to see the appointment of women police officers who can deal sensitively with women who have been raped and abused.

Bekkersdal station commander Lucas van Tellegen supports the call for a full police station. "We have 28 policemen working in four shifts to serve 150 000 people. It is very difficult for us to do our job."

Says Warrant-Officer Tefo Mpete of the police community relations department: "We've come a long way. At first it was gloves off and we boxed each other. Then, as the process went on, we wrestled; and now we are helping one another. There are still problems but some of the police who could not accept the changes are beginning to understand the realities. Community policing is two-sided. We must each do our part." ■

Alice Coetzee is based at Idasa's Pretoria office.

Partnership is path

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put forward, among these the RDP.

These principles should not be treated as slogans. If this practice continues, then we will not be able to consummate the process of democratising our country.

After this address, Mufamadi was asked a number of questions.

Police-community forums are almost impossible in certain areas, such as KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana. How can this be addressed?

We are now building a national police service

which will be organised at two levels – national and provincial. Standards will be set at national level and these must be observed, irrespective of whether one is in KwaZulu/Natal or the PWV. These reform initiatives, internal to the police, will ultimately make police-community partnerships possible throughout the country.

Now and then one will see manifestations of resistance. In such cases it will be necessary to encourage, persuade and sometimes even punish officials who behave in a way which is inimical to sound police-community rela-

tions. In KwaZulu/Natal some investigation is already in progress with regard to making community policing possible.

Has a fresh, systematic look been taken at the claims against your department which you inherited from the previous government?

We are looking at those claims because some of them present a moral dilemma. How can the new SAPS fight a claim made by the widow of Matthew Goniwe? It would not be justifiable. I think some of these cases will end up with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission where it will become possible to talk about reparations for victims. But if we were to settle all these claims at the amounts that are being demanded, the RDP would suffer. ■

ON TOUR: (from left) Gontse Koitsloe of Sapu, Janine Rauch of the Ministry of Safety and Security, Gert van Beek of the Amsterdam Police and Idasa's Mduuzi Mashiyane.



BEA ROBERTS was among a group of South Africans who visited the Netherlands to see how security is provided in an unusually tolerant society.

Policing with vision

LETTING a group of 25 South Africans loose on Amsterdam is at the best of times a challenging experience. When the group consists of police and civilians who have come to see the Dutch policing system in action, the experience promises to be even more interesting. The long overdue study tour took place in September. It was planned by three local organisations – Community Peace Foundation, Idasa and the Policing Research Project – and facilitated by the Dutch Foundation for Society.

For the tour group, the Netherlands became far more than tulips, cheese, windmills and Van Gogh. Our own struggle to achieve a safe and secure environment in South Africa was vastly enriched by the opportunity to engage around these issues in the international arena.

As the main focus of the study tour was community policing, the group included members of the police, non-governmental organisations and local communities. The police delegation consisted of members of various divisions within the South African Police Service as well as representatives of the police unions – Popcru and Sapu. Most delegates were from the PWV, but the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu/Natal were also represented.

The social environment within which policing takes place in the Netherlands is vastly different from our own. Few societies are as tolerant and free as that of the Netherlands, and few cities offer as many choices as Amsterdam where our visit started. Visible manifestations are the sex industry (visits to the red light district, ably led by one of our Dutch police hosts, were mandatory for the majority of the group!), open homosexuality and easy access to soft as well as hard drugs. Our inherently Calvinistic tour group had some difficulty in acclimatising to this context. One policeman confessed that he had to restrain himself from arresting two people smoking heroin on the street.

But it was the approach of the Dutch police to these practices – in particular the drugs – which most clearly reflected their policing philosophy. Policing is not only regarded as law enforcement: it has a far broader social function. This is encapsulated in the Dutch concept of community policing which takes a pro-active approach to ensure that safe and secure living conditions are provided for all citizens.

The mid-1970s saw the emergence of a group of “angry young men” in the Dutch police who wanted a radical new approach to policing and for several years struggled against the authorities to make this possible. Today many of these rebels hold senior positions in the force and the changes they proposed have been phased in. Towards the end of the 1980s, a number of changes were evident: geographic decentralisation within the police force, de-specialisation, a flatter organisation, spreading of responsibilities and management by objectives.

Of particular relevance to the development of community policing in South Africa was the notion of neighbourhood teams that are assigned to a particular district and become a visible and known presence in that neighbourhood. The social commitment of the police is most evident in a range of special projects. They identify specific problems in the community and address these by mobilising the assistance of other institutions or structures. In this way the police are integrated into society and realise their fundamental guiding principle of “knowing and being known”.

We also met the representatives of the three Dutch police unions which, between them, represent 90 percent of police officials, including those in management positions. Unions have been active for over a century and have played a major role in improving working conditions in the force. They engage in collective bargaining and influence police policy, and would only consider strike action if the fundamental rights of their members were compromised.

At times it was difficult to bring our experiences across to our Dutch hosts. This was particularly evident when we visited their specialised training centre for public order policing, or riot control.

The main public order threat in the Netherlands is that of crowds which may become rowdy or even violent, a situation largely experienced at soccer matches. It is virtually inconceivable that crowds would be armed and open fire on the police, but should this be the case, the police are obliged to withdraw and call in the military police. There are no permanent riot units in the Dutch police and the mobile units are composed of volunteers from the force who receive extra payment for this duty after specialised training.

The emphasis on professional training and continuous retraining probably accounts for the professionalism of the Dutch police. We spent a day at one of their training centres, De Boskamp, attending classes and marvelling at the facilities and innovative teaching methods. Much of the teaching is done by civilians, and mock situations and role plays, recorded on video and played back to trainees, are an integral part of the training.

Experiencing first hand how security and stability is provided in a well established democracy was an eye-opener for most of us and it revealed the vast possibilities for policing in South Africa.

Encouraging self-reliant behaviour among citizens, and policing with vision and discretion are qualities that are not unique to the Dutch situation. The Dutch police took decades to change and restructure – our own situation calls for a far greater sense of urgency. ■

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Poor health is among the major burdens of residents of under-developed communities. DAVID SANDERS and ROBERT VAN NIEKERK prescribe a cure.



Picture: THE ARGUMENT

Cure by campaign

THE pattern of ill health in poor communities in South Africa, symptomatic of the economic and social under-development inherited from apartheid, looms morbidly over the reconstruction efforts of the new democratic government. High levels of malnutrition and infections such as pneumonia and diarrhoea starkly reflect high unemployment levels, inequitable land distribution, overcrowded housing and unsafe water and sanitation.

The Western Cape, for example, has a tuberculosis rate which is three times the national average and reputedly the highest in the world. Health problems associated with social instability and the migrant labour system are rife and include sexually transmitted diseases, Aids, substance abuse and trauma due to violence.

If these problems are to be addressed effectively, a holistic, inter-sectoral approach to health is required, aiming both to make appropriate health care accessible and to confront the economic, social and political conditions which underlie ill health.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) provides a developmental framework for the active participation of poor communities in the restructuring of South African society. The key RDP principles of "an integrated and sustainable programme" and a "people-driven process" can best be realised in the area of health through strengthening the self-organisation of poor communities around health issues and health-related basic needs, such as housing, water, sanitation and land reform.

Of course, such community organisation will require financial and other support from

the state, as well as from educational and research institutions and other non-governmental organisations.

The RDP has many similarities with the primary health care approach adopted as international health policy in 1978. Like the RDP, this approach is based on the idea that participation by self-reliant communities, through representative structures, is the only way to ensure a health service responsive to community needs.

The primary health care approach also argues that the aim of an integrated, holistic system should be to promote health and prevent disease, rather than simply to treat the symptoms of ill health.

Improving access to health care, especially in poor rural and peri-urban communities, is a key aim of the primary health care approach. The idea is that community health centres

should be the foundation of a reformed health sector, providing comprehensive services to communities which should participate in the governance of all levels of the system.

These community-based services would form part of a district health system (DHS) whose boundaries would coincide as closely as possible with the boundaries of the local authority responsible for ensuring service delivery. However, the DHS would be supervised and supported from the provincial and national levels of the system.

Such restructuring of the health services cannot be a mere technical exercise, as resistance to change from professional and old bureaucratic forces already demonstrates. If the RDP objective of active participation by organised communities is to be realised, a shift of power relations within the state and the health professions will have to take place.

This shift needs to be effected through community-driven campaigns around basic needs, in conjunction with the more technical exercise of changing structures within government health departments.

The question then becomes: can projects initiated in the health sector become RDP projects, in the sense that they engage communities around health issues, while also strengthening community self-organisation, and engaging other sectors relevant to health (such as education, water and housing) in health development initiatives?

Two examples currently being suggested will serve as illustrations of how this could take place – a nutrition campaign and a health literacy campaign.

A nutrition campaign, based on the primary school nutrition programme launched by President Nelson Mandela, is being advocated on the grounds that, despite the surplus of food produced in this country, many young children go to school hungry, with a significant percentage chronically undernourished. Hunger and nutritional deficiency can significantly impair learning, intellectual performance and development. If children are to realise their potential, they need adequate nutrition.

It is a credit to the new government that the primary school nutrition programme has been launched successfully, and that school feeding is now taking place in all provinces. However, despite the benefits of this programme to many needy families, it does not address the problem in a comprehensive way, nor is the provision of food at schools sustainable over the long term.

It is clear that undernutrition requires a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable response to the complex of factors underlying it. It is crucial that those affected by the problem – in this case primarily the parents of undernourished children – are engaged in the process of identifying the problem, analysing its causes and fashioning a sustainable

programme to address it.

The dimensions of the problem are enormous. Children between the ages of one and three years are particularly vulnerable to the effects of undernutrition and they are particularly difficult to reach. Clinics are attended primarily by children under one year of age (those in the immunisation age range), while creches are used mainly by children from better-off families who are, in any case, mainly over three years of age.

The suggestion is that the primary school nutrition programme should form the institutional context for an expanded programme, with the well-tested international principle of "child to child" health education as the link between primary schools and communities. In terms of this principle, primary school children (and possibly adjacent secondary school pupils) act as "multipliers", accessing younger children within their own families.

The primary health care approach argues that the aim of an integrated, holistic system should be to promote health and prevent disease, rather than simply to treat the symptoms of ill health. Improving access to health care, especially in poor rural and peri-urban communities, is a key aim. The idea is that community health centres should be the foundation of a reformed health sector.

These younger children could then be brought to the primary school by their parents on a pre-determined day, perhaps once a month. Parents, teachers and pupils, organised through committees on which all are represented, could be taught to weigh the children and at the same time could receive user-friendly health information.

A school educational project could be designed around the process of weighing and recording of weights on growth cards. Appropriate care and referral would be provided for seriously underweight or unhealthy children and food might be distributed on that day to the under-fives.

The weighing and recording exercise could be used as the basis for discussion of the factors behind undernutrition, including social and political conditions such as unemployment, poor education and an unsanitary environment.

The next step would be to identify possible solutions. It might be decided, for example, that a public works programme should be proposed, with the twin aims of upgrading the community and generating employment.

Funds could be sought from the RDP budget.

The potential stimulation of community self-organisation through this kind of exercise, and the development of inter-sectoral activities, would qualify it as an RDP campaign.

The second campaign being advocated is a health literacy campaign organised around those health problems identified as priorities within communities. The aim would be to improve health literacy and create the optimal use of health resources within communities. The underlying message would be that the most important health-promoting resource is the consciousness and the organisation of people around health.

Such a campaign should include all sectors, ranging through schools, community organisations, health services and the private sector to water services. All could be drawn into a health literacy day, for example.

The campaign would be initiated by community organisations and schools who could decide to bring in the local health services and other relevant resources, such as libraries and literacy groups, to help plan or provide assistance in their health campaign.

Guidelines would have to be prepared to stimulate discussion but the first major exercise would be for communities to undertake a simple health survey, using the schools as a base, with teachers, parents and pupils as the agents for the survey.

The results would be written up in an accessible form and discussed by community groups and other participating organisations, who would then decide on one issue they could focus on for their campaign. The campaign could take the form of a purely educational initiative or it could involve activities around such issues as nutrition or management of diarrhoea (for which training would be needed).

Where a training need is identified, it should be met as far as possible from within the community – from local health services or private practitioners, for example.

The campaign would be conducted on a door-to-door or street-to-street basis by health education teams, who would be equipped with the necessary training through the "multiplier" method and clearly identified as campaign agents. Support could be mobilised through media coverage, billboards, pamphlets and comic books aimed at health education.

These two examples show how health campaigns could operate within the RDP, given sufficient organisation and political commitment. The cure to ill health in South Africa lies in prevention, and prevention depends in turn on the extent to which we can rid ourselves of the malady of social under-development. Campaigns organised through the RDP could be the means. ■

David Sanders is director of the Public Health Programme at the University of the Western Cape. Robert van Niekerk is research officer in the Education Policy Unit at UWC.

Fears of government control over NGOs' purse strings won't go away.

SHIREEN BADAT spoke to alarmed members of the sector

RDP vs NGO?

that played a key role in apartheid's defeat.

The battle of acronyms

TENSIONS seem set to linger between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the state over the control of foreign funding. Fears of government control over NGOs are mounting after the recent release of the White Paper of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which refers to some form of accreditation for NGOs in order to monitor their accountability and efficacy.

The contents of the White Paper, and earlier government statements about the NGO sector, have sparked serious dissatisfaction within the ranks of NGOs. Among their concerns is that accreditation will result in only the larger organisations receiving contracts from the government while smaller NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs), which are often grassroots initiatives, will be the losers.

Another is a lack of clarity about an "audit" of NGOs which the RDP office has embarked on. Although organisations agree that there is some duplication and competition within the sector, questions arise over what criteria will be used to determine which NGOs remain viable.

Although the White Paper suggests that there is scope for groups that monitor and lobby government, there is concern that those who are critical of the government may be blacklisted.

A major complaint is that the White Paper is vague about just how government will engage with NGOs.

Because of apartheid policies, the world's biggest NGO sector has been spawned in South Africa, with an estimated 54 000 organisations active in development. With a democratic government now in power, foreign funding is likely to be channelled in the usual bilateral government-to-government manner.

In order to fund its R2,5 billion budget for the RDP, the government faces stiff competition from NGOs, which received R2,3 billion from foreign funders last year.

The RDP office has called for the restructuring of the NGO community. Although Minister without Portfolio Jay Naidoo has said he believes that NGOs have a critical role to play in the RDP, he has also indicated that he will only deal with a representative NGO body.

At a recent summit of NGOs, attempts were made to form a national council of NGOs. An interim committee was established to work towards setting up a national structure within the next six months and to engage with the RDP.

A spokesperson for the Western Cape NGO coalition, Michelle Booth, said organisations were "not very happy with this top-down approach by the RDP office". The lack of consultation and the apparent attempt to impose a national structure on NGOs were problematic, she said.

A series of meetings and workshops have been held by Western Cape NGOs over the past year. In February a steering committee was formed.

"We are unclear about the relationship between the national summit and the process we have been engaged in," said Booth.

Jacqui Boule of the Development Action Group feels that although there is a need for some form of regulation or "quality control", the government is placing itself in a very powerful position by claiming the right to decide on accreditation.

She commented: "This could lead to favouritism and patronage and it potentially opens doors for quite repressive measures to be introduced." She added that the critical issues were how funding was used, how NGOs and the RDP complemented each other and how broadly the money could be spread.

Idasa programme director Paul Graham said accreditation was not necessarily the best way for the government to enter into contractual and tendering relationships with NGOs that did work which justified government funding.

"It could become a control mechanism which reduces government efficiency and leaves them at the mercy of NGOs who become merely dependent branches of government policy rather than the independent and effective organisations which make them valuable to the RDP in the first place," said Graham.

In this way, he said, accreditation could backfire on the government. "But it will also be resisted by many NGOs who have suspicions that it will be used to control their activities as

well as access to funds and information.

"The RDP principles of self-regulation, democratisation and a vibrant and independent civil society should be the watchwords for the relationship between government and NGOs," said Graham.

Sharon Follentyn of the Urban Foundation said a process of natural attrition in the NGO sector would be preferable to legislation to rationalise it.

She feels that the White Paper is somewhat short-sighted. "Instead of trying to take over the tasks of NGOs, the government should rather be looking at how NGOs and CBOs can interact with the RDP," she said.

Funders, it seems, are also not too clear about the implications of the White Paper.

Lars Faaborg Anderson of the Danish Embassy said it was important to continue funding NGOs but suggested that a gradual transference of knowledge and expertise should take place from the NGO sector to the government.

He said the Danish government saw great potential for three-way co-operation between itself, NGOs and the RDP which would entail the Danes funding work sub-contracted by the government to NGOs. This, he said, would ensure that NGO programmes were in line with government policy.

Such an approach would mean that the big challenge facing NGOs is how they reposition themselves in terms of bilateral funding. ■

Because of apartheid policies, the world's biggest NGO sector has been spawned in South Africa, with an estimated 54 000 organisations active in development.



BOOKS

Scapegoats in an age of turmoil

By Steven Robins

MILTON SHAIN'S *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* provides a fascinating and detailed account of the rise of anti-Jewish sentiment that began with the arrival of east European Jews in the late 19th century. Shain provides a systematic account of how mainstream "liberal" newspapers, popular theatre and literature fuelled this virulent and overt antisemitism.

His book is a timely challenge to us to wage a struggle of memory against forgetting: as we move into a new era in South Africa's history, the swastika-like emblem of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging and an antisemitic press statement by a trade unionist during the recent Pick 'n Pay strike suggest that traces of antisemitism, like apartheid, are likely to remain for many years.

Furthermore, at a time when the liberal press presents itself as the custodian of individual freedom and political tolerance, Shain draws attention to the ignoble role played by mainstream newspapers such as the *Cape Times*, *South African News*, *Cape Argus* and *Die Burger* in disseminating negative stereotypes and images of Jews. He seems to suggest that while poorer Afrikaners were primarily responsible for the pro-Nazism and antisemitism that emerged in the 1930s, anti-Jewish stereotypes were forged by English-speakers – as evidenced in the media – from the moment east European Jews stepped off the boats in the 1880s.

One derogatory media image that lasted for four decades in South African newspapers was DC Boonzaier's Hoggenheimer cartoon character based on the fictive Jewish financier in a West End musical, *The Girl From Kays*.

Writing for the *Cape Times* in 1904, Henry Farmer caricatured a Jewish "Fagin" at the Southampton quayside about to board a ship to South Africa: "I saw him from the quay. He might have been a somewhat younger edition of Charles Dickens' Fagin ... His nose was hooked most semitically ... His frock was undesirably greasy ... He looked worth no

more than the clothes in which he stood. He was bound for South Africa."

On the mines in Kimberley and on the Rand, Jews were labelled as the prime culprits of illicit (African) liquor selling, illicit diamond buying, prostitution and other criminal and amoral activities.

Their language, working-class background, dress and physical appearance played a significant role in the social construction of Jews as an alien population. In other words, their alien character was inscribed on their bodies in a way that expressed their cultural "otherness".

The Star summed up the mood of the day in a report on the fecundity of east European Jews and warned that this would have an adverse impact on South Africa's development by diluting its "Nordic" stock. This argument was echoed by the *Cape Times*, *Die Burger* and other mainstream newspapers. Shain writes: "By the mid-1920s, eugenicist-based fears of 'race-mixing' and 'mongrelisation' – primarily associated with South African blacks – appeared to have influenced perceptions of the east European."

Fears of Jewish economic competition were expressed by a *Cape Times* correspondent during the post-war economic depression: "Petty trade [is] gradually being absorbed by a most undesirable class of people. The large number of unsavoury looking fruit shops, fifth rate grocery stores and similar places of business which have been opened in recent months, furnish unpleasant proof that the undesirable alien has established himself pretty firmly in Cape Town."

Fears that these "undesirable aliens" could one day become the Hoggenheimers who allegedly controlled the stock market fuelled calls for immigration legislation to halt the influx of east European Jews. Shain provides a detailed account of how such fears and prejudices contributed to the Immigration Quota Act of 1930 which drastically curbed the immigration of Jews from eastern Europe.

The author also shows how Jews came to be seen as the embodiment of the socially



disruptive and disintegrative force of capitalism. He provides considerable evidence of how Jews' involvement in commerce during periods of economic stress produced heightened expressions of antisemitism directed at the supposedly "anti-social" role of the Jewish *smous* (rural petty trader).

Shain's work suggests that these anti-Jewish expressions stemmed from the fact that the Jewish *smouse* were the most visible carriers of social change in the countryside. They came to be seen by "poor whites" as the embodiment of the anti-social nature of capitalism and were held responsible for uprooting them from their rural communities.

He writes: "For the antisemite the Jew symbolised all that was evil in the modern world, a world nostalgically contrasted with an idealised past age of order and harmony ... For many categories of the social spectrum – the impoverished farmer, the unemployed worker, the competing merchant and the frustrated businessman or financier – the stereotype [of the Jew] served as a psychological cushion. It furnished a convenient scapegoat in an age of turmoil."

Shain also suggests that antisemitism among Afrikaner workers and nationalists may have been partly the outcome of a widespread perception that prominent Jewish capitalists supported the English during the Jameson Raid and the Anglo-Boer War.

In a country where some are now saying that South Africans should "forgive and forget" past human rights abuses rather than holding a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the will to remember antisemitism remains a relevant theme. Shain has made a valuable contribution in this regard.

Steven Robins is a researcher in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Cape Town.

THE ROOTS OF ANTISEMITISM IN SOUTH AFRICA, by Milton Shain. Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1994. 203 pages, R70.



'A curious flattening of history'

By Nicky Rousseau

GINSBERG, Sabalelo, Kantolo, Kholvad – these places evoke a different landscape to the one trotted out to successive generations of pupils in South African history lessons. Similarly, the names Sol Plaatje, Steve Biko, Seretse Khama, ZK Matthews, Yusuf Dadoo, Oliver Tambo, Mohandas Gandhi and Chris Hani must sound like music to ears weary of trekker heroes and British governors.

These names are the subjects of eight biographies (out of a projected 22) that have been published in a series entitled *They Fought for Freedom*, which aims to tell "the life stories of southern African leaders who have struggled for freedom and justice". (Gandhi, the Mahatma of India's independence struggle, links in through his role as founding member of the Natal Indian Congress.)

As the exercises at the back of each booklet suggest, the booklets are clearly, although not exclusively, aimed at school pupils. The series is edited by John Pampallis, author of *Foundations of the New South Africa* published by Maskew Miller Longman in 1991. This book was piloted as a history text at the ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College where Pampallis taught.

It is interesting that Maskew Miller is the publisher of both Pampallis's earlier text and the series under review, given its role as publisher of some of the more deadly school history texts that I and generations both before and after me suffered. The signal of the publisher's own transformation is clear.

Each booklet is about 60 pages long with roughly 10 pages consisting of classroom exercises and a suggested reading list. The design of the booklets, particularly the covers, is attractive and this no doubt aims to entice pupils more used to the mute and unimaginative covers of the staple history textbooks.

The narrative style of the booklets,

presumably aimed at encouraging pupils to empathise and identify with the characters, attempts to recreate and make familiar the worlds in which their subjects lived, through a mix of reportage, direct speech and fictional reconstruction.

Several themes resonate across most of the booklets: non-racialism and the breaking down of ethnic and racial divisions; the essentially civic-minded nature of resistance politics in twentieth century South Africa; and the importance of education in effecting personal and political change. If all popular histories start from the need to confront the present, then, crudely put, these themes translate into a project that suggests nation building and reconciliation as central to any new history syllabus, with education as tool and enabler.

Many would affirm these as being central aims for any new syllabus. There are equally many who, no doubt, would dismiss *They Fought for Freedom* for being sectarian (the individuals portrayed are, almost without exception, leading representatives of traditions of resistance associated with the ANC); for its celebratory and largely uncritical tone; and for being somewhat weak on historical detail and explanation.

Without wanting to dismiss such criticisms, it is important to recognise the series as one of but a handful of attempts to begin rewriting history texts. In that sense it usefully raises a number of issues and tensions that historians, educationists (teachers, parents and pupils) and progressives working in publishing companies will need to confront.

One of the major criticisms of conservative history syllabi, both in South Africa and elsewhere, has been the tendency to present historical change as the preserve and outcome of the actions of a select few "great men". Within this perspective, substituting black men for white men and throwing in a few women makes little difference.

Another common criticism of school histories has been their narrowly and selectively political bias. Indeed, much radical historiography in South Africa over the last





LETTERS

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

One of the criticisms of conservative history syllabi, both in South Africa and elsewhere, has been the tendency to present historical change as the preserve and outcome of the actions of a select few "great men".

few decades has been concerned to counter such approaches through a focus on the role of ordinary women and men in the making of history. It has asserted a far wider lens, that places social, cultural and economic life at the centre of historical and political explanation.

At first glance then, this series would seem to be at odds with such approaches. The subjects of the biographies published so far are not only prominent figures but, without exception, men. A few women do feature on the still-to-be-published list, namely Dorothy Zihlangu, Dora Tamana, Lilian Ngoyi, Ruth First and Cissie Gool – but a focus on "leaders" and their "important roles" remains.

The editor and authors would no doubt counter this criticism by asserting the need to counter racist stereotypes, provide marginalised and alienated youth with role models with whom they can identify, and impact on the perceptions of white pupils alienated from the experiences and histories of their fellow South Africans. Biography, they would suggest, is an ideal way to meet these needs.

These are important concerns. Yet it should be pointed out that it is not the biographical approach itself that necessarily draws one into a celebration of the "great men" – or, for that matter, "great women" – thesis. Indeed, a number of eminent social historians (including Lull Callinicos, co-author of one of the booklets) have turned their minds to biography. Biographies and individual life histories, they suggest, can be used to trace the enormously complex processes of identity formation; to highlight the complex interplay between subjectivity and objective circumstance; and to explore the nature of historical meaning in the lives of individuals.

But if biography does allow for a different kind of approach, the authors and editor of this series have not attempted to use it. Indeed, despite the potentially rich tapestry of lives, few of these booklets even read like biography. Instead, the individuals seem often to be hangers on which to peg sometimes loose and – in relation to each other – repetitive histories of struggle.

There are, of course, exceptions – significant

parts of the Matthews and Plaatje booklets, as well as the early years of Tambo being the most notable. Yet the impression remains that the biographies, singly and in relation to each other, are little more than a device for "narrativising" the long march to freedom.

One of the consequences of this is a curious flattening of history. Plaatje, Gandhi, Tambo and Biko inhabit a bizarrely similar world with little difference shown in time, space or individuation.

I have suggested that the issue of constructing a national identity is a central organising feature of the biographies and it is thus interesting to see how the issue is dealt with in the series. All the booklets take pains to stress their subjects' non-racialism and ability to transcend what are seen as ethnic and racial identities. The message that emerges is clearly "we must set aside our differences and build a common nation".

This is a disappointingly simple injunction in a country in which racial and/or ethnic boundaries are experienced either as simply reducible to apartheid policy or as natural. Historical explanation is well suited to point to the constructed nature of identities and to trace – through biography in particular – the ways in which identities are constructed. This would enable pupils to understand that nation building isn't about "forgetting" and "putting aside" but about struggle and power.

The role of the authors and editor in constructing these histories is masked. Thus, instead of helping pupils to recognise that the production of history is always contested, they are left trapped in models of "real" and "true" history without the tools to challenge and construct different versions.

Nicky Rousseau works for the People's History Project in the history department at the University of the Western Cape.

THEY FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM, edited by John Pampallis. Maskew Miller Longman, 1992-4, R16,53 to R17,99 a booklet.

Poet unfair to British

I HAVE read your publication for several years and enjoy the diverse points of view reflected in it. But I must take issue with poet Antjie Krog for her views on the Anglo-Boer War as a cause of Afrikaner oppression of black people.

In your last issue, she maintains that an apology from colonial Britain to Afrikaners and some compensation for the wrongs committed may have fostered accountability among Afrikaners.

No one doubts that Afrikaners were wronged and killed. My own grandmother, a granddaughter of Joao Albasini, was shunted off to a Natal concentration camp with her family. The concentration camps certainly fostered an aggrieved mindset among Afrikaners, but let's face it – they have dwelt on these wrongs in a morbid and persistent way, brainwashing generations with hatred.

Why should their oppression and sufferings not have made them sensitive to the oppression of others? The fact is that prior to the war they kept slaves and resisted attempts by English missionaries to free them. Afrikaners retained the Dutch colonial mindset and took the opportunity to assert it after 1948. The colonial mindset was current all over Europe.

It is distinctly unfair and untrue to attribute the Broederbond mentality to the British. We should rather look to those Afrikaner leaders educated in 1930s Germany with its concept of the master race which accorded with their outlook at the time.

AB Page
Pietermaritzburg

CORRECTION: in the book review titled "Sanitised version of liberation" (*Democracy in Action* 31 August 1994), it was incorrectly stated that Barry Streek writes for Associated Press. Streek is in fact on the political staff of the *Cape Times* and its associated newspapers.

IDASA IN ACTION



DIARY

Highlights of forthcoming events organised by Idasa offices

Port Elizabeth

A series of truth and reconciliation public information workshops will be held throughout the Eastern Cape.

The first will be held in Port Elizabeth on 25 October at the Humewood Hotel. Other workshops will take place in Port Alfred on 26 October (Victoria Hotel) and in East London on 27 October (King David Hotel).

The speakers will be Daniel Nina, Janet Cherry and Mohammed Navsa. The workshops are a joint effort by Idasa, Lawyers for Human Rights, Human Rights Trust and the Institute for Multi-Party

Democracy.

Booking is essential because of space limitations. For further information contact Ansiet Kimsley at (041) 553 301.

● On 3 November a workshop on the RDP will be held at the Humewood Hotel. It will place special emphasis on the unemployed in relation to the RDP.

Speakers have been invited from local and provincial government and academic institutions.

● A seminar on traditional tribal African law versus democracy will be held at the Humewood Hotel on the 29 and 30 November. For further information contact Sandy Wren at (041) 553 301.

Western Cape

Idasa's Western Cape office continues its work in local government in the rural areas. Workshops addressing the transition to local government will be held throughout October and November in Riversdal, Macassar and Albertina.

● A workshop with youth will be held in Ceres on 3 December.

Durban

Idasa's Durban office will coordinate a group of youth on a study tour of Denmark from 28 October to 13 November.

The group has been invited by the Danish Youth Council to study democracy and see how the council operates with a view to forming a youth council in South Africa.

● A "bridging the gap" camp will be held from 18 to 20 October. High school pupils have been invited to attend the camp to discuss their role in peace and reconciliation.

● Representatives from civil society structures are invited to attend a workshop on 27 and 28 October to discuss their role in relation to

the RDP. Interested persons may contact Shelagh Gastrow at (031) 304 8893.

● On 16 October, Idasa staff will facilitate training around local government issues for Cosatu officials in Empageni.

● Report-back meetings on local government negotiations are held on 9, 15 and 16 October in the South Coast, greater Pinetown and greater Durban areas.

Bloemfontein

A public meeting on the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be held at the University of the Orange Free State on 27 October.

Speakers at the meeting will include Paul van Zyl of the Centre for the Study on Violence and Reconciliation and journalist Jacques Pauw.

● Police officials and representatives from towns in the Free State are invited to attend a conference on community policing on 11 November.

● The idea of establishing a provincial Pan South African Language Board will be discussed at a meeting on 3 November at the University of the Orange Free State.

Students brush up on skills

SOME 80 Free State student leaders attended a leadership skills workshop at Allemanskraal in September.

Delegates to the weekend workshop were members of students' representative councils from tertiary institutions in the province.

The programme focused on the definition of democracy and democratic leadership skills. A highlight of the workshop was the simulation of formal meetings. Skills for managing meetings, including facilitation and communication techniques, were imparted.

It was exciting to witness the keen interest of the group in the issues discussed. It was clear that there is a great need for this kind of training.

*Queenette Watari
Training Centre for Democracy*

Go-getting PE is sought after

IN a coup for Port Elizabeth's Transitional Local Council (TLC), the city has been approached by a European firm representing London boroughs interested in twinning with the city.

The Eastern Cape city's sought after status can be attributed to its success as the first major city to establish a TLC.

The concept of twinning entails linking up with a borough facing similar challenges. While beginning with Port Elizabeth, the project may be extended to other regions and may include twinning of provincial governments.

The exercise is aimed at importing and exporting knowledge and skills in local government, health and social welfare, housing, community policing, direct business and trade links as well as small busi-

ness development.

The process will be facilitated by the Idasa office in Port Elizabeth and Euroconsultants in London whose representative, Anwar Rizvi, receives calls daily from boroughs interested in twinning with Port Elizabeth. The one whose structures best correspond with those of Port Elizabeth will be selected for the twinning.

A commitment from business, labour and civil society will be essential for the success of the project.

The European firm is committed to a bottom-up approach to development and will ensure that partners are like minded.

Euroconsultants and other interested partners will visit Port Elizabeth in November to conduct a comprehensive investigation into

the twinning proposal.

This visit will be returned in December when a local delegation visits London to attend a seminar on local government development in South Africa, arranged by the Local Government International Bureau.

Local activities targeted for the twinning are the Pakamisa Small Business Development Project, Small Farming Project and the CDB Regeneration Project.

It is anticipated that the proposed twinning arrangement will be a far more creative process than past exercises of its kind. Exchanges for city councillors are one of many potentially valuable exercises that will form part of the twinning programme.

*Sandy Wren
Senior Co-ordinator, Port Elizabeth*

IDASA **IN ACTION**

Rural local government transition: A guide for perplexed citizens

IF you thought the national and provincial elections were complicated, think again! Transition at local government level is even more bewildering. This has become obvious in Idasa's work with 12 rural negotiating forums and two urban negotiating forums in the Western Cape. (I do not want to even attempt to say what is happening in the Cape Metropolitan Negotiating Forum.)

Stated simply, the transition at local level is governed by the Local Government Transition Act and is envisaged as taking place in two phases:

- the pre-interim phase, which began when the Act became law last year and ends with the holding of the first democratic local government elections;

- the interim phase, which starts immediately after the first local government elections and ends when the next local government elections are held in terms of the final Constitution.

Within each phase a number of steps have to be followed. The first step in the pre-interim phase is the setting up of local government negotiating forums. Two sides are represented in these forums:

- a statutory side, consisting of existing municipalities and local authorities and political parties and organisations who traditionally have been part of (previous) government structures; and

- a non-statutory side, consisting of civics and other non-governmental organisations and political parties who traditionally have been excluded from (previous) government structures.

But even this apparently simple division into statutory and non-statutory sides is not always easy. In some rural negotiating forums, for instance, you find parties which have been part of government but who claim non-statutory status!

Many rural towns have accomplished this first step of establishing a negotiating forum. In others, non-statutory bodies are still struggling to be accepted as legitimate negotiating partners by their statutory counterparts. This reluctance to accord recognition has been

interpreted by some as a deliberate attempt by the statutory players to slow down the transition in their town and to hold on to power.

Among the issues that negotiating forums have to decide on are the boundaries of their local government area, what model of transitional local government to adopt, and how the membership of transitional local councils will be made up.

The second step in the pre-interim phase is for negotiating forums in each town to appoint or become transitional local councils (TLCs). Statutory and non-statutory sides each have the right to 50 percent of the seats on the TLC. The TLCs will take over the work and functions of the previous local authorities.

If negotiating forums decide against adopting the TLC model, they can consider becoming a local government co-ordinating committee (LGCC). Such a decision means that existing local government structures remain in place, with the LGCC playing a co-ordinating role, with minimal powers and duties.

If negotiating forums cannot come to a decision on the type of local government model they want for their town or area, the provincial government, acting in consultation with a committee made up of equal numbers of statutory and non-statutory local government stakeholders, is empowered to either impose a model, or request the forums concerned to renegotiate their options. The provincial

government, again in consultation with the committee, must also approve and appoint the council members nominated by each negotiating forum.

A number of towns have already nominated TLCs and are waiting for approval from provincial level. The TLCs have two main tasks: stabilising community services and preparing for local government elections.

Such elections are the third step in the transition process and are expected to take place between October and December of 1995. The electoral system will be a blend of the ward system (60 percent of councillors) and proportional representation (40 percent of councillors).

An August draft of local government election regulations is available and gives some idea of what to expect. (A later draft has been prepared but I have not seen it yet.)

Immediately after the elections we will enter the interim phase of local government transition, which will last for three to five years. Elected non-racial local governments will be in place and the process of negotiating a final local government dispensation will begin. In 1999 or later we will have another local government election based on the final Constitution.

The above explanation of the local government transition process might seem simplistic but the process is far from easy for participants involved in the negotiations on the

ground. I have attended some negotiating forum meetings, helping to facilitate people through some deadlocks, and I found the process very complicated and frustrating.

Helping communities to see that local government will be of, for, and by them, is a long process. However, it has been encouraging to see the involvement of the broader community in negotiations in towns such as Riversdale and Citrusdal.

Idasa's Western Cape office is very involved with this process of local government transition and we believe that the challenge is to take local democracy beyond local government, to empowering communities in democratic and life skills. We have started local democracy programmes in rural towns and communities and are finding people excited by the ideas and vision behind these programmes.

This is particularly so in the case of those who have been excluded from local government and who have not been valued or affirmed as citizens with contributions to make to their communities. I think it is the idea of sharing responsibility and power that is beginning to foster a new kind of community in rural towns. The realisation of our interdependence on one another will eventually effect the transformation we need locally.

*Charles Erasmus
Regional Co-ordinator, Western Cape*

Helping hand for communities

MANY people involved in community organisations are struggling to cope with the challenges facing them in this time of local government transition. They are expected to involve themselves in the process in two ways: by participating in negotiating forums, and by nominating people for appointment to transitional local councils.

But many community leaders do not feel empowered to take part in this process and are concerned about how to report back

to the communities they serve.

Assisting a process of empowerment for community organisations was therefore the aim of a recent weekend workshop in which leaders from civic organisations in the southern suburbs of Cape Town participated. The workshop focused on how to plan and run workshops in a way that encouraged maximum participation and learning by participants.

The workshop explored creative techniques such as games and exercises and many of the partici-

pants were surprised to find that they were enjoying themselves thoroughly. There was also a focus on developing facilitation and presentation skills, and a final component was information about local government and the local government transition.

All the participants afterwards declared themselves better equipped to run workshops in their communities on local level issues.

*Michelle Booth
Office Co-ordinator, Western Cape*



MY VIEW

Brain drain may bar door to the Promised Land



By Teboho Loate

“WE HAVE some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now, for I have seen the Promised Land. I may not be there with you. But I want you to know that we as a people shall get to the Promised Land.”

These words of Martin Luther King are relevant to us in South Africa. Now that the elections in this country are over, have we reached the “Promised Land”? And if we have indeed arrived, are we all there? Does being there mean that we have fully occupied it?

Before the April 1994 general election, the people of South Africa dreamed of a different country, a different society, a different nation. All these different expectations were underpinned by the desire for democracy, transparency and accountability, influenced by the rhetoric of the “Promised Land”.

Of course, it may be too soon to start counting the possible eggs that will hatch as the realities of the struggle for “liberation” become apparent. There is the obvious argument that the new ANC-led government of national unity did not emerge into an empty environment. It must exist in an environment of complex established systems, of institutions with historical cultures, of institutionalised bureaucracies, where a sector of individuals believe that pre-election standards, values and norms are the qualities that need to be maintained in the post-election society.

The election did not magically transform society overnight. It only opened the door to transformation. This process is now under negotiation and the intense struggles which mark this rite of passage give notice that we have entered stage two of the liberation struggle.

Everything depends on the outcome of this process: the future shape of South African society; the location of power; the continuation or end of privilege; the empowerment or continued disempowerment of ordinary citizens; peace or perpetual estrangement.

The odds are incredibly high, the vested interests are many and the outcome is uncertain. Who should be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that transformation takes place? Will it once again be the political parties cutting deals that leave those with privilege protected by the Constitution, while those who struggled to get a piece of the cake continue to struggle?

If we are to authentically reshape our society, civil society in its myriad of forms must exercise its voice and its presence.

Which brings us to an important problem: the creaming off of civil society leaders into all levels of government, leaving behind a vacuum of leadership, skills and resources.

Principal sufferers of this brain drain are the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) whose people either facilitated or led the struggle towards democracy. Today, hundreds of former NGO leaders are in national and provincial government or are in the process of moving into the civil service. Others, whose talent was clearly marketable, have been recruited by big business, whose salaries were a siren song to upwardly mobile activists and policy planners. The possible nightmare of yet another leadership loss is looming with the imminent establishment of integrated local government.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) clearly puts the responsibility for development with communities on the ground. The government certainly does not have the capacity to implement all development and neither should it, if we want to break the tradition of top-down development.

With the need to move towards implementing RDP programmes, there is obviously an expectation that formerly oppositional modes of operation will be replaced by co-operation around development. The demands and challenges of this change will be enormous for the many major sectoral formations, such as civics and trade unions, as they grapple with the idea of building relations with the present government while not compromising their independence.

In this context, one must ask: how strategic has the ANC been in its approach to rebuilding society? By depleting NGOs and development organisations of leadership, has the ANC not crippled its most important allies in facilitating delivery within communities?

In the apartheid years, the government neutralised communities by detaining or co-opting their leaders. Our present government, for quite different reasons and in different ways, is doing the same thing.

If it is not to be guilty of mere lip-service to its stated support for a vibrant civil society, the government must ensure a climate conducive to the functioning of NGOs and community-based organisations. How is it to do this? Perhaps the first step is to ask some questions.

- What are the ANC and other liberation movements doing to build second-tier leadership within their organisations?

- How can the government strategically promote networking and co-operation between NGOs and discourage the fierce competition for “ownership” that has marked inter-NGO relations?

- How best can the ANC resolve existing tensions with the civics so that development can proceed?

Martin Luther King saw the Promised Land but, 26 years after his death, his people have still not arrived. We face the same possibility. ■

Teboho Loate is regional manager of Idasa Bloemfontein office.