

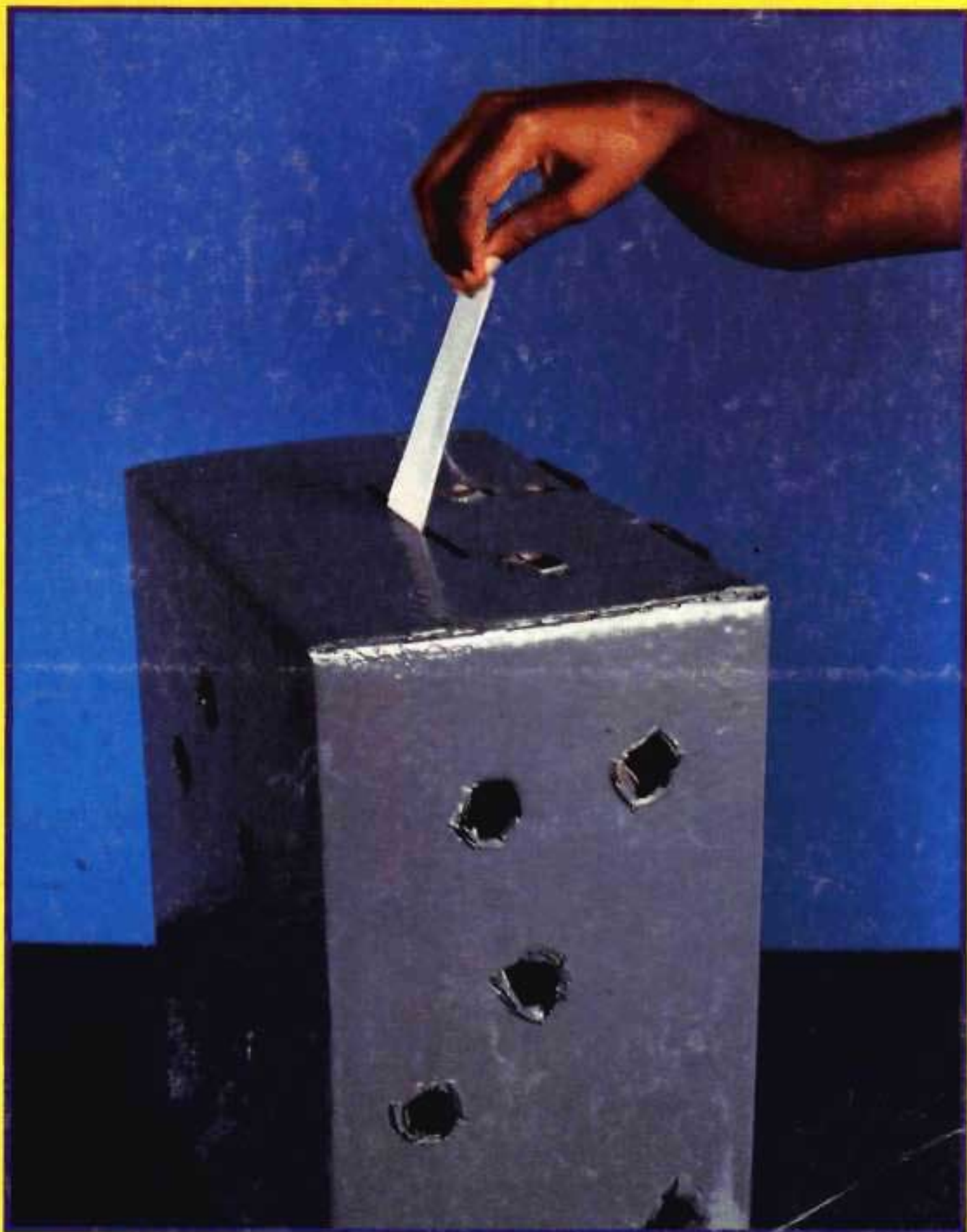
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WIP 96 • APRIL/MAY 19

# PROGRESS

## THE SPOILERS



Have they  
got what it  
takes to  
 derail  
democracy?

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OR



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PHOTO: THE STAMP

## THE BULLET OR THE BALLOT?

If the white right-wing doesn't get you, Inkatha probably will ... As South African voters sharpen their pencils, WIP's contributors probe the potential for derailing democracy

*The Spoilers — Pages 10 to 22*

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South Africa's goalkeeping trade unionist gives you an inside look at what he's taking to parliament

*Personally Speaking — Pages 6 & 7*

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The ANC's holding thumbs that it can take the Western Cape — but the polls show they don't have much hope

*Election Watch — Pages 8 & 9*

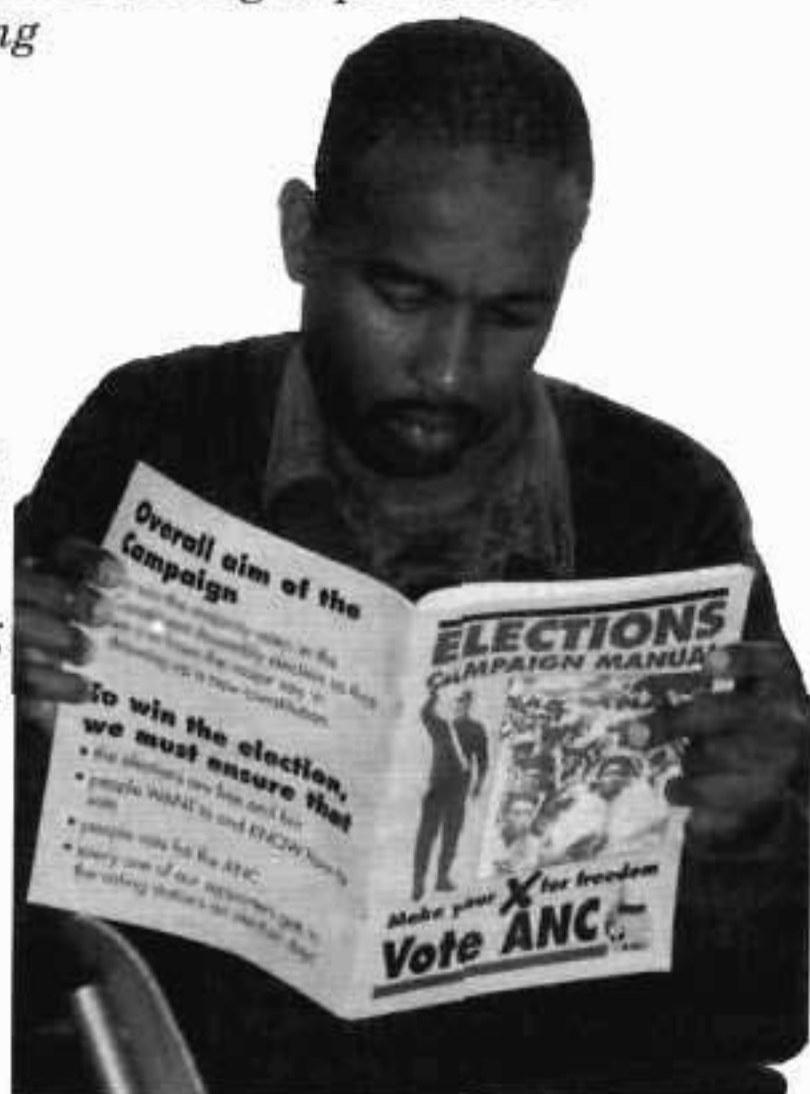


PHOTO: ERIC MILLER



THE ELECTION

**Natal holds its breath**

WHATEVER THE POLITICANS DECIDE, Natal is in for a bumpy ride between now and April 27.

Because the situation is both fluid and violent, it is difficult to predict exactly what will happen — particularly as, at the time of writing, Inkatha was still insisting it would not take part in the election, and there were new revelations about state involvement in supplying it with weapons.

IFP participation in the poll would definitely lift tension in the province. For a start, the electoral code would force all parties in the province to exercise tighter control over supporters who use violence to disrupt opposition campaigns.

But election-related violence is unlikely to disappear. In a province which has lived with extensive violence for almost a decade, the fight to win votes is likely to be a bloody one.

**Protection**

Voters going to the estimated 1 100 voting stations in Natal are going to need protection. In the Midlands, scene of some of the worst violence, there will be about 260 voting stations — most of them outside Pietermaritzburg city. The Independent Forum for Election Education's coordinator for the region, Lynette Archer, said there would be one monitor and three observers at each voting station on election day.

A key problem, however, will be the security forces' ability to deal with violence.

The National Peacekeeping Force, for example, has insufficient staff to provide protection throughout the province. As veteran peace monitor John Aitchison points out: "In the Gaza Strip, the Israelis work on the principle of one soldier every 100m to control the area.

"In Natal, we may need an equally high security presence. The alternative is to have as many visible people as possible and a well-controlled rapid deployment force. Such a force would have to act effectively and ruthlessly the first time violence arises."

**If people want to vote, they will**

Aitchison said there were useful lessons to be learned from the recent elections in Pakistan and Kampuchea. "In Pakistan, the military anticipated trouble spots and had forces ready to go in. In Kampuchea, the lesson was that if people want to vote they will do so, regardless."

Aitchison says he has identified three main trends in the violence in the Midlands.

"The first trend, present over the last five years, is one where the violence has rippled outwards from Pietermaritzburg. It first hit urban Pietermaritzburg, then moved into the city's periphery, then rural towns, such as Mooi River, Estcourt, Wembezi and Richmond. It then moved northwards and is now hitting denser areas of rural KwaZulu — particularly tribal areas, such as Ntambanana, Bergville, Swayimane and Applebosch.

"To some extent the violence has been suppressed in northern Natal — it's a repressive area historically. But the violence has resurfaced in Madadeni (an IFP stronghold), Osizweni (more ANC), Ezakheni and Steadville.

"A second trend is that when the IFP is pushed, it relies increasingly on tribal figures to hold ground. In places such as Underberg, Mpendle and Bulwer, Inkatha is trying to rebuild its support structures. And it's going to chiefs for this.

"But a lot of chiefs are now worried about whether it's a good idea to align themselves with the IFP or any political party. They've seen the destructive effects of violence and they

want to be left alone.

"A significant number of chiefs are not very enthusiastic about rebuilding the IFP in their areas. This puts more pressure on warlords to go into such areas to do the work. Chiefs are in an invidious position and the tribal chief structure is likely to collapse gradually.

"The third trend is the large amounts of guns available — and, related to this, the increase in massacre attacks. In 1988 and 1989, there was real shock when a family was murdered. Traditionally, this wasn't done, nor were children the targets.

"The reason for the change could be a considerable breakdown in social norms, orchestrated attempts to sow fear or groups of psyched-out killers. Possibly, it's happening because of a mixture of all these", he said.

**Send in the troops**

But what options are there for containing the violence? ANC official John Jeffrey says his organisation is hoping the TEC subcouncil on law and order will be of help.

"We want to use the TEC to force the police to act — to ensure the election is free and fair.

"We also want the police to speedily investigate cases of violence and, where appropriate, oppose bail."

A significant development in the province could be the establishment of a regional inspectorate, with the power to investigate and monitor all police agencies and liaise with them.

The inspectorate is likely to consist of at least three people, one of whom would be a civilian, the others drawn from the police. The inspectorate would include an independent complaints mechanism, under civilian control, and be responsible for receiving and investigating complaints from the public about police misconduct.

Jeffrey said the ANC would also be using the IEC. It has already asked for an IEC investigation into the recent





THE ELECTION

No room for losers

THERE COULD BE A LOT OF SURPRISED — and angry — people in the Western Cape once the election results are announced.

A poll by Marketing and Opinion Surveys (MOS) found a startling number of voters expect their respective parties to win elections for the province's regional assembly.

The MOS survey, carried out in February, found unrealistically high expectations — particularly among supporters of tiny parties, many of which have armed components. Some might choose to react violently to the news that their parties fared poorly.

The MOS poll shows, for instance, that 91% of Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) supporters expect the party to either win or do very well in the election. However, no poll to date has shown PAC support levels higher than 13% in the province.

Fully 71% of ANC supporters expect the party to triumph — an increasingly unlikely prospect if recent surveys are to be trusted.



■ NO-HOPERS: Polls show the National Party will take the Western Cape — but its supporters aren't quite as optimistic

Interestingly, Democratic Party and Conservative Party supporters in the Western Cape seem most resigned to also-ran status.

A mere 34% of supporters of the National Party — the front-runner in the Western Cape — expect the party to win.

The lesson, though, is that unless

more realistic expectations are nurtured rapidly about election prospects, there are going to be a lot of unhappy, frustrated (and possibly dangerous) people on the morning of May 1.

— Bob Mattes

● There's more about the Western Cape's election outlook in *Election Watch* on pages 8 & 9

The MOS poll asked supporters whether they think their party would:

	ANC	NP	DP	CP	IFP	FA	AWB	PAC	Wh	BI	Col
■ Win the largest number of votes	71	34	13	0	0	14	39	50	16	63	42
■ Do very well and be one of the largest parties	21	47	23	44	28	57	31	41	48	25	27
■ Not be one of the largest parties but still win a good many votes	4	7	40	44	39	0	8	3	20	5	5
■ Get few votes in the election	0	0	8	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	0

incident at Mpendle, when the ANC was prevented from organising a People's Forum.

"The difference between the IEC and the Peace Accord is that the IEC has teeth", Jeffrey said. "There are Peace Accord structures operating in the Midlands — in Vryheid, Newcastle, Ixopo and Estcourt", he said. "But besides defusing crises, they have not played much of a role.

"The main problem with the Peace

Accord structures is that they are voluntary. They depend on the individuals and parties they represent being committed to peace."

Jeffrey referred to the recent arrest of IFP representatives in Ixopo, Bulwer and Phateni — some of whom are IFP representatives on peace structures — saying: "There can't be much hope for the peace structure if the people sitting on them are accused of participating in the violence."

But there's an additional problem, as John Aitcheson points out.

He says there is genuine concern that even if the IFP does take part in the election, there will be violence when the results are announced.

"The victors might take revenge, or the losers might not accept the outcome," he told *WIP*.

— Estelle Randall

● On page 18, Gerry Maré and Georgina Hamilton look at Inkatha's real agenda in the elections





**MOZAMBIQUE**

**Half speed ahead**

CONTINUED DELAYS ARE PUTTING Mozambique's October election date in jeopardy, with each step of the peace process now taking almost twice as long as planned.

The assembly of troops should have been completed by the end of last year, but is still way behind schedule. Demobilisation has only just begun.

Although it is theoretically possible to catch up, it will require a degree of haste neither side has shown. Says

one diplomat: "It seems as if each side can always rely on the other to throw up an obstacle."

Only a handful of government troops have been moved to assembly areas, where discipline has proved a major problem with soldiers complaining of delays in pay.

UN officials also admit that weapons are being cached outside assembly areas.

Renamo is denying the government access to areas under its control and establishing independent administrations in some of them, in violation of

the peace accord.

This raises the danger that Mozambique might go into elections divided into separately administered territories — as happened in Angola.

Observers note that the chances of renewed fighting are lower than in Angola. But the election loser can still simply ignore the outcome of the vote and continue to control "its" areas.

**More bucks**

Renamo head Alfonso Dhlakama meanwhile has repeated his warning that the election cannot go ahead unless his organisation receives more money.

The UN Mission in Mozambique (Onumoz) has been looking far and wide for funds to finance Renamo's attempted transformation into a political organisation. So far only Italy has coughed up — \$6-million, which Renamo has spent, mostly on lodging, food and transport.

Patience with the delays may not last forever. At the UN, the United States is expected to resist attempts to shift the election date by refusing to extend Onumoz's mandate beyond October.

Asked what would happen if delays continue, one US official responded: "It may be better for the UN to show it can walk away from a failure." ■

— Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin/WIP



PHOTO: THE STAR

■ **WAR-WEARY:** Demobilising the Mozambican armies is taking twice as long as planned

**NICARAGUA**

**Skeletons in the closet**

ALREADY REELING FROM SCANDALS AND uprisings, the Sandinista army is being hit by new allegations of "dirty" clandestine operations it ran during the *contra* war.

The La Penca bombing of 1984 was one of the more mysterious incidents of the Sandinista period — and the source of endless speculation.

New information indicates that the Sandinistas had a hand in the operation.

The target of the bombing was Eden Pastora, a *contra* leader at the time. He escaped — but eight people died, including three journalists.

Because of Pastora's more moderate views and his maverick style of operating, many independent investigators — including some present at La Penca — concluded that extreme right-wing sectors of the *contras*, in collusion with the CIA, were responsible for the

assassination attempt.

Some observers make the more extreme claim that it was a purely Sandinista operation. But others, like investigative journalists Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, suggest it may have been a Sandinista operation in which the CIA also had a hand.

**Rogue unit**

The more likely answer is that the bombing was carried out by a rogue international unit with ties to the Inter-





ETHIOPIA

**MENGISTU: Still haunts the Ethiopian economy**

**Familiar strains**

After decades of rule by monarchy and dictatorship, Ethiopians will go to the polls on June 5 for their first democratic election.

The election is expected to lay the basis for further political and economic reform in a country that is increasingly torn by ethnic division.

Voters will elect members of a constituent assembly whose main task will be to write a new constitution.

Already a score of political groups have sprung up, many of them based on ethnicity but lacking clear platforms. Eritrea's secession last year might inspire some of these groups to

stoke separatist passions in a bid to put themselves on the political map.

Critics of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) accuse it of secretly desiring the further break-up of the country. There are about 75 ethnic groups in Ethiopia, with the Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, Afar and Somali making up 80% of the population.

On a recent visit to the Somali region, Ethiopian president Meles Zenawi reportedly acknowledged ethnic groups' right to opt for independence, but added that the right belonged not to a party or clan, but to "the people and a nation".

Voter registration has begun, along with a civic education campaign

or Ministry.

Predictably, opponents of the Sandinistas have had a field day with the new information, with some claiming the top leadership was involved.

So far, however, the National Directorate of the Sandinistas appears not to have had direct involvement. There is evidence that, months before the bombing, it had declined to act against Pastora because the divisions he fomented within the *contras* worked to the Sandinistas' advantage.

According to a former Interior Ministry official, Sandinista leader Tomas Borge was caught off-guard by the assassination attempt. Borge was a member of the National Directorate and head of the ministry.

He launched an internal investigation into the affair and either fired or displaced some of those associated with the bombing. The full facts, however, are still to be revealed. ■

— *Report on the Americas/WIP*

on democratic rights.

These moves, however, are not likely to undo scepticism about the EPRDF's democratic credentials.

Late last year, police arrested seven opposition politicians. Several journalists have suffered a similar fate.

Addis Ababa University is still reeling after the government last year arbitrarily sacked about 42 academics. There have also been violent clashes between students and police.

And former members of Ethiopia's first political party (the Workers' Party of Ethiopia) and ex-soldiers of the deposed regime of Mengistu Haile-Mariam will be ineligible to vote — unless they have undergone political "re-orientation".

The EPRDF's political penchant for mass mobilisations, continuous ideological work and sometimes generous amounts of "self-criticism" strikes some western donors as an anachronism and does not sit well with the mainly middle-class professionals who dominate the opposition.

At the macro-economic level, though, the EPRDF's performance has been impressive. Defence budget cuts have allowed the health and education allocations to be doubled; inflation is down and the local currency invites some confidence.

In human terms, though, the economy remains in crisis. It is mired in an awkward transition between a state-owned commandist system (a legacy of both Haile Selassie and Mengistu) and a market-oriented one (a destination that does not thrill the EPRDF). There are serious concerns about food supplies again this year.

Not only is the government faced by shortages in food supplies, but about 1.5-million people — displaced by the war and drought — still need rehabilitation.

Western donors are scaling back their contributions to development, which dropped by more than half to \$150-million last year. ■



personally



**Jay Naidoo's off to parliament — but, as he admits here, he secretly wishes the National Assembly was in Mauritius. Maybe they'd appreciate that 'favourite green shirt' of his?**

**How would you describe the way you're feeling at this stage of the election campaign? Tired? Excited? Nervous?**

All three. When you work a 17-hour day you do get exhausted. When you feel the warm reception and enthusiasm at workers' forums and people's forums, you get excited. When you see Terre'blanche and the Mangopes, you get *anxious*...

**How does it feel, to finally be able to make a meaningful vote?**

A climax of momentous struggles against apartheid. I feel a sense of relief that we can start to rebuild a better life for our people.

**What's your favourite moment during the election campaign work you've done?**

Dancing the toyi-toyi in dusty fields and sports grounds, feeling the drums of freedom. And, most recently, in the Eastern Transvaal, being made a member of the Swazi tribe by colourfully-adorned Swazi women.

**How's the pace of the election affected you? Where do you get the stamina? What's the secret?**

Doing yoga, spiritual food, and spending precious moments with my son and wife.

**Okay, so how do you relax between all this?**

I spend all my (limited) free time with my family. We must remember that building a new South Africa means starting with rebuilding the family unit. I hope the new government takes this seriously — especially for women

and political activists.

**When you get time to listen to music, what do you enjoy most?**

Jazz and classical — mostly due to the influence and increase in cultural appreciation because of my partner.

**Do you get scared when you're out there, campaigning? Do you think someone might want to kill you?**

Death has always hovered around the lives of political activists. However, given my eastern roots, I suppose I never allowed that to upset my inner conscious and determination.

**Where would you prefer parliament to be — in Cape Town, Pretoria or somewhere else?**

Mauritius — in the future constellation of democratic southern African states.

**Are you expecting a cabinet post?**

Who wants the additional aggro? I will play the role that ensures that the goals of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) are achieved. Anyway, it's up to the wisdom of our leader, Comrade Madiba, to decide. We have not fought the struggle for positions.

**Who would you like to see in the cabinet?**

People who are competent, honest and committed to the RDP. I'm confident that the process led by comrade Mandela will see to this.

**Who would you *not* like to see in the cabinet?**

Louis Shill, Hernus Kriel, Adriaan Vlok and a few ex-presidents and

# Jay Naidoo



chief ministers.

**What are you going to wear on voting day — a suit or a Cosatu T-shirt?**

I don't like pinstripes, so it will probably be my favourite green shirt.

**In your years in the labour movement, what has impressed you most?**

The humility and experience of wis-

dom of millions of ordinary people who have never been recognised under apartheid.

**Do you have a 'favourite' businessman?**

It will take a few years for that. I have a few special friends ... only one is a businessman, and he's not that category of "businessman".

**You're apparently quite a good**

**goalkeeper. Which soccer team do you support?**

The South African national team. Forward to the next World Cup!

**Do you get time to watch TV?**

**What's your favourite programme?**

Do we have real TV in South Africa? I'm still waiting for a South African version of *Fawlty Towers*. Dennis Davis' *Future Imperfect* is the only one that comes close.

**What will you say to people who won't vote for the ANC because of its links with the SACP?**

They are confused. It's not the SACP that has tortured people, had death squads, forced three-million people out of their homes, or led to six-million jobless. It's that "new" old party we all know.

**What will you say to black people who think they should vote for the National Party?**

It's their choice — but may god help us if there's even a minority that does.

**How do you feel about Cyril Ramaphosa's suggestion that Robben Island be declared a 'volkstaat'?**

I heard someone say the other day that the Flemish part of Belgium is a better place for them...

**What would you say to people who are afraid that being in parliament will 'soften' your views — particularly your attitude towards capital?**

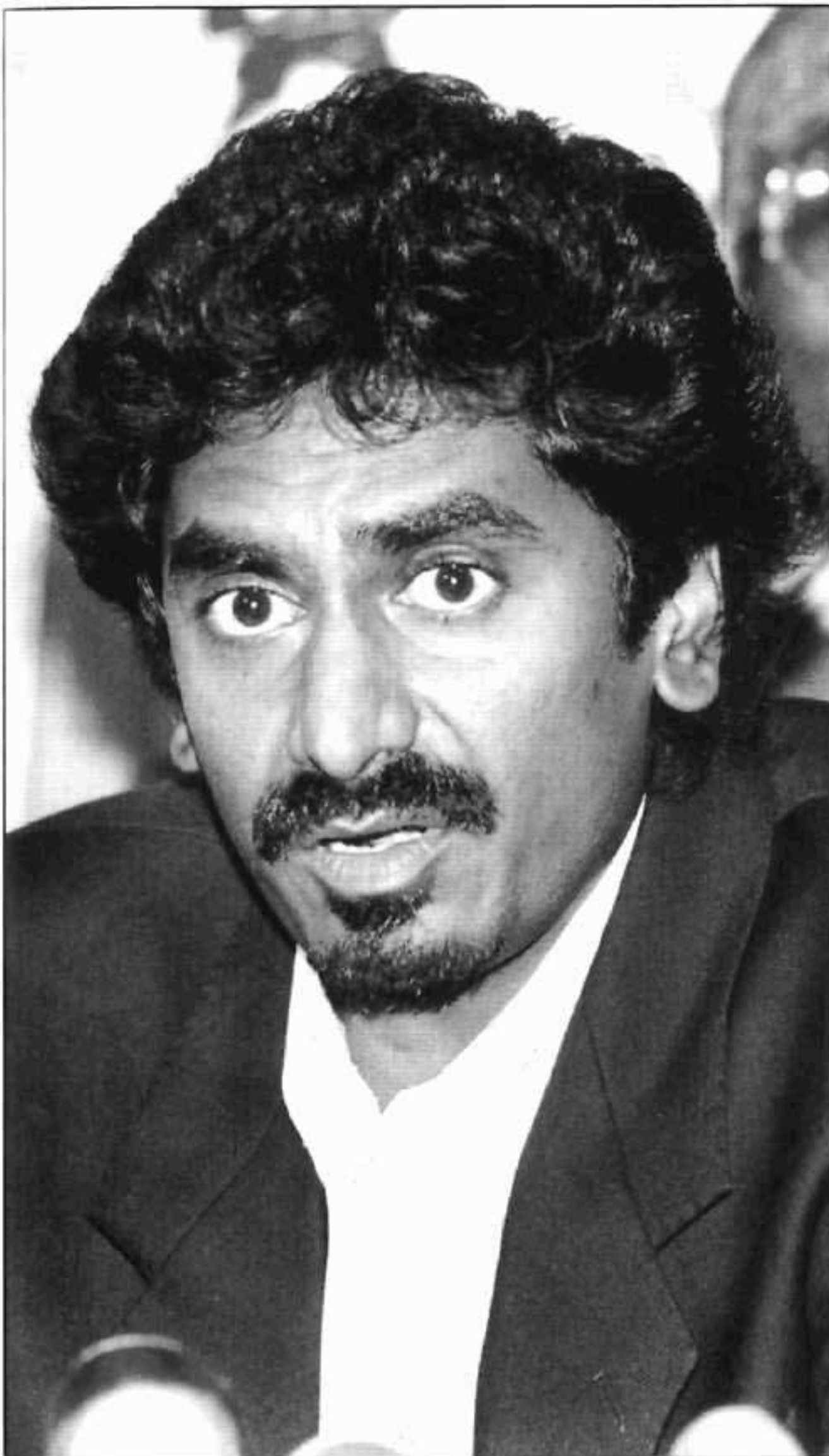
I despise arrogance and untrammelled power. I will work with anyone wanting to improve the lives of ordinary people in South Africa. It's certainly not going to be business as usual in the new South Africa. So ask me that in five years.

**What would you like your son to be when he grows up?**

Anything he chooses ... as long as he joins Cosatu. Remember, I'll always be a trade unionist.

**Finally: What do you think of *Work In Progress*?**

It's the social conscience of the Left. — Interview by Chris Vick & Mpho Mosimane







# The Western Cape hangover

If polls and reports from the field are to be believed, a nasty hangover awaits *Kaapies* on May 1: the National Party will be running their province for the next five years. **BOB MATTES** reports

**W**HAT WAS UNTHINKABLE THREE years ago now seems likely: the National Party (NP) might control a strong regional government in the Western Cape.

The prospect actually is not all that startling. Since 1991, only one opinion survey has shown the ANC leading in the region (see *WIP 95* for an assessment of that poll).

But very few African supporters of the ANC and PAC are anticipating such an election defeat — mainly because just about everyone they are in touch with openly supports one of these two parties.

If the NP does win the Western Cape, and unless more realistic expectations are quickly nurtured, there will be a lot of angry and frustrated people on the morning of May 1. Which raises the unhappy prospect of intense instability, and possibly even racial violence, immediately after the election.

## Unhappy numbers

A Market & Opinion Surveys (MOS)/Institute of Multi-Party Democracy (MPD) survey done in the region two months after campaigning started confirmed the trend set over the past few years: NP 35%, ANC 24%, DP 4% and PAC 3% (22% refused to answer and 8% said they didn't know). The figures were strikingly close to a December 1993 MOS/MPD sampling.

This latest survey shows the ANC consolidating its position among African voters (only 20% of the Western Cape electorate) — drawing about 65% of the vote. Field research from



■ **FW's FAN CLUB: 42% of coloured voters in the Western Cape say they'll vote NP**

the MPD's "Launching Democracy Project" attributes this to the ANC's vast organisational superiority over its competitors in the townships.

Meanwhile, the NP appears to be recouping support it lost last year among whites (just over 20% of regional voters), pulling around 55% of their votes. These figures conform broadly to both parties' performances nationally.

## Is die Kaap Hollands?

So what is the secret to the anticipated NP victory in the Western Cape? The key factor is its support among coloured voters, who comprise almost 60% of the province's eligible voters. Fully 42% presently choose the NP; only 17% opt for the ANC.

Polls show the NP slipping from its support levels two years ago, with many coloured voters drifting into the "undecided" category. But few of them

completed the shift by moving over to the ANC. The choice they seem to be wrestling with is *not* whether to vote ANC or NP: it's between voting NP or not voting at all.

The ANC is staking its hopes on capturing enough of the "undecided" vote to narrow the gap by election day. Barring a major reversal, this seems unlikely.

The "fine print" shows why. In its latest survey, MOS also asked voters to rank parties on a "ladder", from most-liked to least-liked. This gives us a glimpse of the sentiments of people who refused to reveal their preferences in the mock ballot. And it provides a rough guide to which way "undecided/won't say" voters might jump on election day.

Around 33% of them are likely to move toward the NP, but only around 18% could go to the ANC. And in the



group who said they "didn't know" (disproportionately dominated by coloured voters), around 30% could move to the NP, but only 10% to the ANC.

Then MOS asked which party people *most* oppose. Two in three whites fingered the PAC, and 43% of Africans pointed to the IFP. But among coloured voters the most unpopular party was the ANC — at 36%, safely outdistancing the CP (25%) and the PAC (12%).

### Blinded by the light

This trend flies in the face of the wobbly assumptions about the "unity" and "uniformity" of the oppressed. It also contradicts predictions that the activist support given to the United Democratic Front in the Cape Flats would automatically translate into mass support for the ANC.

Most progressives and leftists have failed to take into account the *relative* degrees of oppression and exploitation experienced in the Western Cape. African voters, many of them recent arrivals from rural areas, suffer sky-high rates of unemployment, severe landlessness, lack of adequate shelter and an appalling education and health system.

Without implying that coloured residents have cause for contentedness, they are *by comparison, a relatively* urbanised, well-employed, better educated, property-owning group. The tri-cameral system in some ways did deliver benefits to this constituency.

Yet, the NP's coloured support cannot be explained purely on material grounds. Culture, too, has a hand. An NP campaign strategist privately claims party research shows "most" coloured voters fit the profile of the NP's core constituency — white, Afrikaans-speaking voters. The NP has been running its campaign on the premise that it can target white and coloured voters with essentially the same strategies.

It's hard to imagine a single ANC campaign pitch that can simultaneously enthrall African and coloured voters in the Western Cape.

For instance, when MOS asked voters why they support a particular party, Africans cited the party's stance on equality, its struggle for basic rights, its policies on job creation and education. Coloured voters also cited equali-

ty, but their concerns resembled those of white voters: can the party maintain stability and peace, is it honest, trustworthy and reliable, can it govern well?

### One more twist

The ANC has been confronted also with some key issues which, despite its best efforts, are seen as "zero sum" matters by both African and coloured voters — issues like affirmative action and housing.

When asked in the MOS poll about the illegal occupation of houses by homeless people, coloured voters' responses resembled those of their white counterparts. While 19% of Africans fully supported these occupations, only 3% of coloureds agreed; another 21% of Africans sympathised, compared with only 7% of coloureds.

Fully 44% of coloured respondents favoured eviction or punishment of occupiers. And, as a clear sign of the depth of distrust and misgivings, 58% of coloured voters expected the advent of a black government to lead to more occupations.

The upshot, it seems, is an NP provincial victory. But this does not mean it will run the Western Cape as it wishes.

Polls show it snapping at the heels of a clear majority, but it still has to get its supporters out on April 27-28. Here again the plot thickens.

Only 77% of NP voters in the province say they will definitely vote — compared to 88% of ANC supporters. Most Africans say they will vote, *come hell or high water*. But only 65% of the key coloured vote is determined to go to the polls; the numbers drop to 47% if there's violence in their area.

The chances of violence seem much lower in white and coloured areas compared to the townships. But perceptions (rather than reality) will be key. If they hear of violence and feel threatened, the NP vote could take a dip.

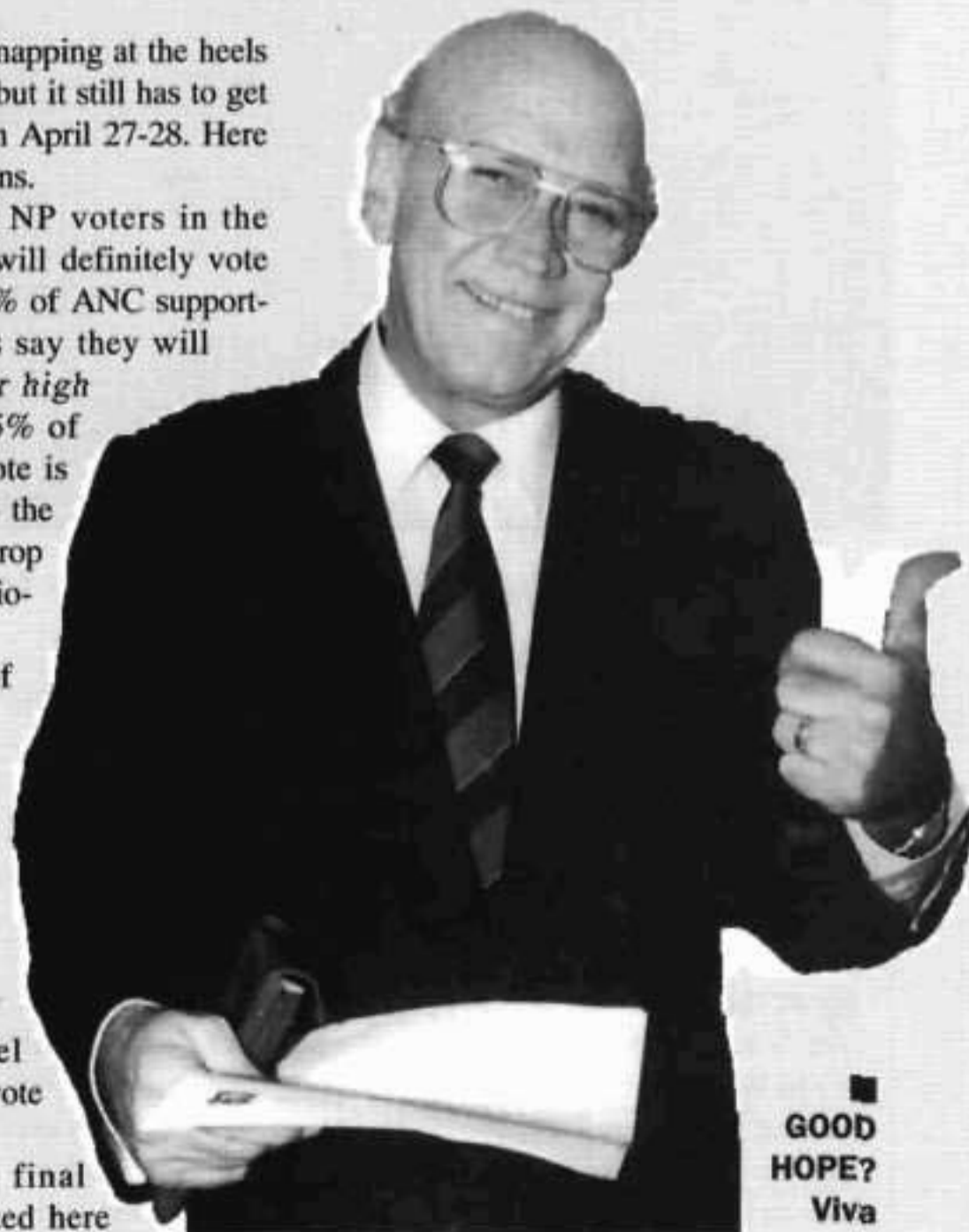
But there's a final twist. The polls cited here

were done before the double ballot was agreed to, so none asked voters which party they support for *provincial government*.

This might hurt the ANC somewhat more than the NP. For one, ANC election workers are worried that some supporters will spoil the second ballot because they don't know what it is for. As well, some voters might be more inclined to cast their provincial ballots according to "basic preferences" or "attachments", while voting strategically at the national level.

It's worth noting also that, in the Cape Province as whole, the PAC recently registered 13% support among African voters. This sharpens fears that some ANC supporters might choose the PAC on their second — provincial — ballot, in the mistaken belief that they are indicating their "second preference".

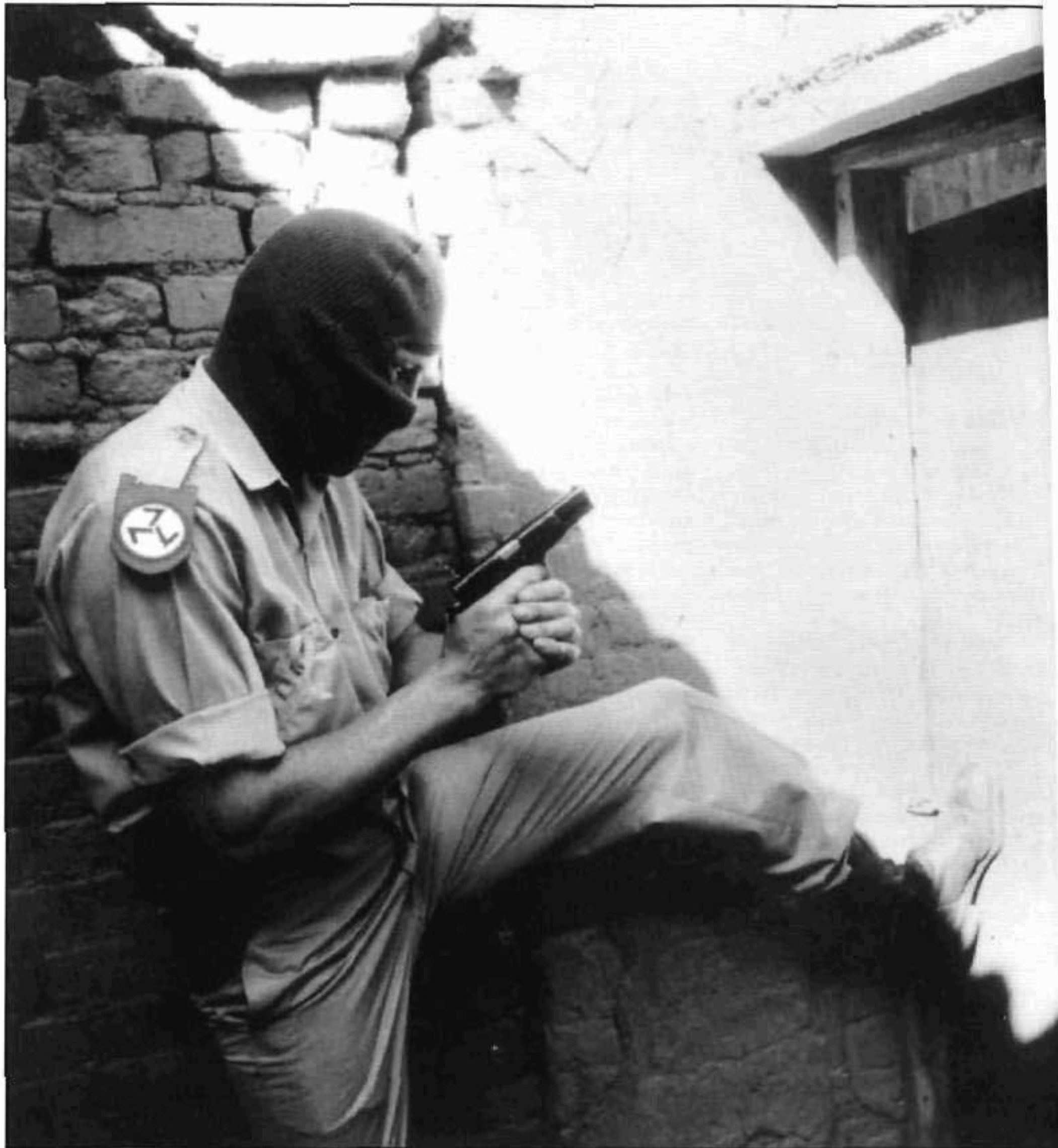
All of which probably warms the hearts of the Democratic Party, which hopes to slip down the middle to become a key broker in a cabinet coalition — an outcome that, presumably, could brighten a few faces in Claremont and Constantia. ■



■  
GOOD  
HOPE?  
Viva

PHOTO: ERIC MILLER





■ DIE HARD: The right-wing might want to put bullets before ballots

“**I**n a rebellion, as in a novel, the most difficult part to invent is the end” (Alexis de Tocqueville — 1848).

Is the white Right the bogey of the new SA? The political equivalent of howling at the moon? Or a genuine ticking time-bomb?

The answer is in the making. And it will depend less on the Right than on how its opponents — specifi-

cally the post-April government — choose to deal with it.

Already, there is a nasty irony at work here. An ANC-led government of national unity will be confronted with a set of security and strategic dilemmas similar to those that used to befuddle the apartheid regime.

Puzzles like how to act decisively against hard-core militants without — mistak-

enly — reducing the entire opposition phenomenon to a security threat. How to dodge provocations meant to yield martyrs and boost sympathies. How to prevent your adversaries from, as Mao put it, “taking root and blossoming” in the “soil” of “the people”.

Much as the rebellious French military officers in Algeria employed *guerre revolutionnaire* theory they

had learnt in Vietnam during the early 1950s, South Africa’s white Right is using strategies and tactics designed and refined by the Left.

The similarities are striking: the “popular front” overtones of the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF); the right-wing’s success at establishing footholds in civil society; its use of armed propaganda; its ability to stage events





cover story



# When push comes to shove

aimed at provoking state violence, which could justify an escalation of the conflict.

This time around, the ANC gets to hold the other end of the stick. But can an ANC-led government, backed by a less than trustworthy state apparatus, beat the white Right at what is really not a brawl but a game of wits?

"Ninety percent of what you hear about the right-

wing is bullshit," is right-wing expert Wim Boooyse's rule-of-thumb. "Remember that and you'll understand the Right a lot better."

So just how strong is it?

Our understandings of the white Right are surprisingly flat and melodramatic. The mainstream media conjures the image of a lumbering anachronism, united by simplicities and propelled by an almost primordial set of

Bravado, bombs and boeps? Or a full-blown threat to post-election South Africa?

**HEIN MARAIS** fires the first salvo in our focus on The Spoilers — putting the white Right on the couch



# Uncivil servants

'Low intensity' obstructionism can be expected from the lower and middle echelons of the civil service, where widespread right-wing sympathies are evident among whites.

But observers also fear more organised action, stemming from discontent over salary levels, job insecurity and restructuring.

'The prospects of the public sector taking on the new government soon are very big,' a Cosatu union official, who asked not to be named, told *WIP*. 'And there is a real danger that the right-wing will try to push for and capitalise on such a confrontation, tying it to a set of political demands.'

There are signs that right-wing political activists have established a strong influence in the sector, though they haven't been able to establish control over a union.

Part of the explosive mix is the militance of the largely-black public sector unions. There seems a strong prospect of industrial action by unions like the National Health and Allied Workers' Union soon after the elections. This might incite white civil servants into launching an organised challenge of their own, around some widely-felt grievances. Right-wing organisers definitely will politicise such action.

'We've warned our friends of this, but people don't take it seriously,' says the Cosatu official. 'We need to make a strategic decision, which might mean taking matters to arbitration rather than going for industrial action.'

The longer-term answer would be forming a public sector union that cuts across boundaries in the sector. But union officials are quick to admit that work on that front is scrappy and will not yield results for many years. ■

— Hein Marais

Afrikaner-nationalist myths and creeds. Sure, it's all of that — and a lot more.

Like black youth, the white Right has been reduced to a caricature of extremism (see *WIP 90*). Only, in its case the platitudes and imagery are the flip side to those imposed on the youth. Instead of anarchy and mayhem, the stereotype shows people uniformly ranged around a common goal, united by ethnic dementia; they appear fanatically attached to "their" history and a sense of place and identity.

Reducing the white Right to the progeny of Afrikaner-nationalism is part of the problem. Because the Right seems *shaped* less by culture or ethnicity (it is multi-ethnic, even multi-national — Afrikaners, English, Portuguese, Eastern Europeans, "Rhodesians"), than by a common set of anxieties brought on by two decades of social and economic dislocation.

What Afrikaner-nationalist ideology does is provide the symbols and idioms of right-wing discourse.

## Like a brick wall

One need only survey the dominant architectural styles in SA's towns and cities to be reminded that our vigorous post-war

economic boom ran into a brick wall in the early 1970s. The apartheid system had blundered into an organic crisis as structural contradictions revealed themselves.

The state's response to this crisis was a gradual series of political and economic adjustments. And it's there that the origins of today's white Right lie.

Those reforms — and the regime's shift to supply-side economic policies in the 1980s — exposed white farmers and workers to market realities. By the 1980s, the populist alliance that had brought the NP to power in 1948 had irrevocably collapsed, its demise more or less coinciding with the emergence of the Afrikaner yuppie.

Having reshaped the ruling alliance around what had become a functionally enmeshed Afrikaner and

English capital, the NP shooed its old mass base — white labour, small farmers and the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie (largely absorbed into the civil service) — out the side-door, where frosty winds blew.

From 1981 to 1986, white unemployment rose steadily. Small business insolvencies increased more than five-fold between 1981 and 1992, according to the Central Statistical Service, with agricultural insolvencies rising by 815% in the same period.

A Gallup poll in early 1992 found 32% of whites — most of them lumped together at the bottom end of the wage scale — expecting their conditions to worsen. In the civil service, where one in three Afrikaners work, real earnings have *dropped* over the past five years.

That is the arithmetic of the right-wing. Likewise, a review of its rural strongholds finds farmers buckled by drought, shrivelled subsidies and indebtedness — a state of affairs that also up-ends commerce and services in the towns. Added to this is physical insecurity, from the waves of armed robberies and attacks on farms.

Dazed by the economic downturn and slashed state assistance, these are layers most vulnerable to affirmative action, most fearful of land reform, most resistant to a new order that seems to augur only more upheaval.

These fears, Afrikaner academic Willie Esterhuysen has reminded, "remain the basis on which many whites experience the political process".

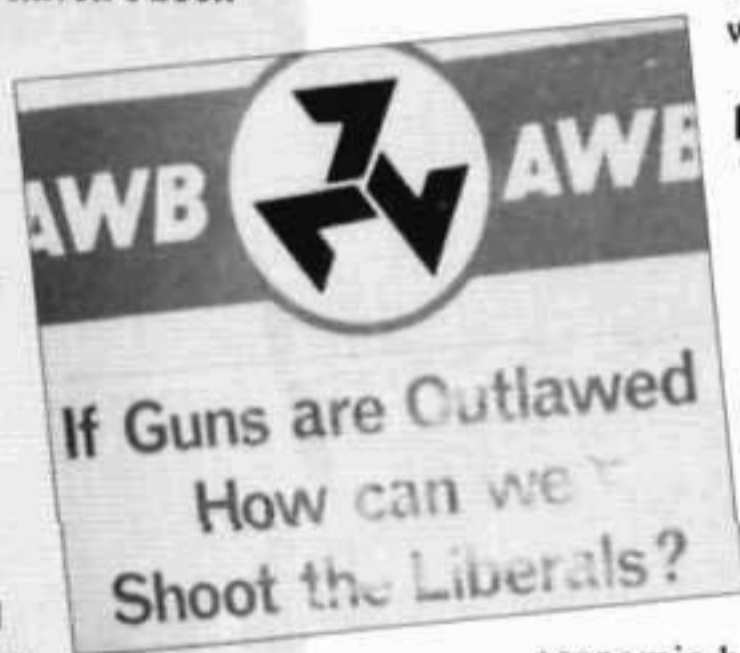
Right-wing organisations alone have proved capable of articulating a politics that addresses these anxieties and insecurities.

Most of them, including the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), have broadened their reach and relevance beyond the strictly political. The AWB, for instance, is active in neighbourhood watch systems. It also does charity work and organises women's activities; other groups are active in culture, publishing, in school committees and community structures.

## Made to order

Like any political force, the white Right has an intellectual layer, which has deftly pushed a stripped-down and touched-up Afrikaner nationalism into service.

In today's version you find the focus on culture and language —which





softens its racist features.

But Afrikaner nationalism today is still, essentially, white racist reaction in drag, as English (and Eastern European and "Rhodesian") right-wingers fully understand.

And the volkstaat is a repository for right-wing passions, the political form that best expresses its anxieties.

The 1992 referendum result suggests a hefty 31,3% of white South Africans are right-wingers, though that doesn't mean they will actively support a volkstaat. Quizzed two months ago by Integrated Marketing Research pollsters on whether they would live in a volkstaat, the equivalent of 850 000 whites said "yes" (21% of white adults).

But how far will they go to make it a reality? And, really, does it matter whether the figure is 900 000 or 90 000?

Former Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) co-leader Constand Viljoen believes it does: the "dream" must be achieved through constitutional means, hence the appearance of his Freedom Front on the April 27 ballot paper.

The main battle in the white Right is being fought here — around which strategy becomes hegemonic. They all share the same objective, says Wim Booyse, but "the hardliners feel force is the only way to achieve it, and the moderates still believe negotiations is the way to go."

Booyse believes Viljoen's way of thinking might still represent the majority of right-wing supporters. "The radicals are making the same mistake the NP has been making since the late 1980s — they're running ahead of their constituencies," is his verdict.

The split in early March — between the Viljoen faction and the Eugene Terre'blanche/Ferdi Hartzenberg faction — does not mean this struggle for hegemony is over. If Viljoen's intuition is right, and the "constitutionalists" are a majority, the pressure now shifts onto the hardliners.

Their fundamental strategic aim is "to force a situation where the only choice is between a volkstaat and civil war," says Bill Sass, senior researcher at the Institute for Defence Policy (IDP) — to make the alternative to a volkstaat "too ghastly to contemplate". There are many ways (see "Paths to Hell") to reach that point.

It requires, first of all, that they rapidly broaden and "radicalise" their support base. People must be forced off the fence — and into taking sides. As Sass reminds, many of their strategists are "products of the total onslaught era who studied revolutionary war in great detail" — they know their Mao and Giap.

So the battle is on for the hearts and minds of right-wing constituencies — which is why it is crucial to clarify the factors that motivate right-wing sympathies and not take the rhetoric at

volkstaat. But the average white family is still more likely to watch the "rebellion" on TV than from behind barricades. Constand Viljoen understands this.

The militant Right sees the need to change this state of affairs. Its hard-core activist layers won't swell hugely — and they don't have to. Remember that at the height of the Organisation Armee Secrete (OAS) rebellion in Algeria it had 3 000 members, of whom perhaps 100 were engaged in direct action.

What the activist core requires is a



■ **FEAR OF A BLACK PLANET:** No matter how strong the fear, the average white family is more likely to watch the 'rebellion' on TV than from behind barricades

face value.

### Too comfy to be contras?

Analysts like the Centre for Policy Studies' Steve Friedman advise us to "remember that whites generally are comfortable, well-established citizens" who are not exactly prime candidates for mass action and civil disobedience.

Most are stuck with jobs and mortgages on their homes to worry about; the 1991 census, for instance, shows a high percentage of white households saddled with bond payments.

It's easy to say you'll fight for a

pool of activated sympathy (Mao's old simile of the fish and the water). It must draw in people who, as Sass points out, "will help with money, information, shelter".

Acts of armed propaganda and mass defiance (occupying council offices and forts, defending Radio Pretoria) are an ongoing part of this process. Likewise provoking incidents which make it difficult for conservatives to equivocate. "For some time the right-wing has been trying to orchestrate confrontations with the security forces, in order to force people to make choices," notes the IDP's Jaki Cilliers.

PHOTO: THE STAR



## Dangerous curves ahead

Even if the Freedom Front contests the election, and a majority of conservative whites go to the polls, the right-wing threat will not be over.

A replay of the terrible paroxysms of violence launched by the OAS in 1961 seems highly probable. Some of it will be the "terror of spite" — attacks on symbols of the new order, on black civilians and politicians, a variety of terror already present.

But some of it will be tactical provocations meant to trigger chains of events: outrages that draw retaliation (vigilante or official), that claim or ruin innocent lives, that produce "martyrs" for the cause, that underscore sympathies.

This calls for decisive but nimble responses. A key goal, says Booysse, must be to avoid driving the current militant right-wingers underground. He urges: "Don't ban them."

At the moment, the networks are relatively easy to infiltrate, enabling more precise crackdowns, an advantage that is lost when they go underground. The typical pattern then fits the hardcore agenda to force vacillating constituencies off the fence. As attacks continue, security forces cast wider dragnets that harass more and more innocent people; they launch raids that claim innocent lives or yield martyrs. The snowball effect is obvious. Sympathy levels rise, rhetorical supporters shift to provide low-key active assistance, the militants are emboldened into a new round of actions. It's the story behind, for instance, the survival of the IRA. It must be avoided.

The task is to limit the inevitable campaign of bombing, shooting and burning to a murderous nuisance, to prevent it from becoming an effective counterrevolutionary force. The key is to discredit and isolate the hardcore *before* nailing it *en masse*.

One way is to keep pushing the negotiations option, a tactic that led directly to the Viljoen/Hartzenberg split.

## A balancing act

The right-wing are going to exploit three things: land, education and local government. A major PR campaign, backed by tactical, concrete evidence of earnestness, has to calm and contra-

dict some of the most prickly fears. "Give in on some points," is Sass' advice, "you won't placate the hardcore, but you can cut away their base of sympathisers."

It's a controversial response that could force the ANC alliance into even more of a tightrope act — balancing, hopefully only *temporarily*, the rights and demands of its supporters against the threats and fears of its foes.

Another way is to desist from actions of the sort threatened by ANC president Nelson Mandela when he warned right-wingers in early February that "we won't make it a limited type of violence when we retaliate". "Sending in the troops" might become inevitable in some cases but it's a response the militants definitely expect and probably desire.

Neither should we swallow the caricature that paints the white Right as a strictly military threat. Highly *militarised* it certainly is, but it has established a remarkable range of footholds in civil society. These range from agricultural and white mineworkers' unions, to a strong presence in the Public Servants Association, to town councils, school committees and neighbourhood watches. It is here that the Right principally reproduces itself. Its strategic options depend centrally on how reliable and durable these "bases" become.

Instead of the knee-jerk appeal to state action, creative challenges within civil society can foil the Right. Their stronghold towns remain vulnerable to non-violent actions like consumer and service boycotts and stayaways, actions that can help us maintain the moral high-ground while deepening divisions within right-wing ranks. A businessperson in Brakpan inevitably has divided loyalties between his political convictions and the survival of the business. Boycotts can force him to choose *publicly*.

And what of the business associations, civic groupings and churches — that sweep of (white) civic consciousness which leaps to action when disaster strikes the pale side of town, but tends to sit on its hands the rest of the time?

Right-wing town councils and organisations do their banking with major institutions which can be targeted

by consumer and other pressure. Likewise the wholesalers and companies that supply, service or own businesses in the town. The local churches are affiliated to national and international parent churches where pressure can be applied. The Right is everyone's problem, not just the politicians'.

## Don't roll the credits — yet

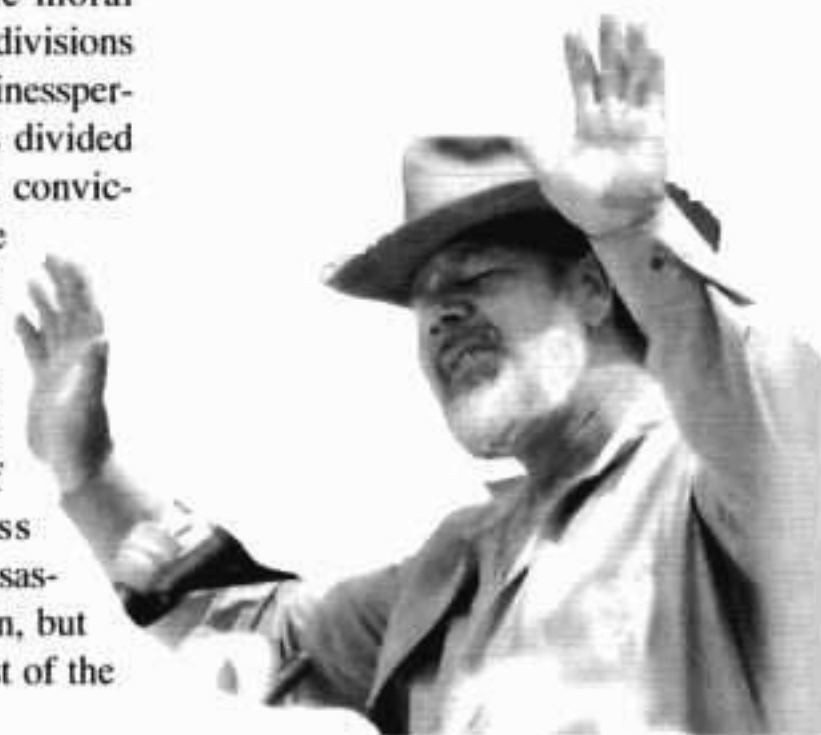
It's too early to measure decisively the effects of the miserable right-wing intervention in Bop or Viljoen's "constitutionalist" exit from the AVF.

Still, as tempting as predictions of the Right's slow implosion into insignificance are, it should be clear by now that this phenomenon is way more than a passing pathology.

That it earns the derision and hate it invites goes without saying. Less obvious is the extent (and the unexpectedly ironic ways) in which the threat posed by the right-wing to our new democracy will depend on whether an ANC-dominated government mimics its predecessor's weakness for the big stick — and how resourceful civil society turns out to be.

Meanwhile, we remain trapped in that unhappy phase, described 140 years ago by American statesman John Calhoun in a phrase Antonio Gramsci almost certainly encountered: "The interval between the decay of the old and the formation and the establishment of the new constitutes a period of transition which must necessarily be one of uncertainty, confusion, error and wild and fierce fanaticism."

It's a reality we can neither wish nor baton-charge out of the way. ■



■ **WHITE NOISE:** Terre'blanche's men will be hoping to find issues to mobilise around



# The main manne

**T**he real military might of the Right is to be found inside a 'home guard' built up around structures of the SA Defence Force's Citizen Force and commando systems.

It is this force that Constand Viljoen referred to earlier this year when he claimed the Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) can push 10 000 people into the field at short notice.

The top ranks of virtually all Transvaal commando units north of Warmbaths appear to be at least actively sympathetic to the right-wing/volkstaat cause.

The *Boere Krisis Aksie*, with its power base in the northern Transvaal, has played an integral role in setting up this 'people's army'.

A small number of these right-wingers under the command of former 32 Battalion commander Jan Breytenbach proved themselves disciplined and experienced, if not powerful, during the Bophuthatswana foray in mid-March.

But the same event also proved that a large, cohesive, well-armed and disciplined right-wing army probably will remain a myth.

## Armies of the right

Numerous right-wing armed groupings appear from time to time. At best three of the paramilitary groups can — by virtue of their structure, membership and cohesiveness — be likened to 'armies'. These are the *Wenkommandos* (Victory Commandos) of the AWB, the possibly dormant Eastern Transvaal *Boere Kommandos* and the *Pretoria Boerekommandogroep*.

These groups spring from similar but distinct social bases.

AVF commandos tend to be 'ordinary' farmers and workers from the *platteland*, with a more literal allegiance to Afrikaner-nationalist ideals.

In the Transvaal and northern Natal, AWB commandos are mostly blue collar workers, many of them unemployed. They include a large contingent of recent East European immigrants in Johannesburg proper. On the East Rand, where the AWB has its biggest single commando unit, members tend to be 'lumpens' who are viewed as outcasts in the broader white community. Free State commandos tend to be more integrated into their communities.

## Wenkommando

The AWB's *Wenkommando* (WK) has a strong profile. It is subdivided into the elite *Ystergarde* (Iron Guards) and several other units.

The *Ystergarde* is a polished unit. At one stage 20 new members were being inducted each month, but membership seems to have peaked at about 200 men.

The *Rooivalke* are the female counterparts of the *Ystergarde*, while the *Witkrulsarende* are a battlefield medical team. The *Penkoppe* are basically the *Wenkommando* Youth League and consist of children of active AWB members.

In March 1993, AWB leader Eugene Terre'Blanche claimed that a *Vergeldingseenheid* (Reprisal Unit) had been formed, comprising hard core AWB members who

would retaliate when whites are attacked. The unit's existence has not been verified.

The AWB puts WK membership at 34 000-36 000, but a September 1992 police estimate snipped it down to 15 000. Even that figure might be inflated, though the WK did expand considerably during 1993.

A distinction must be made between active members and those who have merely signed up. Attendance figures at rallies suggest an active membership of about 5 000 countrywide.

## Eastern Transvaal Boerekommando

The *Eastern Transvaal Boerekommando* (OTB) comprises mostly ex-AWB members. Dormant recently and with a membership of about 400, its influence extends from the Eastern Transvaal into northern Natal and parts of the Free State.



■ DIE VUILGOED IS DAAI KANT TOE: A flock of Stormvalke in hot pursuit

Under the apparent leadership of Gawie Volkschenk, a teacher, this group broke away from the AWB's *Wenkommando* in early 1992 in the wake of the *Paardekraal* debacle.

## Pretoria Boerekommandogroep

Based in Pretoria, the *Pretoria Boerekommandogroep* (PBKG) is led by Willem Ratte, a former intelligence officer with 32 Battalion, and Jan Groenewald, brother of AVF strategist Maj-gen Tienie Groenewald. It was central in the creation of the right-wing Radio Pretoria.

Ostensibly organised along 'community watch' lines, the PBKG is highly politicised in support of the volkstaat ideal. It sees Pretoria as the 'holy city' of Afrikanerdom.

Formed in 1992, it grew rapidly and soon boasted 1 000 members in 14 commandos in the Pretoria area. Its numbers might have swelled to 3 000, most of whom are inactive. Only about 150 members around Ratte are likely to undertake serious military action.

— Jan Taljaard





# Highways to hell

WIP asked analysts to survey some of the routes organised right-wing reaction might take. Here are some of the more prominent scenarios that emerged...

**T**HE AFRIKANER VOLKSFRONT'S (AVF) fiasco in Bophuthatswana seems to have cut down to size the white Right's threats of mass armed "resistance". But it gives no cause for complacency.

The Right retains many options, several of which it might pursue in tandem, though not necessarily in a coordinated fashion.

● **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** will become the focus of overt right-wing activities. The aim is to displace local authorities in areas deemed to fall within the *volkstaat* and create liberated "cantons".

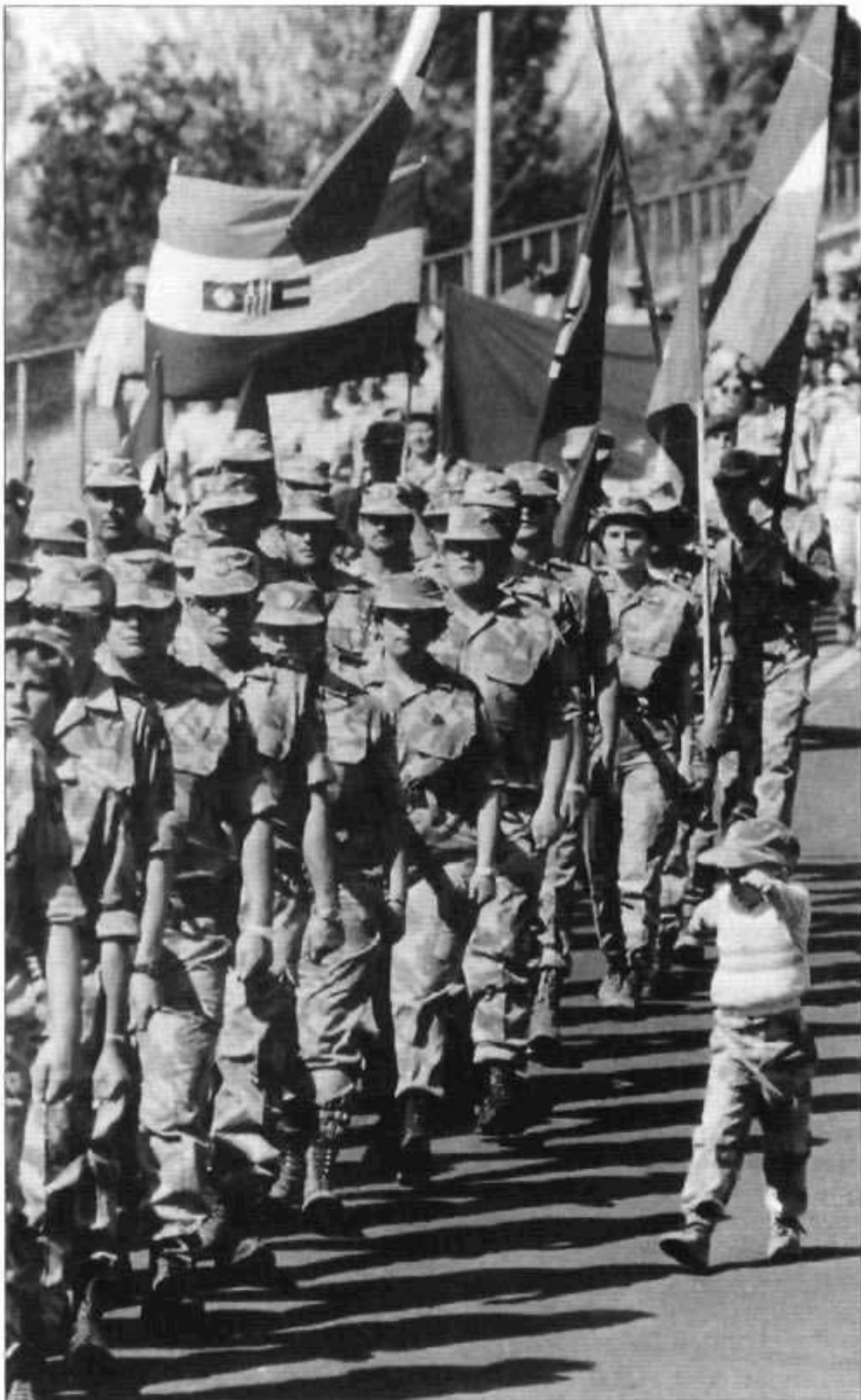
Tactics will include the refusal to pay taxes to non-racial authorities, protests, strikes, occupation of council and other public offices, and cutting water and electricity to townships.

Key installations like power stations, dams and sewage plants are particularly vulnerable to seizure or sabotage. Their security arrangements are well-known to right-wing commando members who, in many cases, are tasked with the security of these installations — a hangover from the "total onslaught" era. "Insiders" will assist.

The effect will be to demonstrate the new state's "lack of authority" in *volkstaat* zones. The "dual power" thrust of this programme is evident in right-wing plans to set up their own "civil councils".

The Conservative Party (CP) has prepared a list of 283 cities and towns it says fall within its *volkstaat*. According to its mouthpiece, *Die Patriot*, a "people's republic" is to be established in a core area. Other "cantons" are to be proclaimed elsewhere in the country.

Several town councils have already declared themselves part of the *volkstaat*. But a key player in this pro-



■ **BOYS WILL BE BOYS:** Local armies could try to flex their muscles in the *platteland*



# A coup d'état?

Whatever the extent of right-wing support in the security forces, coup talk remains based on sloppy analysis — for a range of reasons.

● As Military Research Group's Rocky Williams demonstrated in *WIP 91*, most of the technical and ideological factors that make a coup 'work' are not yet present. Centres of state authority are spread out across the country, requiring swift, simultaneous action in different areas. This makes it difficult to keep a coup secret and to sustain it once launched.

● Right-wing support is (regionally) concentrated in the commandos and citizen forces of the SADF — not in the 77 000-strong (mainly black) permanent force which has to walk over for a coup to work. Even if their white officers opt for a coup, they'll face the predicament that sank the OAS in Algeria when, as historian John Talbott has noted, 'officers who had joined the (1961) putsch found themselves without troops to command'.

● The support in the commandos and citizen forces is likely to be expressed through inaction not active resistance, says Jaki Cilliers of the Institute for Defence Policy: 'They won't mutiny, they just won't act against right-wing groups.' It would be foolish to use them in that role, and the SADF knows this. Which leaves the question: who actually makes the coup?

● The political project of the Right is no longer a national one, it's not about imposing what the Conservative Party called 'cooperative separate development' across SA. A coup d'état is dysfunctional to the objective of a white homeland. The most it can do is impose a new government that decrees the creation of the homeland, and which then has to contend with mass resistance from the majority of South Africans and instant international isolation.

Two scenarios point elsewhere. One is a coup attempt that is not meant to succeed, but rather to massively destabilise the country — i.e. a coup as a brinkmanship tactic.

The other might arrive when instability reaches the point where order collapses, violence spills over into white areas and the government appears indecisive or ineffectual in its response. The 'politics' of that coup, however, would not necessarily be right-wing. ■

— Hein Marais

gramme, the right-wing Transvaal Municipal Association, is experiencing internal dissension over these plans.

The idea is to not use violence openly unless in "self-defence", though it is difficult to see such a campaign proceeding "non-violently".

This strategy will provoke a backlash from local black communities, on whose labour and spending power rural towns depend.

● **PARAMILITARY ACTIONS:** The humiliation in Bophuthatswana — the first mass armed action of the sort — will see the white Right stick to less ambitious, and generally covert, paramilitary activities.

At the moment the focus is on morale-boosting acts of defiance and relatively minor destabilisation. They include Radio Pretoria's defiance of the state and TEC, the occupation of forts, disruption of local level negotiating initiatives, and the symbolic occupation of municipal offices.

At the same time, moves by white right-wingers (and Inkatha) to destabilise the election are already apparent. Two white agricultural unions have officially endorsed keeping the ANC from campaigning on farms. Bomb attacks on ANC offices are commonplace, while several recent massacres in Natal have underscored the Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) resistance to the April poll.

More actions aimed at preventing black voters from travelling to voting stations on April 27-28 are a certainty.

Training of armed Inkatha-aligned forces continues with impunity, and might be linked to attacks in Natal on voter education workers and ANC canvassers. Exact details are sketchy, but Natal right-wingers have claimed that at least three intakes of 600 Zulus each have been trained in "self-defence".

Violence will dramatically intensify in northern Natal, which reportedly has seen an influx of armed men recently.

In the medium term, a variety of "low intensity warfare" (LIW) type interventions can be expected, including massacres, train attacks, drive-by shootings, bombings of public facilities.

These actions can cause intense, enduring instability as attacks and counter-attacks take on their own momentum - a pattern that could affect the transition at the national level.

## ● CONSTITUTIONAL BLACKMAIL:

The Freedom Front's decision to participate in the election, the departure of the Ciskei and the collapse of the Bophuthatswana government has triggered severe tensions within the Freedom Alliance (FA).

Whilst some of the activities described here are aimed at establishing "facts-on-the-ground" (liberated "cantons", for example), they obviously also are geared to tilt the balance of forces at the national level.

A hardline option is to create conditions that demonstrate the only alternative to granting self-determination is civil war. Attempts to render parts ungovernable fit into this strategy.

Civil wars fall into two broad categories: those aimed at displacing the government in power and secessionist wars.

The threat of secession by a *volkstaat* seems small at the moment, largely because it will require protracted armed struggle by a large number of right-wingers. Some analysts believe Inkatha's ability to wage a secessionist struggle is limited.

But developments in Kwa-Zulu/Natal are extremely alarming, and the conflict there could soon approach civil war levels.

Meanwhile, whether tactical or random, terror attacks increasingly will be a feature of right-wing activities, perhaps peaking in the months immediately after the election.

A key element of a counter-strategy is to keep constitutional options open for the right-wing, whilst delegitimising its militant sectors.

To an important extent, this confrontation will be fought at the ideological level; right-wing fears and propaganda can be persuasively contradicted by word and deed. It is also necessary to restore morale within the SADF's permanent forces and the SA Police.

Crucial at this stage, say analysts, is the need for the new government to use force as a last resort only. ■





■ SHYING AWAY FROM THE POLITICAL PROCESS: Buthelezi's objective is to preserve his own power-base

# Avoiding democracy at

Inkatha has done more than most to derail the democratic process.

**GERHARD MARÉ** and  
**GEORGINA HAMILTON**

explain why, and look at why Inkatha is so opposed to any election which would destroy its power-base

**S** EVEN YEARS AGO, WE CONCLUDED our book on Inkatha, *An appetite for power*, with the following words: "While some care has been taken in the past to balance the clearly ethnic 'Zulu' appeals, the dramatically more prominent role that King Goodwill Zwelithini is being allowed to play on the Natal political stage has swung the balance towards regional and 'Zulu' consolidation. In some of his pro-

nouncements, King Goodwill has displayed a level of antagonism towards non-'Zulus' that cannot but inflame even further tensions created and maintained by apartheid ... [This] does not bode well for the future."

That future has arrived. There is no reason to retract any but the most inconsequential points we made in 1987. As we said in the preface to our book: "At a time when organisations





# all costs

striving for a democratic SA struggle to overcome the racial and ethnic divisions that have served apartheid SA so well, Inkatha continues to exploit those differences and mobilise under ethnic calls.”

These references to earlier work are given to alert analysts to the continuities in the project undertaken by chief minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi and other leaders of Inkatha and the

KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA).

From its formation in 1975 as the Inkatha Cultural Liberation Movement (with its membership initially limited to “Zulus”) Inkatha leaders have appealed to an ethnically-exclusive constituency. Initially there was some ambiguity in the call as the claim to be the resurrected ANC of the “founding fathers” also featured in Inkatha’s mobilising appeals.

## The Natal hegemony

Inkatha’s actions in the 1980s, however, left the regional population with little doubt about the movement’s thrust. It was to consolidate political power in the region, rather than just within the bantustan. This was to be achieved through research on the inter-relationship of the economy and the people of Natal/KwaZulu (the Buthelezi commission and its two-volume report); through constitutional negotiations (the Natal/KwaZulu indaba), which bore remarkable similarities with the process followed some six years later at Kempton Park; and through setting in place regional administrative and service structures (such as the Joint Executive Authority and Joint Services Boards).

In addition, the thrust towards regional consolidation rested firmly on the legitimacy that King Goodwill gave to it, and to Buthelezi as “traditional prime minister to the Zulu nation”.

The legitimacy was based on the continuities of a “Zulu nation” that had claim to the region, and that had its own “traditional” power structures. “Tradition”, in the Inkatha version, has always meant loyalty to chiefs, to Buthelezi himself, and to the king. Zwelithini’s role was to define who could be admitted to membership of the Zulu nation, to determine the conditions of such membership, and to identify those who are to be demonised as traitors or as the ethnic foreigner.

## Alien nation

Within this view of the world, bodies like the UDF, Cosatu and the ANC were portrayed as bodies led by non-Zulus. In other words, all organisations that had a national thrust to their politics were located outside the ethnic fold. This was necessary because they under-

mined both ethnic mobilisation and related regional projects of Inkatha.

The issues that have become flash-points in politics since 1973 are exactly the issues which have come under Inkatha’s control as governing party within a bantustan. After 1976, housing, education, policing, township administration etc became points of struggle. The growth of unions contradicted both the economic and political positions advanced by Inkatha, especially after the formation of Cosatu in 1985.

In the late 1970s, when KwaZulu moved to the next stage of self-government, control was extended over police and education. In both these areas Inkatha moved swiftly to initiate and reinforce its own interpretation of the world and the locus of the enemy. Speeches made by Buthelezi, as minister of police, to KwaZulu Police passing-out parades illustrate this well — as do the contents of what was initially called the “Inkatha syllabus” followed in KwaZulu schools.

## The first shots

Violence flared up regularly from the mid-1980s, undoubtedly aided directly and indirectly by organs established by the central state to fight off the “total onslaught”. The pattern had been set. The cooperative structures between central government and the bantustans had been set in place.

The UDF in Natal, based to a large extent in urban areas and with a significant Indian leadership, never seemed to have the strategy that would undermine Inkatha’s control over areas and people — nor a clear alternative to its ethnic mobilisation. Instead, violent confrontation — and an often equally exclusionary control over territory — carried the day. This was reinforced by the frequent destabilisation of attack and counter-attack, and the involvement of the youth, swept on a tide of revolutionary rhetoric and total rejection of the “system” and a commitment to “ungovernability”.

This ongoing violence, which has led to more than 10 000 deaths in the region over the past decade, has also created a steady refugee problem, hidden to a large extent because of the



shifting and informally-housed "natural" population growth around the cities and major towns.

### So what is Buthelezi after?

That is the larger context within which to ask the question: "What does Buthelezi want?" At the most general level it is an easy question to answer: He wants to maintain and extend power. The more difficult question is to say how he is going to achieve it when every opinion poll shows support for Buthelezi personally (and for the IFP generally) is a considerable way off achieving that goal. In addition, he and those around him seem hell-bent on staying out of the elections.

We should, however, note the very unpredictable status of opinion polls in these elections, and the undoubted effect that people's real and imagined fears of intimidation and persecution will have. Already it has been pointed out that with the IFP and the Zulu king calling for an election boycott and with the political intolerance that characterises the political culture in the region, every person who walks into a polling booth in certain "Inkatha areas" will not have cast a secret vote, but a vote against the boycott position.

### A foggy crystal ball

To offer a possible explanation of the route being followed by Buthelezi, the king and the IFP, we have again to trace certain continuities — with the clear warning that to attempt predictions in this time of flux is even more hazardous than usual.

Buthelezi has relied fairly consistently on structures which have been dominated by chiefs. That is what the bantustan system amounted to — a creation of apartheid to allow "tradition" to dominate all political processes.

These "traditional" roles — now supported, along with democracy, by every party that has pronounced on the issue — do not depend for their existence and claims to power on the popular will. They are, furthermore, male-dominated, apply only to part of the population, discriminate against people living in rural areas, and are highly inefficient and frequently corrupt.

What better form of government

to retain when it is clear that you are going to lose an election — a form that will exist whether elections go against you or not; a system that is undemocratic, if not anti-democratic.

And yet, in some form or other, it carries the stated support of all the major parties (including the ANC-led alliance). Just this month, the king once again pronounced that Buthelezi was his "traditional prime minister".

### Avoiding democracy

It does, however, still leave the question as to how Buthelezi hopes to achieve the establishment of such a level of government when the major structures agreed upon in negotiations will undoubtedly be democratically-elected.

The strategy is that of arguing for

minister to the king and the Zulu nation. He said he would not participate until the political claims of those elements had been acknowledged.

The second, and related, part of the strategy was to call for a single-stage process of drawing up a constitution, in which all parties present would have a say, and in which it was hoped that the major elements of the IFP and "Zulu nation" demands would be included. The two-stage process that was accepted, with the prior election of a constituent assembly, that would serve as a test of popular support (and hence the demotion of certain parties who did not carry such support), meant that the part played by Inkatha and its minor allies would carry less weight.

Inkatha and its spokespersons have not, however, stayed out of nego-



### ■ IN DEFENCE OF THE REALM: Inkatha support has been mobilised against any "foreign" threat

the legitimate existence, and recreation, of the "Zulu kingdom", based on the prior existence and the colonial destruction of such a polity. Within this argument the role of the king is central, along with the undefined (but generally accepted) notion of the "Zulu nation", and a "government to the Zulu nation", namely the KwaZulu government and KLA.

From the start of the negotiations process Buthelezi stayed out, not only in his personal capacity, but as prime

tations — they have just not followed the central route through the World Trade Centre. Through bluster, through ultimatums, through stalling and delaying, and through the threat of violence, Inkatha has gained considerable concessions.

Except, that is, the most important one — acceptance of the political package that hinges around the "Zulu nation", the king, a territory, and a government, the KwaZulu government, dominated by chiefs. ■





# Who you gonna call?

The police have their own plan for dealing with election violence — they'll just sort it out themselves. **JOHN SEILER** offers some alternative advice

**L**AST-MINUTE NEGOTIATIONS, THE secrecy surrounding deliberations of the Transitional Executive Council and the hectic pace of the Independent Electoral Commission have left one vital question unanswered: What role is the South African Police going to play in the next few weeks?

It's a vital question — particularly because of the absence of some key *political players from the electoral process*, and their expressed commitment to disrupting the polls.

There *is* a general plan for police behaviour. But it's one which raises some hard questions and requires some modification — before it becomes irreversible.

The plan was prepared by an inter-departmental working group on electoral security, mandated by the TEC and the IEC and discussed in a public seminar at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation during March.

Although an SAP major-general chairs the working group, and an SAP brigadier is the convenor, participation came from a wide range of government agencies involved with the election and security.

The plan represents a general consensus among the participating government departments — but there appears to have been no substantial consultation with the ANC, Lawyers for Human Rights, Idasa or other prominent critics of the SAP who have a strong interest in the election.

Given the emphasis on official participation and the exclusion of critics, it is not surprising that the plan's basic premise is that the SAP must hold central responsibility for maintaining law and order during the campaign and into the post-election period. When



## ■ HEAR NO EVIL, SEE NO EVIL: Civilians will have to be involved in intelligence-gathering

necessary, the police will draw on the SADF and the NPKF for more people, and on the the ANC and domestic intelligence agencies when it needs information.

### JOCs strapped

The plan's structure is simple. Joint Operations Centres (JOCs) are to be set up at national, regional and magisterial district levels.

Because the IEC will chair these centres, their establishment hinges on the appointment of IEC executives at these three levels. So while the national and regional JOCs are running, most district ones await the appointment of

IEC staff.

At each level, the centres will bring into play the same government agencies involved with developing the plan (with the intriguing addition of commando units at district level).

Political parties, civics, unions, and even local white councils will not be members. Their participation is limited to providing information; it appears they will have no role in any broader discussion of political intelligence.

Formal responsibility for this will rest with government intelligence agencies — the National Intelligence Service (NIS), SAP intelligence and Military Intelligence (MI) — along with the



ANC's intelligence arm, under the direction of the TEC's intelligence sub-council.

One or two members of the intelligence committee at each level will also be members of the JOC.

### Containing chaos

The plan is divided into three phases:

- The campaign.
- The election itself.
- The immediate post-election period.

During the campaign period, the central security function will be to minimise intimidation and public violence. The SAP will keep track of meetings and will provide staff on request.

Wherever possible, "reaction groups" will be stationed near potential trouble areas for call-up when required.

During the election proper, the SAP will provide direct security at polling stations and the locations for storage of ballot boxes.

After the election, barring contingencies which the IEC has forbidden the SAP to discuss publicly, a return to "normal" policing is anticipated as quickly as possible.

### Problems and solutions

There are a number of obvious problems with the plan. The widespread distrust of internal stability division (ISD) units will make for major problems of unit allocation — especially for what the SAP euphemistically calls "reaction groups," but even for the small units assigned to most districts throughout the country and at polling stations themselves.

Taking into account all available SAP staff, including reservists and administrative staff, it may not be feasible to have any substantial presence apart from in the most volatile districts. This would require turning to the NPKF and the SADF. The NPKF would seem an attractive alternative to the ISD in the East Rand, but it would probably be seen by IFP supporters as ANC-oriented — even more so

## There is no legislation banning fire arms from polling stations

than the SADF units now assigned there.

What if a security problem crops up in an unexpected district or instability grows beyond the ability of the immediate security detachment and the nearest "reaction force"?

The district JOC would presumably request urgent aid from the regional JOC. That JOC could assign a unit to intervene; but if there is severe stress on available staff in that region, it might need to turn to the national JOC.

More to the point, who would be assigned? In the SAP, only ISD units have the capability for such assignments. One unit, the 12th — often used for such backup roles — has the reputation of being especially aggressive and even brutal.

In theory, training and monitoring ought to reduce the risk of such interventions. Clearly, training itself will be inadequate given the limited time and probable resistance from the ISD and portions of the SADF. Effective monitoring might be decisive — not so much the classic on-the-ground monitoring of police behaviour, but the "monitoring" of JOC decision-making that IEC chairing should permit.

But that depends first on the insistence of the IEC chair to attempt monitoring and the responsiveness of JOCs whose membership will be almost entirely white male and imbued with *ancien regime* conceptions of domestic security.

### One voter, one gun

The IEC and the SAP admit to basic prob-

lems, such as the fact that there is no legislation forbidding the carrying of registered firearms into polling stations on election days!

The practical difficulties of searching each voter are enormous, but the psychological implications of uniformed (presumably armed) SAP searching at polling places in this country's first democratic election are staggering.

There may be a solution to this problem: The parties and community organisations are best equipped to know who intends to bring arms and can either dissuade them from doing so or report them to the appropriate JOC or local SAP station.

But if parties distrust each other as much as they do in some areas, what motivation would they have to encourage a unilateral disarmament?

The underlying solution is to bring them more fully into the electoral security process. They should be working members of the information committees at all levels, not just contributors of information. Only by ongoing participation, and with active efforts by information committee chairpersons, can a sense of mutual responsibility for the electoral process develop.

Beyond full discussion of political intelligence in the information committees, the chairpersons and individuals from the major parties should also be active members of the appropriate JOCs.

Shifting the burden of responsibility from uniformed and armed security units to civilians should also take place during the voting itself. There is no advantage in having the SAP in view at polling stations anywhere in the country, regardless of the volatility of local politics. Whether warranted or not, their presence only engenders ill-will and distrust.

Far better that SAP units responsible for polling stations be held in reserve nearby to be contacted by the IEC if needed. Voters arriving at their polling place would see only civilians: the IEC staff, party representatives, domestic and international observers. This civilian presence would help to make the point that elections are for citizens — and that no security force should be thought to have any influence on their outcome. ■



■ WE'RE ALL EARS: Reaction groups will be on standby on election day





# Dances with wolves

Eighteen months after elections, Angola is still at war. **DAVID COETZEE** looks at the prospects for peace, and at the role a new South African government could play in bringing it about

**A**FRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PWV chairman Tokyo Sexwale came away from a recent visit to Angola commenting on similarities he noted with the present situation in SA. Like in Angola, he said, there was a "fear that some may not accept the outcome of South Africa's elections" — and he warned about "the dangers of the open confrontation that could take place".

This is true enough. But the parallels break down just about there. Inkatha, doing its best to avoid an electoral test, does not have the level of national support enjoyed by the Unita rebel movement and leader Jonas Savimbi. Nor does it have the tens of thousands of battle-hardened troops who underpin Savimbi's political postures.

Yet the deals discussed during March at the Lusaka peace talks between Unita and the MPLA may contain lessons for SA — even if they are only lessons to reject.

## Real support

Despite their awful aftermath, the elections in September 1992 were the high point of Angola's battle-scarred history. Although the government was essentially driven into the election — against the advice of many of its top officers, who said Unita was planning betrayal and could not be trusted — the event was well-run, and generally taken seriously by all.

One thing it did was to finally display the actual support for organisations on the ground — Unita received 34,1% of the total vote compared to the MPLA's 53,7%.

Savimbi secured just over 40% of the votes for presidential candidate, against the MPLA's Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who got just under 50%. In the central highlands — Unita's heartland



■ **THE MAN BEHIND THE WAR:** Unita's Jonas Savimbi put the bullet before the ballot



— Savimbi secured over three-quarters of the vote; in Bie and Huambo provinces, 80% and over.

### Strike a deal

Immediately after the election, it was apparent that deals had to be struck with Unita to bring them into government. With such extensive national support, they could not be relegated to the political wasteland — even though their support came primarily from rural Ovimbundu people, away from the centres of population and the modern economy.

Deals also had to be struck because of the way Unita was flaunting war if it did not get its way.

With hindsight, it is apparent Unita had no intention of agreeing with the election results if it lost. While the MPLA had been demobilising its Fapla forces, and taking seriously the formation of a unified army, Unita kept out an entire army and the best weapons. At one stage, the government warned that an army of 20 000 was being maintained in secret by Unita. The UN arranged for helicopter flights to range over vast expanses of bush in the south of the country. They found nothing.

Unita was using the false peace to extend control over areas it had not been able to secure during the war, and was holding onto its areas despite demands that it allow the central state to take control and get voter registration going.

The effect was disastrous: six months before the election, the state could exercise its authority in less than a quarter of these areas.

### International silence

But the problem in the end was not with the Angolan government, which had conceded to international pressure to hold the election and had then done it well in appalling circumstances.

The problem was with the international community itself, which refused to take government fears about Unita seriously. And it refused to put its money where its mouth was and to send in an adequate military force of Blue Helmets to ensure peace was kept — only some 400 UN police and some 600 other monitors were sent in. Former UN representative in Luanda Margaret Anstee said afterwards that this had been the main mistake of the elec-

## South African hands on the wheel again

**As this edition of *Work In Progress* went to press, the Lusaka peace talks between Unita and the MPLA were going well — and some kind of deal was in the offing.**

**But once again, it seemed, South African hands were firmly on the Unita wheel.**

**Before the Angolan elections, Unita leader Jonas Savimbi's chief advisor was SA 'diplomat' Sean Cleary (the brains behind Pretoria's election management in Namibia), who presented a plan to split top government posts among members of both parties.**

**Now, according to MPLA secretary-general Lopo do Nascimento, South Africans are helping Unita draft its proposals in Lusaka.**

**Do Nascimento would not identify the South Africans, beyond saying they are 'the people and groups who are trying to destabilise SA's internal situation'.**

**But he did point out the proposals tabled in Lusaka were 'similar' to those presented at constitutional negotiations in Johannesburg. They came, he said, from 'forces that are presently trying to implement a divisionist policy, based on ethnic independence with SA'.**

— David Coetzee

tion.

The UN has consistently argued that it does not have the funds to send in the thousands of troops needed where peace is not already established. But political wariness among member governments was also a likely factor, and is likely now to have grown.

After its Somali debacle, the main contributor to UN peacekeeping, the US, is unlikely to send ground forces on these operations in foreign countries. Washington has in the past sought to gain political kudos in this way, but cannot take the fall-out if marines start arriving home in body-bags.

Yet if a new Angolan deal is brokered, these questions will again have to be faced by the UN.

### Power-sharing deals

Right after the election there was talk of a power-sharing deal in which Unita could be guaranteed a proportion of provincial governorships, administra-

tive control in parastatals, ambassadorial and other posts.

Unita suggested instead that the government be divided in the proportion 40% to the MPLA, 40% to itself and 20% to the other parties. This was based on Unita's argument that it represented almost 40% of political opinion and that this — rather than the principle of "winner takes all" — should determine the distribution of power.

The MPLA, in response, said it was prepared to discuss a more elaborate power-sharing deal than the agreed national unity government.

But Unita was not consistent on what it wanted. Unita members were divided about whether to:

- Accept the results — and their minority position in parliament — and compete in a second round of elections in the hope of winning the presidency.
- Stick to their original position that the election must be annulled and re-run according to a Unita-prescribed formula.
- Go for a third option involving some kind of power-sharing, which took the elections result as a starting point for negotiations.
- Failing agreement on one of the above, go for "Somaliasation" — the division of the country into two, a northern and southern Angola in which the MPLA would have the north and Unita would control and administer the four provinces it won in the central highlands and the far south-east.

This proposal ties in with Unita's approach during the war, when it tried to cut the country in half by taking the port cities of Benguela and Lobito and to control a corridor up to Huambo. It failed in this bid.

### Regional aid

After a year and a half of bloody fighting, an MPLA general recently declared that his army again controls 90% of the urban areas, and a third of the countryside. This may be an exaggeration, but there is a general sense that the war is heading back to square one, after claiming (at a conservative estimate) close on 1 000 deaths a day — the worst war casualty rate in the world.

In the longer term the military tide may now be turning for the MPLA government. Internationally it has widespread support, and if it can pay it



an get arms. In addition, it is trying to *win over the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with a new economic restructuring plan.*

More significantly, the regional balance of forces will change dramatically when the ANC comes into power after the April elections. Though the new government will not be in a position to put in significant military support for the MPLA — both because of

make reparations for the war damage it has suffered, and there may be some sympathy for this view in the ANC (though officially it is not on). SA's own reconstruction demands will be large, so there will not be substantial help available. But this may build with time and as regional economic integration starts to take concrete forms.

Meanwhile the top-level agreement on the principles of a general task

Years of Portuguese colonialism, followed by years of war, have removed the social means for dealing with antagonism. Nor has Angola acquired parliamentary traditions of government and loyal opposition.

Yet the country is not itself divided: many families are intermarried and spread between government-held cities and Unita-held towns and countryside. Ethnic violence has only flared in the



## ■ THE WRITING ON THE WALL: Angola has no tradition of peaceful problem-solving

the tenuous hold it will have on the loyalties of its own officers, and because of the security priorities it is likely to have at home — it is likely the ANC will remember its debts for the years of support given by Angola.

Feelings for Angola in the ANC's top echelons remain strong, despite the fall from grace of the MPLA — jettisoning its "workers party" label and its earlier ideas of planned social development, and acquiring instead a reputation for corrupt dealing.

The Angolan government continues to hint strongly that it wants SA to

force last month, set out between President FW de Klerk, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe and Botswana's President Ketumile Masire, will have been noted with misgivings at Unita headquarters.

Savimbi's only regional friend now is Zaire's President Mobutu, himself under constant internal and international pressure to resign.

### Peace is foreign

Angola, various commentators have noted, no longer has any traditional means of peaceful problem-solving.

tensest moments, as when Luanda residents attacked fellow Bakongo citizens after the government had hit out at Zaire's aid for Unita. It rapidly sought to damp down that incident.

Angolans are, all agree, now disenchanted with politics and politicians. But a period of peace, despite the dangers of immobilised government and instability which a divided administration would give, may be enough to generate a rebirth of political will, morale and organisation — or perhaps even political parties no longer cast in the mould of the old. ■





# A toast to the world

ANC stalwart **ALBIE SACHS** says thank you for decades of solidarity

**O**ne of the pleasures when travelling around the world these days is to ask old friends to raise their glasses on April 28 and drink a toast to our elections — and, in doing so, to drink South African wine. Those who don't take alcohol, I tell to toast in our excellent fruit juice.

This is to people who for decades, as a personal gesture of solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle, refused to purchase South African goods. I am also speaking to the playwrights, the trade unionists, the religious leaders, the legal experts, the government officials and even some politicians who found their own ways of supporting the struggle for freedom and justice.

There are so many people out there who stood by us over the decades whose contribution must be honoured. They gave us shelter, education, access to all the ideas of humanity and, above all, moral support. They agreed with us that we were not freaks for believing in simple justice and the achievement of universal franchise in our country.

In the case of some East European states we got the support of governments without the people being involved (and in the hardest days, when no-one else was backing us, that support was invaluable).

In West European countries, we got help from the people without their governments. This was most spectacular in the USA where a huge black-led groundswell forced through sanctions legislation against the so-called constructive engagement policy of the Washington administration.

Only in the Scandinavian countries, in Africa and in India did we get whole-hearted support from people and government. Sweden and India stand out as two countries which took principled positions throughout the years.

Yet the most important support that we got — and at the highest cost — was from African countries, particularly the Frontline States. Our debt to

them will only be repaid when they have recovered to achieve stable, flourishing societies. Angola and Mozambique in particular were devastated because of the support they gave to the ANC. And all they can see for it at the moment is President De Klerk shouting "Viva!".

Mozambique lost perhaps half a million people — and to this day has two million refugees outside the country and several million more internally. We had difficult moments such as when the Nkomati Accord was signed, but basically they stood by us over all the years. We owe them plenty.

International institutions like the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, the Commonwealth and, later on, the European Community, made important contributions. Many of us spent hours, weeks, years of our lives lobbying and speaking.

It was good to see how the issue of combating apartheid united almost all the representatives of humankind. Many people took their first political steps in activities against apartheid. Often they learnt to see the connections between the structures of injustice in their own lands and the defence of apartheid in SA.

We hope that the millions and millions of people who took their personal stands, who attended or witnessed the great Free Mandela concerts, who objected to racially selected sports teams and who deprived themselves of the delicious taste of our fruit and wine, will share in our joy on April 28 in what will have been a common achievement and a victory for the whole world.





# The ANC: Is there life after the election?

What future does the ANC see for itself after the elections? Will it have two 'wings' — one inside parliament and the other toying in the street outside?

This edited ANC discussion paper tries to answer a few questions...

**W**HAT WILL THE ANC LOOK like after the April 27 elections?

The movement has already agreed that it will not be dissolved — in fact, the ANC's national executive committee (NEC) has explicitly committed itself to strengthening the ANC after elections.

The ANC will have to be reconstituted, however, in a way that harnesses its membership in the new conditions, where it is the dominant force in government.

But how will it work? Will there be two ANCs — one debating inside parliament, the other toying in the streets outside?

It's a question political parties around the world are grappling with, particularly those trying to maintain dynamic contact between the popular masses and their elected representatives.

The question is really about accountability, mandates and the selection of candidates.

And in the ANC's case, it's a question of how it keeps a strong link between those who go to parliament and the rest of the ANC.

## Lost forever

ANC representatives going into parliament cannot be lost to the movement. They will need a viable means of contact with the people outside — and that means more than a report-back meeting every five years, just before re-election time.

In particular, the ANC cannot



## ■ TAKE YOUR SEATS: An urgent task for the ANC will be to derail the gravy train

afford to be reduced to the ANC in government. It cannot be swallowed up; it will have to maintain a degree of autonomy as an organisation.

It's also worth remembering experiences in the former Soviet Union, where the state and the party became one. This is an example the ANC must ensure it does not follow — it needs to develop an autonomous character as an extra-parliamentary organisation which is separate from the ANC in government, in a way that never happened with the CPSU in the Soviet Union or UNIP in Zambia.

## The extra-parliamentary ANC

Outside parliament, the ANC will con-

tinue to be the leader of a broad range of social movements. It will have to help maintain unity among the forces of change — without undermining their right to differ — and help build their strength, so that they can play a decisive role in driving the reconstruction and democratisation process.

At the same time, the ANC will have to defend the mandate of a democratic government — bringing people onto the streets, if necessary, to stand by the government if it encounters opposition to its mandate.

This will add weight to the process of change, countering pressures from those resistant to transformation. It will be able to empower parliamentarians to





■ WE MADE IT! All smiles for the ANC — but the movement will have to overcome fatigue and resistance as it mo

continue with the reconstruction programme.

### Structural problems

For this to happen, though, there needs to be clarity on the constitutional status of the ANC after April 27.

- ANC MPs and cabinet ministers will probably enjoy greater prominence than ordinary ANC NEC members who are not in parliament. But they will have to remember that the NEC remains the leading structure within the ANC, and is the leading policy-making structure outside of conferences. It speaks on behalf of the ANC.

- The ANC will also have to clarify where MPs fit into the broad organisation plan. They will need specific organisational tasks, either within the regions which elected them or within a broad national framework.

This will keep MPs in touch with

problems at all levels of society — something which will be particularly important once the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) gets off the ground. The RDP carries the danger that it may only benefit organised sectors such as the working class. Rural and landless people are not organised, nor are the homeless, and MPs need to be put in touch with these sectors.

In addition, MPs can help to build contact between government ministries and people on the ground.

### Building the ANC

It's likely that a high degree of fatigue will set in after the elections. And this is going to be hard to break if the democratic movement does not have clear programmes of action for its members.

The masses will need to see their own power as central to the process of

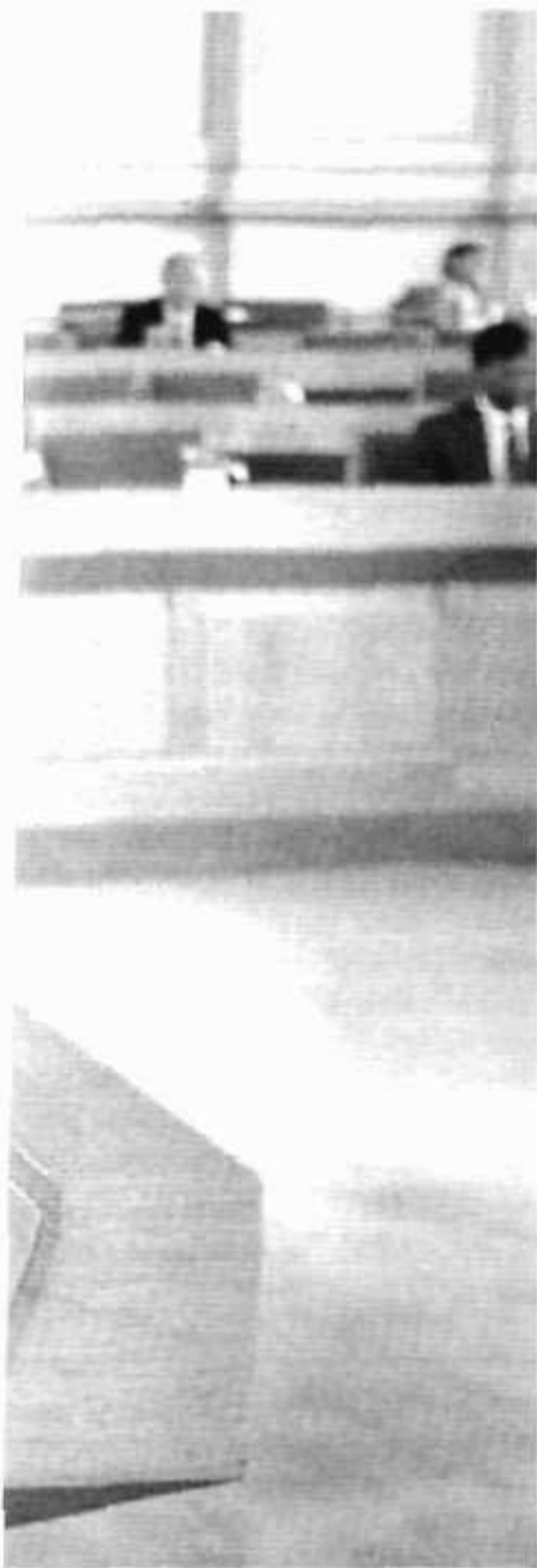
democratisation. Electing people to parliament is one way of ensuring the people benefit, that representatives act on their behalf in the highest organs of the state. But in addition, the people have to be organised in their own territory, on the ground, to improve conditions — with or without the assistance of a future parliament.

But how should the ANC approach this? Should it carry on trying to recruit more and more members?

Membership is only a source of strength if it is *organised*. It is not a source of strength if it is a statistic. What this means is that the ANC will have to go through a period of consolidation, building and rebuilding.

It should not try to acquire thousands more members for the sake of numbers; its membership needs to be firmly anchored in our communities, and its branches and regions need to be





## Is reconstruction

connected to the broader democratic movement.

## The ANC in parliament

The present parliament has acquired a reputation for corruption — a gravy train, clearly identified with anti-popular measures.

It's essential that elected ANC representatives do not uncritically adopt the normal qualities of parliamentarians. In particular, while parliamentary service is going to be one of the highest forms of public service, it is important that our leadership retains the kind of links which have distinguished us from all other organisations in this country.

● **Perks:** We need to look at the material benefits enjoyed by those in parliament. The ANC is the party of the poor, and it is essential that its MPs are in the forefront of ensuring that the gravy

# Building a new democracy

Reconstructing the ANC will be part of a broader struggle to build different layers of democracy after the elections:

● **Representative democracy:** ANC representatives in parliament will have to link up with the movement's mass support base. MPs will have to develop distinct report-back methods for the public in general as well as the ANC itself. There must be transparency, and they must operate within a publicly-known code of conduct.

● **Participatory democracy:** Forums like the National Economic Forum, and the National Housing Forum will have to be transformed into areas of consultation and cooperation to realise the aims of the RDP.

● **Direct democracy:** This means self-empowerment and self-initiated action by organised forces on a variety of fronts, sometimes in support of the RDP and sometimes advancing local demands.

Ordinary citizens must be able to exercise their rights, as individuals, who may or may not choose to belong to organisations, street committees or any other structures.

## New rights, new powers

The framework of democracy must allow ordinary people to do things they have never considered within their rights — and which give them the capacity to understand and act on knowledge that was not previously theirs.

They must have access to what was previously barred — including the system of justice, where economic factors must form no barrier.

A democratic government will have to take responsibility for implementing the RDP and ensuring a speedy advance with programmes of electrification, housing, education, job creation etc.

The new government will also have to provide a coherent framework for all actors to contribute towards democratic transformation. It will have to actively intervene through legislation and financial measures.

This process must, however, be people-driven and organisationally-driven. The people must be organised — and in some cases, organisations will have to be revived and created to achieve this.

## New sectors

'People-driven processes' are not anarchistic popular actions, but people harnessed in an organised manner towards a particular goal. So a people-driven process means one driven through organisations, in particular the ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance and the organisations in the mass democratic movement.

In some cases these organisations bring together already existing organised workers or other sectors. In other cases, sectors may not be adequately organised. It is the responsibility of the alliance in particular to ensure organisation is stimulated.

This is particularly important in the rural areas, where there is practically no organisation and where in many cases the ANC is weak. Existing civic organisation also needs to be strengthened.

But the implementation of the RDP goes wider than any previous processes and is in keeping with the broad conception of nation-building. This means a much broader approach than in the past — drawing in organisations which have not historically been part of the MDM or other alliances, but which have something to contribute towards health, education or other programmes.



# No ANC alone

**'The ANC alone will not be able to ensure the implementation of a national and democratic programme for transformation.**

**'It will need to draw on the insights and experience of the various organs of civil society which stand to benefit if the programme is implemented.**

**'The ANC will have interact, consult and cooperate on a continuous basis with a variety of sectoral formations to advance their democratic goals, defend and deepend democracy and supplement government's efforts in implementing the RDP.'**

● *Extract from ANC discussion paper*

train element in parliament is removed. They will have to take active steps to remove any perks which are not vital for the performance of their jobs.

This means a reduction in salaries, for a start.

If the ANC is to remain a people's organisation, it's essential that their lifestyles are not seen as alien to their followers — that is, that they don't adopt ostentatious, lavish lifestyles.

At the same time, MPs should not be placed in the situation where they earn more than people who continue to work full-time for the ANC at ANC salary levels.

In principle, the ANC should probably adopt the approach taken by alliance negotiators at the World Trade Centre and the TEC, who paid surplus earnings to their organisations (for example Sanco and the SACF).

● **Accountability:** The proportional representation system creates special difficulties with accountability and report-backs. MPs will be able to report back to their regions — but this isn't accountability to the public in general, so the

ANC will have to develop special mechanisms to ensure regular report-backs.

● **Discipline:** What happens if ANC representatives in parliament deviate from ANC policy? Firstly, we should not forget that all people elected on the ANC lists are there as representatives of the ANC — regardless of any other organisational affiliations, or any private thoughts they might have on ANC policy.

If matters are still in debate, members are obviously free to contribute towards formulating policy — and this includes differing among themselves, in public.

But if MPs have private reservations about aspects of established ANC policy, these should be raised firstly within the ANC's constitutional structures and then within the ANC caucus in parliament.

Where an individual MP openly and flagrantly deviates from policy in a serious way, it's within the movement's rights to call on that person to resign and be replaced by the next person on the list. ■

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## GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT



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# Taps before Trotsky

The joint Cosatu/SACP socialist conference offers a unique opportunity to revitalise the Left. But, as **JEREMY CRONIN** points out, South Africa can't afford for it to be another ideological talkshop...

**I**N JULY, A MAJOR SOCIALIST CONFERENCE is planned for South Africa. The decision to have the conference goes back, partly, to Cosatu's Special Congress last year, held to nominate Cosatu candidates for the ANC election lists and to debate the draft of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

The impending elections had triggered off a series of debates within Cosatu, and these swirled beneath the surface of the special congress. In Cosatu affiliates, there had been a debate on the future alignment of the federation after the April national elections. Some affiliates had called for the launch of a new workers' party and for the breaking (some said after the elections) of the alliance with the ANC.

Whatever the consistency of different positions expressed at the conference, there can be no dismissing the profound uncertainty tens of thousands of organised workers felt (and feel) about the short and medium-term future. Will years of struggle be sold out? Have we forgotten our socialism? How can we ensure we are not marginalised?

There were expectations that the Cosatu conference would debate the new workers' party issue — but in the end, this particular debate was limited to a resolution. It was, in fact, the reaffirming of a previous Cosatu congress resolution that the labour federation jointly with the SACP (now added) should convene a Socialist Conference in 1994.

Preparations are under way for this conference. But, since they remain



■ **A WATERSHED CONFERENCE:** The concerns of the poor are more important than intellectual arm-wrestling

preparations and much open-ended discussion needs to happen before a more fixed framework is in place, I can only express personal views about it.

To be sure, they are views that have been tried out, revised by criticism, and assisted in a number of collectives.

## What's in a name?

First, there's the question of name. As we all know, beneath names are agendas. At one time, the conference was being referred to as a "Unity of the Left" conference. I have no objection to Left unity, but I'm not sure a conference with that title is the best way of achieving it. That title sounds like incitement to a right-of-admission debate. Who is and who isn't Left? And

just how Left does Left have to be? That's a conference for ideological bouncers flexing the orthodoxy of their pectorals in the doorway.

But the most important disadvantage in billing yourself as a "Unity of the Left" conference is the basic strategic fact of a major fault-line between the various formations and tendencies that describe themselves as Left or socialist in our country. The fault-line occurs on the crucial question of the ANC. Make no mistake, the debates might often be about the relative merits of Trotsky or Gramsci, or about what really happened in China in the late 1920s. But most of them come down to a set of fundamental South African questions:

● Should the Left ally itself with the



ANC?

● Should the Left operate within the ANC?

● Indeed, is the ANC itself fundamentally, or at the very least potentially, left?

Or are the answers to these questions: no, no, and absolutely no?

I believe that by far the greater proportion of the Left in SA is either in the ANC or aligned to it. But there are obviously other Left forces as well. We could have a conference that (explicitly or implicitly) forces us to focus on the ANC, left unity against or with the ANC? We could skirmish with each other. We could confirm ourselves in our own views. We might, one or the other side, even poach a few converts.

But I think such a conference would be woefully misdirected.

Much better to have a conference on the relevance of socialism for our country, and invite even non-socialists to such a conference. Both the Left in the ANC and the Left outside of it share many values. These include our anti-capitalism; our anti-imperialism and our belief in the need for some kind of international solidarity; our criticism of capitalism's current rampant neo-liberal ideology; our commitment to the working class and to a society based on basic needs not profits; our concern that post-April we may see a partial transfer, but very little transformation, of power; our belief in some kind of socialism.

All this surely lays the basis for, in the first place, the conference emerging with a common socialist declaration. An unapologetic assertion of these broad perspectives is critically important.

### **A consensus against barbarism**

The negotiations process and run-up to elections have (necessarily and correctly, I believe) put great store by an inclusive process. A broad, progressive *consensus has been achieved on the absolute necessity for democratic elections within the context of an interim constitution. It is a consensus that includes the major imperialist powers, the NP, through to the Left (or almost all of those calling themselves left) in our country.*

This consensus has been achieved on the brink of an alternative. That

## **An unapologetic assertion of broad socialist perspectives is critically important**

alternative was, and remains, a descent into barbarism, as John Saul has called it. There are plenty of well-armed and often fanatical forces (largely gathered in the now-eroding Freedom Alliance) that are itching to plunge our country into an Angolan, Bosnian or Beirut war of enclaves. There are parts of our country that already approximate to that.

It is in the face of this threat that a broad spectrum of political and other forces has achieved a minimum consensus on some democratisation, including the holding of April elections. *Neither socialism nor capitalism (except perhaps bandit capitalism) could be sustained in the rubble of Huambo or Sarajevo today. But the consensus within and about our country against a descent into barbarism does not abolish major strategic, which is to say, class differences.*

Two major blocs, two major strategic opponents, have struck a negotiated deal for some real progress, in the face of a common immediate threat. But the negotiated deal carries risks for both sides. For our strategic opponents, the deal will place the ANC in government, and the ANC includes within its leadership ranks many worker leaders, communists, and other progressive forces. The ANC's struggle traditions are revolutionary, its Reconstruction and Development Programme fundamentally anti-neoliberal and, above all, its working class and popular base is militant, seasoned and relatively mobilised.

But for us, the deal also carries grave risks. In a world dominated more than ever by neo-liberalism, we may simply stabilise the South African and southern African situation on behalf of imperialism and local big capital. The

new government may hoist an ANC flag over a typical neo-colonial state. We may end up giving greater legitimacy (than FW or PW, not to mention Mangope could ever hope to give) to the kind of structural adjustment programmes that the World Bank and IMF will try to impose upon us. And this, too, would mean barbarism — another kind of barbarism.

### **Civilised barbarism**

For if there is the barbarism of enclave fascism, of tribal warlordism and ethnic cleansing, there is also the barbarism of the new world order. It is, of course, a more "civilised" barbarism. Its victims tend not to die in mortar fire or from land-mines. But it is a barbarism that claims many more lives — 25-million died of hunger in the third world last year. That hunger was basically caused by debt strangulation. 25-million dead is the equivalent in deaths of a Hiroshima atom bomb dropped every single day of last year.



■ RAINING REVOLUTION: The socialist



There is, thus, a double challenge for the Left in our country. We need, I believe, to play a constructive, even a leading role ushering in a more democratic and stabilised dispensation. But there are those in our ranks, enthused with the success of the broad constitutional consensus, who are inclined to forget the second kind of barbarism. For them, talk of socialism "rocks the boat".

It is in this situation that the July Socialist Conference will take place — in the context of a major nation-building effort, but with the conviction that stability, national unity and reconciliation should not, indeed cannot be achieved at the expense of suppressing the needs and aspirations of the working class majority. And, since a socialist transformation is central to those needs and aspirations, mapping out the *how* of such a transformation is critical.

### Sao Paulo Forum

We have some very useful precedents

## Rather than reinvent a new socio-economic programme, the Left needs to strengthen the RDP

— in particular the Sao Paulo Forum which, at its fourth annual meeting in July last year, assembled 112 national liberation, social democratic, socialist, communist and various other revolutionary formations from South and Central America and the Caribbean. The forum was launched at the initiative of the Brazilian Workers' Party and its president, Lula.

Each year the number of partici-

pating formations, and the scope of the unifying declaration, has grown. The most recent Sao Paulo Declaration condemns the three decades-long US blockade of Cuba, it expresses solidarity with other struggles and democratisation processes (for instance, in El Salvador). At its heart is a left critique of neo-liberalism, structural adjustment programmes, the debt burden, and the general undermining of the national sovereignty of third world countries.

Perhaps most important of all in last year's declaration is the conviction that the Left has to "move beyond denouncement and resistance, to concrete proposals and alternative actions." The Left has to be able to propose and implement actual development programmes that reject "the formula 'growth first, distribution second'". "The development model we desire", says the forum, "presupposes combining the existence of the market with a regulatory function of the state ... and the energetic promotion of the structural changes necessary to ensure democratisation and social justice and, in particular, to guarantee social policies: education, health, transportation, housing, etc."

This, it seems to me, must also be the central challenge of our own Socialist Conference. And that surely means looking quite centrally (not necessarily uncritically), at the RDP. Rather than reinvent a whole new socio-economic programme, the Left needs to strengthen the RDP, to build mass mobilisation behind it, while, if necessary, critiquing points at which it fudges strategic differences, where it attempts to be all things to everyone.

The conference, therefore, needs to focus on concrete, working class concerns.

Let there be, certainly, a debate between Trotsky and Togliatti, Gramsci and Mao. We need to continue to explore legacies and traditions. But, in a country with 7-million unemployed and where over half the adult population is non-literate, let the debates that privilege intellectuals not be the centre-piece.

We need a conference which opens up a process that enables the Left in our country to voice — with much greater confidence — basic policies on anything from banking to tap water. ■



PHOTO: THE ARGUS

conference must focus on real issues





# Taking the gap

The elections will open up space for new forms of mass mobilisation. **FAREED ABDULLAH** looks at how the July Socialist Conference can help the Left take the gap...

**B**ARRING THE UNFORESEEN, ON May 1 South Africa will enter the ranks of the world's democracies, and our transition will move into a new phase.

The compromises that brought us to this point are fairly easy to discern in party political terms — deals between the ANC and National Party, concessions to the Freedom Alliance and so on.

But it's not as easy to distinguish and define the new class alliances that are also being forged. As socialists, we have to clarify the class nature of our transition.

A couple of points stand out. Because the ANC will come to power on the basis of its support in the working class (broadly defined), it will not easily escape some form of accountability to that class.

Yet, at the same time, other classes will begin to consolidate themselves within the ANC. The bourgeoisie and the middle class will try to steer the party in directions that suit their class interests.

This will be compounded by the movement of thousands of ANC activists into the state and civil service — enabling an already existing middle class within the ANC to assert itself more strongly.

It is this group of cadres that will easily find common cause with their counterparts in the current government and civil service. It is also likely to link with the movement of "progressive" individuals into industry, and will be enthusiastically courted by local and international capital to service their interests.

This will be a "class" full of contradictions, and it need not be specifi-



## ■ AFTER ACTION, NO SATISFACTION: Mass struggle will need new leadership after the election

cally anti-working class. This development will have a profound change on the nature and pace of change — despite continuing class struggle within the new government and especially the ANC.

### Class struggle continues

Meanwhile, we can expect serious class struggle, inside and outside parliament, accompanying the popular demands for social reforms like land, jobs, housing, water, transport, health care, electrifica-

tion and social security.

The ANC can lead this struggle inside parliament — but not outside. The seat to lead the extra-parliamentary or mass struggle will have been vacated. A new leadership must emerge to occupy that space.

It is crucial that socialists consolidate their position in the leadership of the mass struggle — this is the principal objective basis for the unity of the Left (or, if you prefer, the consolidation of socialist and left forces).



If the Left is unable to fill this vacuum the mass or extra-parliamentary struggle will dissipate. Parliament will remain the only front on which the working class will wage class struggle. We know where that will lead us.

### New leaders

A successful Conference of the Left should yield an alternative leadership for extra-parliamentary politics. It is a first step towards creating the leadership needed to lead the working class towards further democracy and greater socialisation of productive and consumptive relations.

But the central goal of this conference — and the Left — is to develop a programme for the transition to socialism. Clearly, no single seminar can answer such a question; it may take years to find common cause and a common programme.

If this conference starts the debate and discussion, and puts in place mechanisms that enable us to meet this challenge, then it will be an historic achievement.

To pull this off our debates and discussions must be open and honest.

Do we achieve socialism by becoming hegemonic through "ideological contestation", as Joe Slovo suggests? Does the path lie via the classical Leninist route of the vanguard party, as ISSA's Terry Bell would have us believe (see *WIP 95*)? Is there a *parliamentary road to socialism*?

Is the Movement for a Mass Workers' Party (MWP) the correct strategic approach or merely a Brazilian import? How does this concept differ from the idea of a socialist platform?

Is a loose alliance of broadly anti-capitalist forces enough to build a coherent socialist project — or will it yield only an amorphous front that leads the Left down a cul de sac. And crucially: *Is the ANC a part of the broad left front?* These are some of the questions that the Conference of the Left cannot avoid addressing.

There is a strong body of left opinion, across the political spectrum, that insists theoretical debates lead nowhere.

Instead, the conference should concentrate on building unity around a commonly forged programme of action. There are arguments that the Left should engage the practical political questions of the day, and build cam-

paigns which mobilise the masses to see socialism as their only solution.

These views need not be obstacles. The conference requires a formula that recognises the need for political discussion on strategic questions, as well as the need to outline a common programme of action.

We also need theoretical debate. Obviously it will take many conferences to cast fresh thoughts on some of the assumptions of socialist theory that need to be revisited. But conference participants must be encouraged to insert this discourse into the debates about programme and politics.

### Pitfalls

The greatest difficulty we face in the Left is that we have nurtured deep divisions over the decades, and still have serious political differences. Yet we have not really engaged each other in constructive discussion.

There are positive signs, though. Recent decisions by several socialist formations to support participation in the election brings the Left formations into the same political dimension. It's a subtle but dramatic development.

Who's going to be there? The success of the conference hinges on the question of invitations. The event must be as inclusive as possible, whilst leaving no doubt that socialism will be its central focus.

Invitees to the conference should include working class organisations such as trade unions (Cosatu, Nactu and other independent unions) and civics (Sanco); political formations that define themselves as socialist (SACP, Wosa, ISSA, CWG, WIRFI, MWT, NEUM, Azapo, etc); sectoral and mass organisations (SAHSSO, NECC, Sasco, Udusa, etc); and socialist individuals (from the ANC, NGOs, progressive publications,

and academics).

This is not presented as a conclusive list but illustrates the spread of delegates and where they are drawn from.

Because decisions of the convening committee are crucial in determining the success or failure of the conference, this body should be broadened to include a wider range of likely participants in the conference.

### History lessons

In the current period — and particularly since the collapse of Eastern European regimes and the Soviet Union — we have learned an important lesson: no single organisation or party can represent the entire working class. The working class is represented within a number of political formations, and the sooner we come to accept this, the easier it will be to accept the role and place of various left formations.

The working class is not a homogeneous entity and different political formations will represent sections of the class which are differentiated on the basis of political, social, religious, ethnic and economic differences. Thus the political plurality of the working class and why it will yield numerous formations.

At the same time, a common thread which binds different working class, socialist and left formations is necessary to weave it into a hegemonic bloc. And in that lies the objective basis for the unity of the left. ■

● Abdullah is a member of the Western Cape Regional Executive of the SACP

■ **ROLL OUT THE BARREL:** The Left will have to take over the ANC's role as agents of change



PHOTO: THE ARGUS





# Raking it in?

## *Consultants in the SA transition*

'Now is the time', as the slogan goes ... to make bucks in our transition. And one way is by converting yourself into a 'consultant' armed with expertise in community development. But, as **DANIEL NINA** finds, there's more to this gravy train than meets the eye

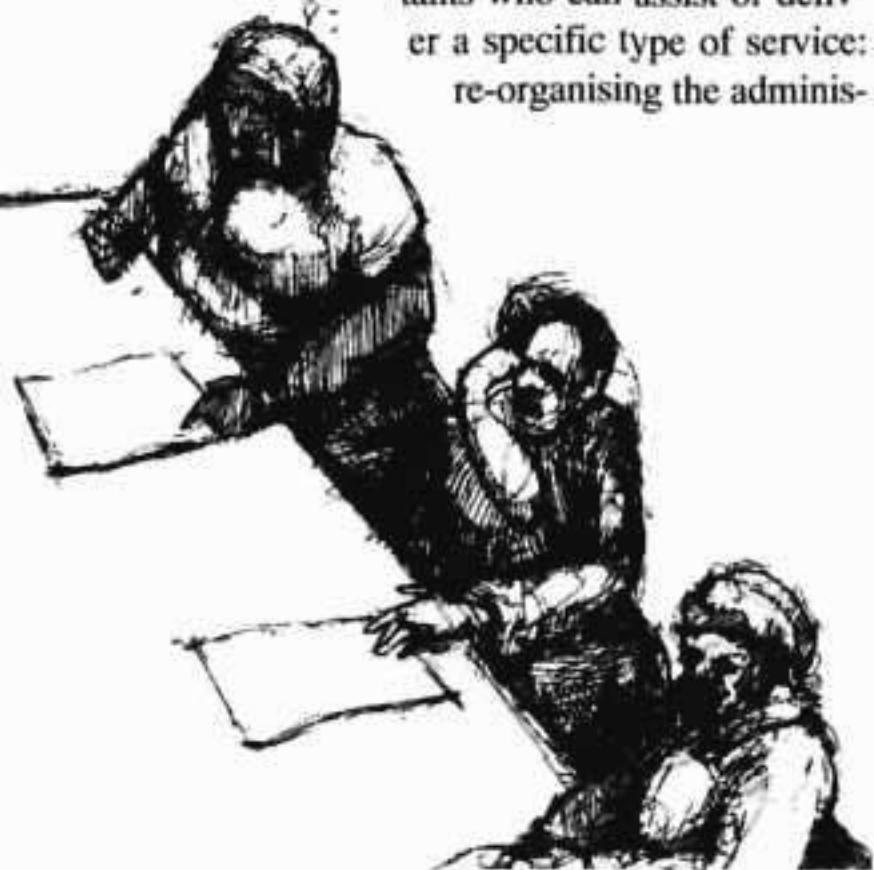
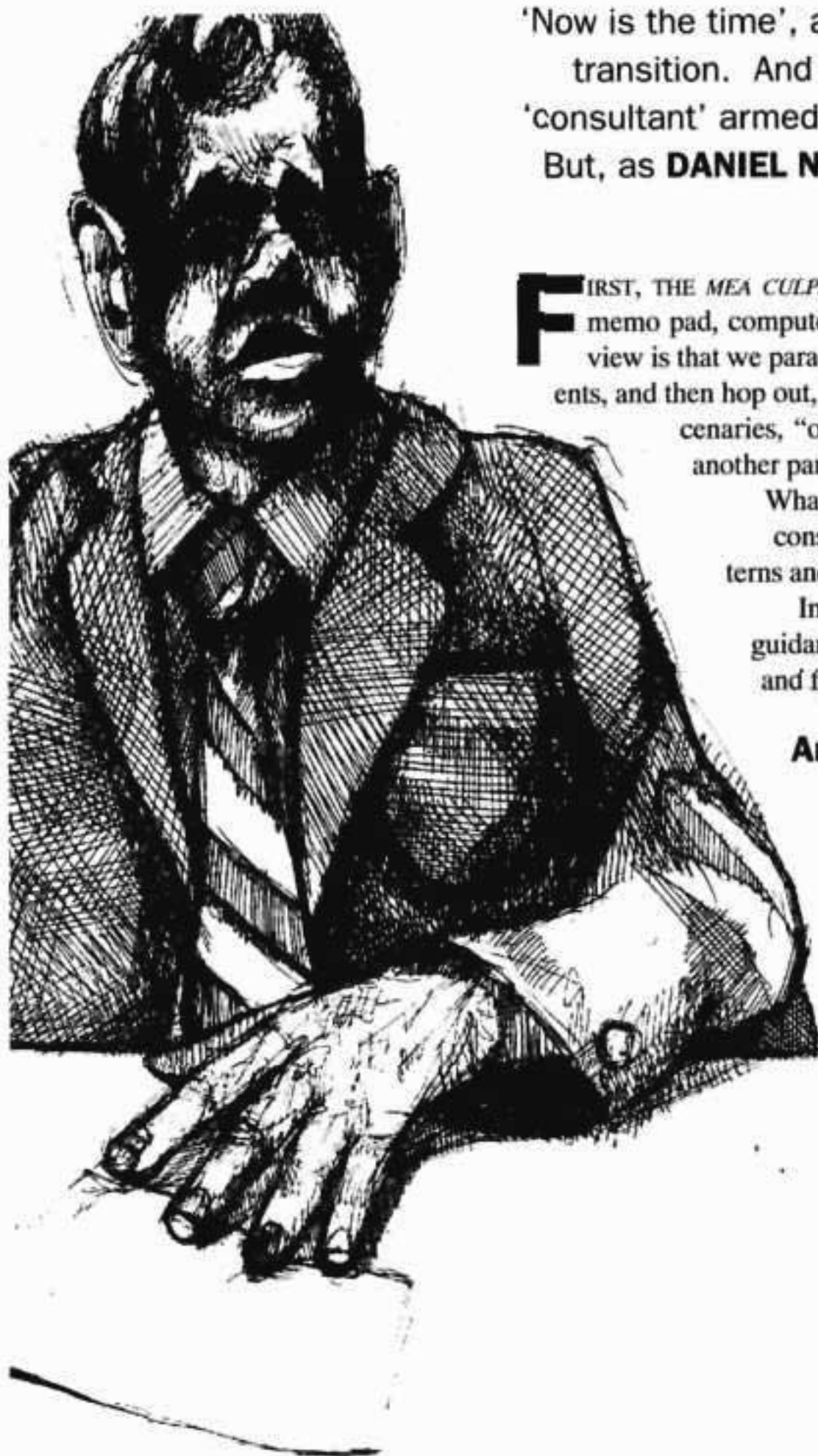
**F**IRST, THE *MEA CULPA*: I, TOO, AM A CONSULTANT. REPLETE WITH ELECTRONIC memo pad, computer notebook, zippy schedule and "insights". The common view is that we parachute into problem zones, dispense our knowledge and talents, and then hop out, burdened with another fat cheque or two. But are we mercenaries, "operators" quick to spot a gap and fill it? Or are we just another part of South Africa's growing service industry?

What's often forgotten is the fact that market forces are consistently determining a need for more flexible work patterns and relations.

In addition, our transition has created situations that require guidance and solutions – from "technical" policy matters to staff and financial management systems inside NGOs.

### **An NGO in need ...**

In the world of NGOs and CBOs, consultants have become a coveted resource. In particular demand are consultants who can assist or deliver a specific type of service: re-organising the adminis-



■ **LARGER THAN LIFE:** Community groups have to ensure a balanced relationship with consultants



trative, management, planning or financial systems of these organisations.

In the heydays of apartheid the "politics of struggle" reigned. NGO and CBO funding proposals usually uncorked a steady stream of funds; provided you were fighting apartheid, few international funders or solidarity groups scrutinised your spending. This allowed members of various social sectors to earn wads of money "from the struggle" — all the way from lawyers to sometimes under-worked (but committed) activists.

Now, with the shift to the "politics of development", scores of NGOs and CBOs find themselves lacking the knowledge and technical expertise to re-organise their projects. Hence their resort to outsiders — the consultants tasked with buiding or directing strategic changes in the organisation.

### More bang for bucks

Donors and funders have also begun to require that NGOs and CBOs bring in consultants to improve operational and financial systems. Often this intervention is made a precondition for new funds. Their motto now is: "More bang for bucks".

Some consultants are introduced not to reorganise but to provide specific types of training that will enhance the organisation's work.

Organisations that encounter serious problems when dealing with racism or sexism, or in implementing affirmative action policies, usually turn to "experts" who can help smooth the transition.

There is also the consultant who is hired to provide an external service. In voter education, for example, some NGOs will contract a trained trainer who then works on behalf of the organisation.

Another type is the employee who faces retrenchment or demotion because of financial restrictions. They can be converted into consultants. This is happening in many NGOs stuck with shrinking budgets — many hard-working employees are handed the dilemma of either being retrenched or taking a more flexible consultant position.

Then there's the "tourist consultant". Many "experts" are jetting in to provide help guide and participate in SA's transition (as internationalists or adventurers?). From urban develop-

## Who is a consultant?

**It's not easy to define consultants in the world of non-governmental and community-based organisations (NGOs and CBOs). There are bona fide consultants who sell their knowledge and expertise for money — a relationship driven by market principles. There are contract workers classified as consultants for the sake of assigning an honorable title to a particular task.**

**And, in the scramble for more international funding, many NGOs and CBOs include in their funding proposals the hiring of a consultant — in order to pad their budget request — even when the post is actually filled by an insider.**

ment to voter education, they are busy assessing and directing transformation in NGOs and CBOs.

"Tourist consultants" come in two guises. Some funders (USAID, for example) sometimes require that consultants from the donor country help out in the NGO's development or transformation. Or they are shipped in to provide expertise that is locally unavailable.

Many local consultants (and some NGOs) are beginning to oppose the presence of these "foreigners", claiming they are not qualified enough or do not understand local dynamics. But often these objections boil down to a turf war.

### One for the money, two for the ...

Obviously, if consultancy were charity work, there wouldn't be that many of us. But is money the only reason people become consultants? "Yes" is the common — and glib — answer. But it doesn't really aid our understanding of the phenomenon.

Franci Lund, at Durban's Centre for Social and Development Studies, says people in leading NGO positions are vacating their posts so that affirmative action policies can be introduced.

Many become consultants to that same organisation, or they freelance.

Naturally, there are other, less ennobling reasons for becoming a consultant. The job appeals to the ego. You are accountable to no-one — until you land a contract, in which case some consultants manage even to maintain that status. You can set the standards and define the solutions to a problem, since you possess the requisite expertise. You're the boss.

And as Susan Hayter, of the Independent Mediation Service of SA's Western Cape office, suggests, if you claim specific knowledge, you can hold the NGO or CBO to ransom. Knowledge empowers the consultant to bargain in the marketplace for suitable reward. Knowledge is not only power, it is money. Compared to a salaried worker, the consultant earns more money per hour, day or project.

Obviously, consultants don't find work through their sheer willpower or the mere compulsion by donors. There is also a need in the marketplace. The market in the NGO and CBO sector is tight, and the broader economy is not absorbing all the qualified people who seek to enter it full-time. So you offer your services in a more flexible way: as a consultant.

On top of this, there's no such thing as "tenure" for consultants. Each job could mean the end of your career. You're chased by deadlines and the pressure to deliver. The appeal from the "employers'" point of view is apparent.

### Out in the open

For NGOs, internally, the transition means transforming and reorganising the project — financially, administratively, even strategically and politically. Consultants have become the midwives of these processes, and often also the conceivers, conceptualisers and controllers.

NGOs are no longer vaccinated against market forces by injections of donated funds. With the flow of funding ever-more fitful, they are having to learn — practically — and adhere to the rules of capital accumulation. And it is cheaper to hire a consultant for a specific task than to add permanent staff. A consultant goes without medical insurance, housing benefits, providential funds, pension (or even invitations to the "Christmas party").



# To each according to invoice

When the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) hires consultants, it applies fee guidelines which some other organisations are also following. But in general, consultants can determine their own fees. And they do — with startling variations.

Geraldine Coy, of Gouws Woods & Partners, proposes that 'the work of a consultant should be determined by the value it represents'.

Within that logic, the consultant's fee is determined by the amount of work invested in the project, the need to 'reproduce' the consultant (basic Marxism) and the overheads involved.

According to Franci Lund, a reasonable fee is R600 per day. The corporate consultancy world views R1 500 per day as a basic fee. The DBSA works with three categories: a market rate of R202 per hour; R168 per hour for non-profit organisations with overheads; and R99 per hour for academics or consultants without overheads.

The lack of clear regulation, regardless of the DBSA's efforts, has established disparities. The influence of the corporate sector and members of the liberal professions (like lawyers) has overdetermined the value of consultancy work in certain fields.

Members of the corporate and legal sectors, for example, claim there is no difference whether you are consulting for Anglo American or Sanco in Guguletu — you should use the same fee scale. Such consultants say they demand a different fee when working for the community sector, but the reality is that even their 'adjusted' fee is very high.

The field of community conflict resolution presents good examples. Hannes Siebert, media director of the Western Cape Peace Committee, says consultants brought in to mediate conflicts in poor communities used to charge R1 500 per day. But this ended last September when the National Peace Secretariat decided no consultant could charge more than R800 per day when doing community conflict resolution. Is this figure reasonable?

The common perception is that many consultants' fees are inflated because of money poured in by the international community. But the fees are determined more by the corporate mentality that now permeates NGOs and lights the path of consultants; it's the logic of capital accumulation that dictates the rate of payment.



tions to the "Christmas party").

A less obvious aspect of this trend is the fact that knowledge is no longer static and exclusive. It "floats" through society. Hayter says an NGO no longer needs to claim (exclusive) expertise in its field; it needs to demonstrate a good *general understanding* which it can augment by "buying" or "renting" from consultants the specific knowledge that will enhance its work.

The implications are important. "Knowledge" has become a commodity that can be traded like any other. This affects the character of the consultant's services and the "new" nature of certain NGOs.

These are worldwide trends, as reflected at the recent GATT conference. The service industry, of which consultants are part, is the fastest growing sector in the world. Already it represents 20% of world trade. (Restrictions applied to other types of trade should also apply to this sector. For example, dumping of services, like consultancies, should be curbed.)

## Migration patterns

The idea of having "floating consultants" entitles many NGOs to claim access to that which they actually do not command. In the field of community policing training, for example, certain international donors are keen to provide funds, as long as their consultants are involved. These people then migrate through different NGOs nationally, enabling the NGOs to claim access to the funding. But the international donor, through its designated consultants, restricts control over the work the funds were meant for.

This creates space for more consultants, offering more services. "The market should determine," as Helen Zille, a prominent Western Cape consultant, notes.

Consultants will not disappear. There is plenty of work for them and the market forces will continue determining their value in operation. But it is not as if consultants alone are driven by these forces. NGOs, CBOs and the international donor community have a hand in this development.

And eventually, the interaction of these different sectors in the market will determine the future of the consultant service industry in SA. ■





# It's time to professionalise

There are good consultants and bad ones. We need to distinguish between the two, and lay down some ground rules for dealing with them. So before you dump that R300 an hour 'expert', hear what **GRAEME BLOCH** has to say...

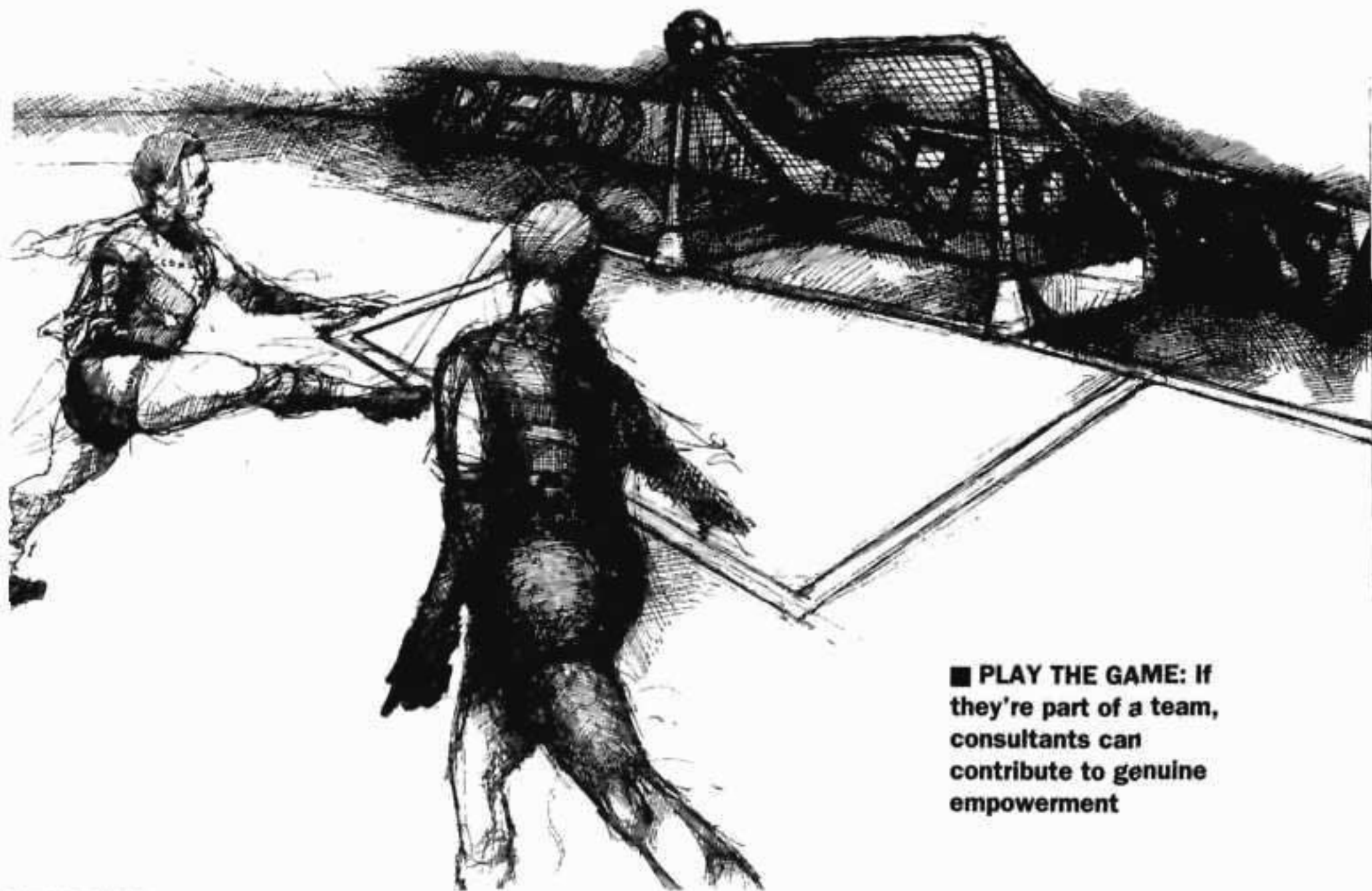
**C**ONSULTANTS HAVE COME IN FOR a lot of criticism recently, for a number of reasons. Some have been involved in corrupt practices; there are questions about their race (usually white) and gender (usually male); tension around the direction of resources to "intermediaries" rather than the grassroots; and questions about their effect on the development process itself.

But consultants have their uses. And, if nothing else, they're going to be around for a long time. No government will be able to control their practices — and international aid agencies, which use consultants in most other parts of the world, are unlikely to change their approach here.

But if consultants are going to be a part of our lives, what can we do to ensure healthy relationships with them?

Firstly, we have to be aware of the structural effects of working with consultants.

One is the question of *expertise*. In organisational issues, how often are consultants genuinely in touch with underlying issues and processes in the area they explore? Are they really able to analyse — in a sustainable way — the source of particular problems? Are they able to analyse the medium-term



■ **PLAY THE GAME:** If they're part of a team, consultants can contribute to genuine empowerment



effects of solutions they set up or propose? Crudely, operating from an office in Sandton or New York, what sensitivity do they have to the local situation on the ground?

An example: Recent processes in youth development have, to a substantial degree, been led by middle-aged white consultants with a strong business tradition.

Their ideological baggage includes strong anti-statist views and a "free-market approach". Is this the expertise that can harness youth energies in a sustainable way?

Consultants, like donors, may be in a hurry to establish highly visible programmes in ways that artificially try to leapfrog the painful time required by development processes. They opt for high-powered free-market solutions, which may not be best for development in these areas.

The answers depend to some extent on the real inputs of clients themselves — and in ensuring that the driving processes are clearly located outside the technical advisors.

Too often, we've seen organisations with experience and understanding undervalue their own contribution. They also undervalue their own goals, and cede responsibility for development decisions with no rational basis — and with devastating effects.

## Monitoring

This also relates to *the way consultants work*. They are busy on a range of projects. There is a tendency to encourage the expansion or extension of any activities that require outside expertise. Once this expertise has been paid for, there is no incentive to continue to monitor and implement strategies. In other words, there is no medium-term accountability to processes that are generated. There are a million reasons why failure can occur after consultancy — yet no-one keeps a record of consultancies and their failures and successes. There is very little quality control: indeed, the consultant has a range of mechanisms, catchwords and fluff that add "legiti-

# There is very little quality control — consultants have a range of catchwords and fluff that add 'legitimacy' to the techniques at their disposal

macy" to the techniques at their disposal.

Very seldom are consultants called to order for the detail of their consultancies. How much time is actually spent doing what they claim? There are very few auditing mechanisms to ensure service delivery. At the end of the day, do we know of cases where the end project has been rejected and returned to sender? Consultants do not inherently deliver good products. Nor is it an argument to suggest that the market will decide and eliminate the feeble and the wicked; there are too many chips stacked on the side of those with knowledge and prescriptions.

## A structured relationship

Users, such as NGOs (and the future state, for that matter) need to develop mechanisms to structure their relationships with consultancies.

In the first place, users must decide just what it is they require. Like African governments, it is no use trying to negotiate with the IMF over structural adjustment when your economies have finally crumbled. The NGO with direction and vision is far more able to identify and monitor its consultants, and to direct their advice to areas where support is needed. More importantly, it is in this way that the quality of advice can be

truly assessed, and the consultants' claim to offer something unique and useful can be scrutinised.

We need far more technical management of consultants. What is their record? Is their type of advice suited to a particular client's needs? How much is one prepared to pay for the advice? How much time have consultants spent on the tasks they claim (and it is worth excluding research time, interviews and other moments that the consultant requires to understand the problem — building *their* capacity is not the responsibility of the recipient)? In other words, claims for costs must be justified on a line-item basis. Loose contracting and sloppy timekeeping must be rejected.

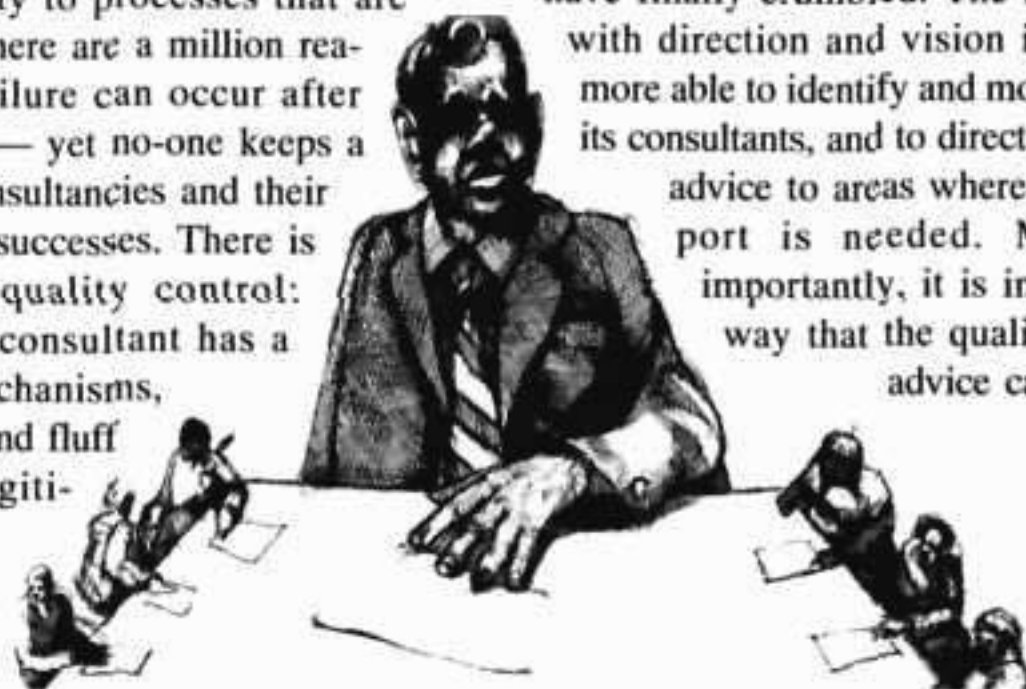
Recipients of services should also learn to share their experiences. We've never heard of an NGO conference with time set aside to analyse the policies, approach, and service delivery of various consultancies. Why not a detailed register in which a kind of "consumer comments" section is kept? Civil society is not just the watchdog of the state, but must examine practices in its own domain.

The downside of consultancies also needs to be taken into account — in particular, the issue of developing capacity. Consultancies are not geared to sharing their skills too widely, to long-term training, to genuine empowerment of their clients. Building definite demands and processes into the consultancy provision can only benefit the NGO or CBO concerned.

Lastly, it should be clear the issue is not about the colour of consultancies, and the monopolisation of resources by white professionals. This is of course a part of the issue, and it relates to sensitivity to context and the ability to communicate. But black professionals with the same tendencies as outlined above, are going to be no more helpful to development than the white-dominated consultancies of today.

The call, then, is for a real professionalism in provision. Those who do the employing, who maintain the consultancies in business, have a real duty to look at how their money is spent, to assess the services they receive, and to plan accordingly. ■

● Bloch is project officer for a funding development agency involved in youth development







# Feeding the land-hungry

South Africa's rural people were able to speak with one voice at the recent Community Land Conference. The challenge now, says **ESTELLE RANDALL**, is to make sure politicians don't forget what they were calling for

**“W**E LOOK FORWARD TO the birth of a new South Africa. But for us there will be nothing new until there is land, services and growth ... We will not sit back and watch as the wealth builds up in the cities, while on the edges of the cities, in the small towns and in the countryside, we continue to suffer and starve.”

That message best sums up the attitude of South Africa's rural and landless people who, for the first time in their history, have been given the opportunity to speak out about their plight.

The message is contained in a declaration adopted by over 700 delegates from South Africa's rural and landless communities, who attended the Community Land Conference (CLC) in Bloemfontein during February.

Organised by the National Land Committee (NLC) and its affiliates, the conference was the culmination of almost a year's local and regional discussion — a process which has already helped to strengthen emergent links across communities (see *WIP95*).

As a result, these communities are likely to be watching the broader political processes far more closely. And they are likely to be much more confident about lobbying the future government.

## The confidence question

But will the conference have longer-term benefits? Is it likely to give impetus to rural people's organisation and help them move out of the shadows?

NLC advocacy officer Brendan Pearce feels confident that this will hap-



■ **NO MORE BEGGING BOWLS: 'We will not sit back and watch as the wealth builds up in the cities'**

pen — although he concedes that if there is no strong follow-up to the conference, the danger of the issues sliding off the agendas of political parties is high.

“It's quite clear that it took a big event like the CLC for rural people's issues to be noticed. The ‘one farm, one farmer’ demand — whether it's right or wrong — generated a lot of response.

“This is the only way rural people are going to be noticed — if their issues are raised in a strong, public way, at a national level.

“The conference created an important momentum. An obvious way for communities to continue to make sure their issues stay on the agenda is for them to organise.

“Because they are not sufficiently organised to carry this momentum forward, service organisations like the NLC will have to help communities maintain the pressure. We could do this through publicity, campaigns and through helping communities to engage with political organisations. We should also help communities to build their capacity to raise issues themselves.”

Pearce said he believed it was possible, although difficult, to build a rural social movement in South Africa. This was because of the momentum created by the conference and because there were already some community structures. These structures should be strengthened and broadened, as they



form the foundation of a national movement.

### **Less noise, more action**

Pearce's views about public, national level activity are not shared by all in the NLC network. Some feel there should be more emphasis on local and regional organisation, rather than large national meetings. They believe the building blocks for a strong national movement are strong local and regional organisation able to meet the needs of rural people — and firmly rooted in communities.

Organisational, political and social dynamics differ and an emphasis on local and regional organisation, even if slower, could bear more fruit.

The debate about where the emphasis in community organisation should lie is one which needs to be resolved by the NLC and the communities with which its affiliates work.

### **Taking up issues**

Some demands which the conference adopted are more radical than current land reform proposals now being debated. While the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and World Bank proposals favour a market-assisted land redistribution and have pegged 1913 as a cut-off date for land restitution claims, the land conference has demanded that the cut-off date be 1652. The conference also called for the scrapping of the property rights and restitution clauses in the interim constitution.

Community regional representatives discussed these two issues with ANC president Nelson Mandela on March 10. In particular, communities said they were concerned with statements that only state land would be used for redistribution.

Pearce said his impression had been that when the ANC and Mandela referred to redistributing state land, they included farms mortgaged to the state through the Land Bank. The ANC also promised to make Land Bank financing more accessible to disadvantaged potential farmers.

"Mandela spoke of the importance of striking a balance between food production and land redistribution. But what he didn't really deal with was the fact that only about 20% of white farm-

# **What does the RDP offer rural people?**

## **■ Land reform**

The ANC has committed itself to redistribute 30% of agricultural land and to complete land restoration within five years of the April election, according to land reform proposals in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

A land reform programme, says the RDP, should be demand-driven and supply residential and productive land to the poorest section of the rural population and aspirant farmers. Land reform should raise incomes and productivity, ensure security of tenure — regardless of the landholding system — and remove all forms of discrimination in women's access to land.

Land restitution should redress the suffering caused by forced removals. The democratic government must, through a land claims court, restore land to South Africans who have been dispossessed by discriminatory laws since 1913. The court must be able to work speedily, and there should be guaranteed constitutional rights to restitution.

The redistribution part of the land reform programme should strengthen existing property rights of communities already living on land, and use market and non-market mechanisms to provide land.

## **■ Rural development**

To correct the history of under-funding and misuse of funds and to meet the needs of the rural poor, substantial transfers of funds from the central government to the rural areas is necessary.

The objective of a future rural development policy should be to coordinate the activities of government agents and to pass as much of the control of government-funded services to rural people.

This would mean ensuring that:

- Democratic structures are set up to control finance and local development activities.
- Councillors are elected at district and local level and local councils and other voluntary community structures such as local development forums are formed.
- Community development officers are trained to advise communities of their options. These officers will work for the district councils.
- Government officers and council officials should complement the work of non-government organisations in rural development work.

The new government should include a central Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform. This ministry should include a unit for rural data collection and an early warning system for food and water security. It should set targets for provision of clean water to within 200m of houses, health indicators (especially for socio-economic diseases), adult literacy provision, service provision and poverty reduction.

It should also train and re-train extension workers, community development officers and officials dealing with land reform. Programmes for this training should be designed within the first 18 months of the RDP.

ers contribute to food production. He was vague about exactly what the ANC, if it got into government, would do.

"It seems they are trying to walk a delicate balance between allaying the fears of white farmers and dealing with the aspirations of the land-hungry."

Mandela had given communities an undertaking that the ANC would

consult rural people on policy. But Pearce said he believed changes to the constitution would be more difficult after the election because there would be a greater reluctance to "rock the boat".

● For more on the CLC debates — particularly on the issue of polygamy — see Sue Wixley's article in our Women's Rights supplement





Winning letter

## Say no to the IMF

I recently read with trepidation about the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) R2,9-billion loan to South Africa.

The total debt burden for sub-Saharan Africa has now reached over \$200-billion. Servicing this debt drains the region of \$10-billion a year, or around a quarter of the region's export earnings. This represents four times what most African governments spend on the health and education of their citizens.

This haemorrhage does not touch the principal debt owed to these benevolent institutions. And that is why African countries are made to have balance of payment and structural adjustment programmes.

The standard conditions demanded in these balance of payment stabilisation programmes have one effect: because of high interest rates, they divert capital away from productive investment and into commercial activities. Economic growth comes last.

These conditions have resulted in massive unemployment, falling real incomes, pernicious inflation, a net outflow of capital, mounting external debts, denial of basic needs, and de-

industrialisation.

This inevitably leads to social disintegration and economic collapse (with social services worst hit) while the burden falls on the poor and weak social groups — workers, women and children.

In the South, the IMF is regarded as the bridgehead of a new imperialism for the recolonisation of Africa and the rest of the Third World.

So does South Africa really need the IMF?

Next to Japan, South Africa's economic advancement in the last 40 years was probably unsurpassed anywhere in the world — even with the imposition of sanctions and the promotion of total isolation. South Africa's foreign debts have never been high in relation to gross domestic product, and interest has always been comfortably serviced from export earnings.

Why are the police of development (IMF) in such a hurry to release this loan?

South Africa spent about R2,3-billion a year on the occupation of Namibia prior to its independence, and on destabilisation of the frontline states. Surely these funds could be used in offsetting the balance of payments deficit and in redressing the social inequalities created by the apartheid regime? Or have the coffers been cleared in the massive ongoing privatisation schemes?

Let us not burden future generations of South Africans with massive IMF loans.

— M Baleka, London

## Taking a chance?

Caroline Gillespie is most welcome to contribute to the debate on popular justice (*WIP 95*). But is she taking a chance?

Firstly, academic discipline is important. Not all in African communities are part of the realm of popular jus-

tice. No-one claims that communities are homogenous or that the development of popular justice has been even. But why has this particular expression of organic justice mushroomed all around the country? We are not talking about warlords and criminals who claim to lead some type of organs of popular justice. We, as many other intellectuals, have been analysing systematic and well-organised practices of popular justice.

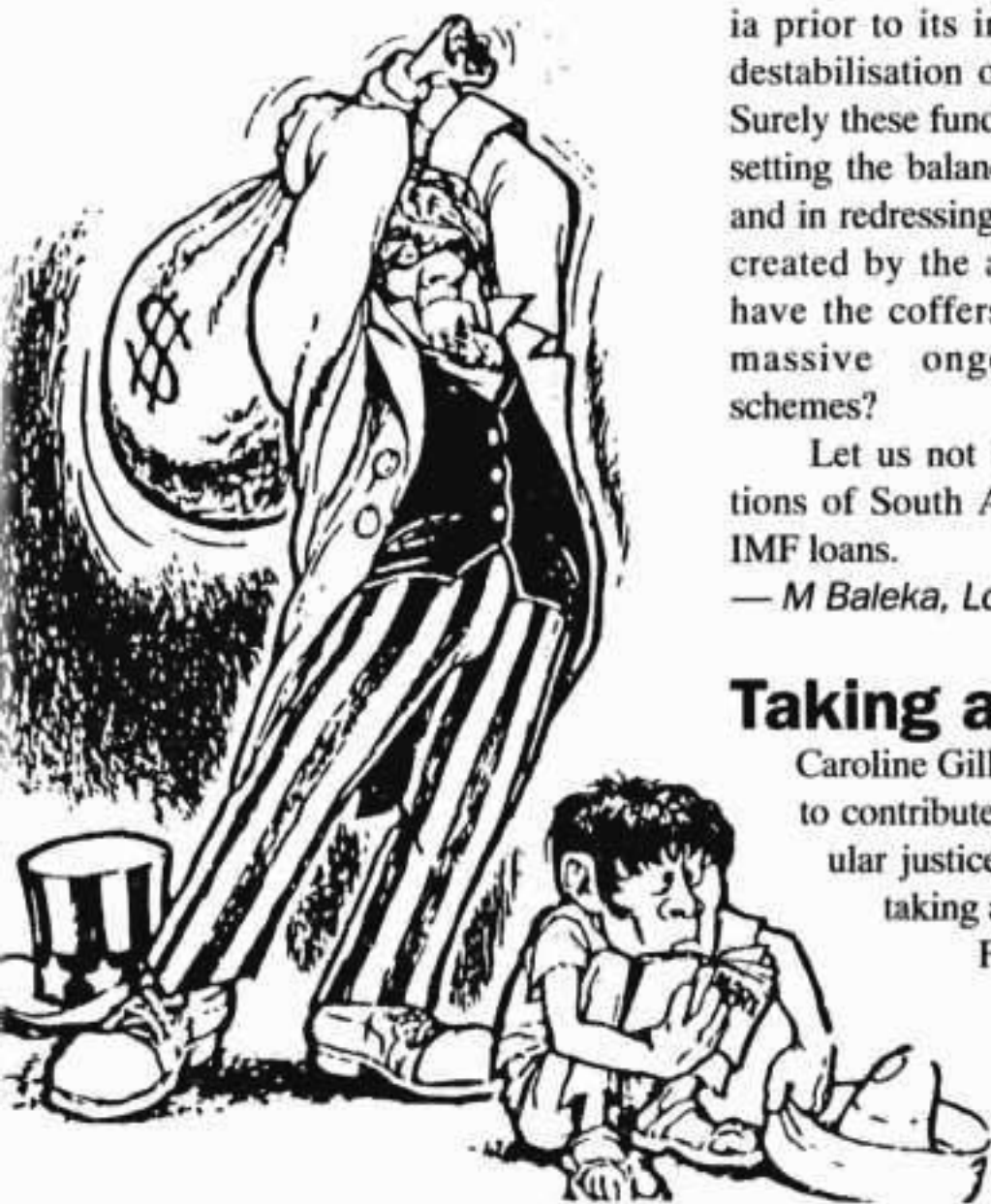
Secondly, our intervention in *WIP 94* was intended to promote a political project in which organs of popular justice could make a clear contribution in the current period of transition. We are not interested in "marrying" anyone, but in exercising hegemony.

Thirdly, it is important not to make generalisations and then look for specific cases that could sustain the "theory". Many of us have been meticulous in analysing case studies and then making some general observations of what it represents and its broader implications. Also, it is important to address concepts when engaging in the debate: it is not about having more justice or more policing (by the state? by the community?) but of transforming that type of justice and policing.

Fourthly, as people who have been working most recently in the Cape, we are alarmed by Gillespie's statements about Gugulethu and the Eastern Cape. She raised misleading (inaccurate?) information that bothers not only the activists of popular justice, but also academic/intellectual rigour.

Finally, as intellectuals we still believe in transforming society, not in reconciling it.

— Zelda Holtzman & Daniel Nina, Cape Town



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## JUST CALL ME EVITA

Yes, that really was Winnie adroitly ducking into the camera frame on TV1 News during Nelson Mandela's mid-March Bop tour.

Though not invited along (so the story goes) MamWinnie schmoozed her way into the inner sanctum, prompting flurries of resolute manoeuvres as Nelson sought to keep at least four comrades between him and the ex-mother of the nation. She bravely fought on, however, and made the evening news.

Not on the news, though, was her brusque but canny message to a Bop civil servants' rally: "One Mandela, one president."

Why do we have the feeling she wasn't implying that *she'd* be retiring from politics soon?

## IN A FLAP

It's tough to hate something as uninspired as our new flag — but then, we Sath Efrikins have never needed an excuse, have we.

"Looks too much like an advertisement for a zip fastener", griped one lateral thinker in a letter to the editor.

"Looks like a Transkei hut design," complained another, obviously house-bound grump in Cape Town, while a columnist detected in the new ensign little more than "a colourful pair of Y-fronts, recumbent".

But the AWB's top *malletjie*, Eugene "Mr T" Terre'Blanche outshone the competition.

Effortlessly holding at bay the urge to dabble in rational thought, he informed us that "the triangle on the left is the pyramid of the illuminati/New World Order one-world government".

"We are shocked but not surprised," he announced, "that (the ANC) shows the broken cross lying on its side to depict (its) triumph over Jesus Christ."

## TWILIGHT

As astrology junkies know, Mr T's descent into the occult is not limited to outlandish types only, particularly in troubled times — a tendency the German marxist Theodor Adorno captured smartly 48 years ago:

"The asocial twilight phenomena in the margins of the system, the pathetic attempts to squint through the chinks in the walls, while revealing nothing of what is outside, illuminate all the more clearly the forces of decay within. The bent little fortune-tellers terrorising their clients with crystal balls are toy models of the great ones who hold the fate of mankind in their hands. The smiling of auguries is amplified to society's sardonic laughter at itself, gloating over the direct material exploitation of souls ... (C)onsciousness famished for truth imagines it is grasping a dimly present knowledge diligently denied to it by official progress in all its forms. It is the knowledge that society, by virtually excluding the possibility of spontaneous change, is gravitating towards total catastrophe." (*Minima Moralia*)

Chew on that, Beardman.

## MORE INFANTILE DISORDERS

At the impressionable age of six, [*fill in name of any white South African newspaper editor*] made a puzzling discovery in the attic ...





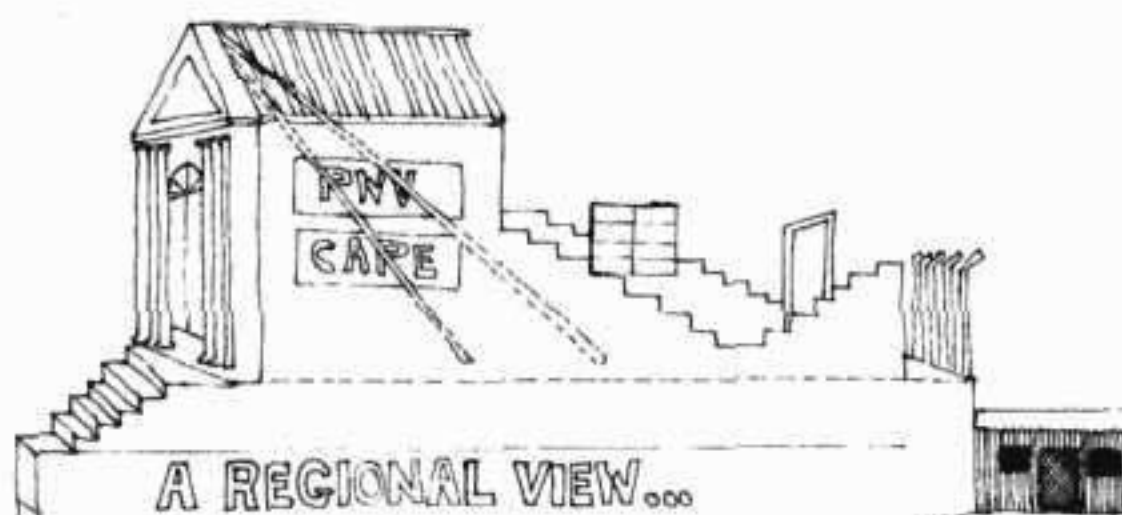
# Reconstruct

A Work in Progress supplement

Issue no. 17

## The view from the back door

If you have ever been on a film set you will know that most of the buildings you see in the movies are mere facades. A row of shop fronts creates the illusion of a street. The architecture of the new South Africa may have something in common with this. The building has been designed by negotiators. For a long time no-one could agree how many rooms there should be. The proposed foundations, bricks and features have been argued about and compromised over. This doesn't make for a great building, even though the front may seem impressive.



In this issue of *Reconstruct* we tour the new premises, assess progress in construction and take in the view from the back door. What will the new regional governments find in their rooms when they take occupation in May 1994? And what will they find dumped in the backyard?

South Africa's distorted development was part of a conscious national plan. Will strong regional government help to correct those distortions or will it merely endorse them? The answer

will emerge in the de facto relationships which emerge between the provinces and central government and the extent to which clear, practical, national development strategies can take root in the post election era.

Our quick audit of the new regions begins to indicate what will be on the regional development agendas and makes a snap assessment of capacity to make development happen. For many regions it's not a happy picture. For those regions like Northern Transvaal,

the greater Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal — the already considerable problems they face are made more complex by the reincorporation nightmare which we preview in a separate article.

On balance the view from the backdoor shows a mean gang of complex realities already climbing over the fence. What does this mean for community based organisations, service organisations and NGOs?

When you look at the immense gap between the size of the problems and the resources we have to deal with them, it's clear that we are going to need every last bit of capacity, creativity and skill available.

Those who have doubted that NGOs and service organisations have a developmental role to play need to step outside and breathe in a lungful of realpolitik. The development tasks that lie ahead require that the existing NGO sector be expanded, upgraded and reori-

entated. The article on the Urban Sector Network sets out the issues involved in this process.

By the time you read this there will be less than two weeks to go before elections are held and we take occupation of the "new South Africa". If development is to be community driven and able to utilise the substantial organisational base developed through struggle perhaps one of our first tasks is to see how development education can take over from where voter education left off. ■

### FOCUS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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### CONTRIBUTIONS

This issue of *Reconstruct* was guest edited by Alida Smit and Rick de Satge. Contributions for future editions should be sent to Mpho Mosimane PO Box 32716 Braamfontein 2017





P L A N A C T

# Gearing the USN for delivery



Since its formation in 1988 the Urban Sector Network has made a major contribution to restructuring local government from the ground up. It has played an important role in the National Housing Forum. It has assisted community based organisations in local struggles and provided technical support for local development projects. Perhaps most importantly it has helped in the creation of an agenda for development. As expectations of delivery mount the USN positions itself to play a new role. **RICK DE SATGÉ** reports.

**O**PEN YOUR EARS AND WHAT DO you hear? Almost everywhere people are talking about the capacity for delivery — how to get much demanded goods and services to the people who need them most.

It's a key part of elections propaganda. "The ANC makes promises but can't deliver" — a line punned (ironically) by the National Party.

It's central to the new agenda for service organisations and NGOs. Some have been criticised by donors and community-based organisations for failing to deliver. But these generalised criticisms often obscure more than they reveal.

The late Francis Munyuki — a leading figure in the Zimbabwean NGO community expressed the changes facing South African organisations like this:

"The progressive movement put apartheid in the scrapyard. Every time the state built a new apartheid vehicle

the popular forces took it and stripped it. They exposed its bad design and its wasteful engineering.

"Now the country is littered with apartheid scrap — collapsed institutions, useless development strategies, civil servants with no understanding of development. But this was the easy part. With a few basic tools almost anyone can strip a vehicle.

"The post apartheid tasks are much more difficult. You can't just put the old apartheid vehicles back together again and give them new drivers. That's how our struggle broke down.

## Maximum mileage

"You must design new appropriate development vehicles, build, maintain and refine them. You must train drivers. You must decide clear local and national destinations. You must get maximum possible mileage for the lowest possible cost. You must deliver the goods on time."

The transition from the scrapping of apartheid to responsibility for design and delivery requires new approaches, new forms of organisation and a new organisational culture.

This recognition was the connecting thread which ran through a recent USN strategic planning workshop. Eight organisations came together to critically examine the Urban Sector Network and remodel it into a more coherent force for development.

The workshop identified a clear mission for the USN. (see sidebar)

At the heart of this mission is the recognition of the need to synthesise progressive development processes with the requirements of delivery at scale. Progressive development processes require the detailing of development strategies and institutions, as well as the emergence of clear project methodologies. And delivery requires community driven projects with measurable objectives and outcomes, quantifiable resources and strict cost accounting.

It redefines accountability as a two way street. Within a project-based approach service organisations and community-based organisations fulfil specific roles and functions essential for successful delivery. These functions are clarified through the planning process and are set out in a mutually binding agreement.

The agreed project plan specifies exactly what will be delivered. The





plan itself provides the index against which to assess the level and effectiveness of delivery.

Clearly this approach demands that service organisations retrain and retool in order to be able to perform to meet the demands of the new standards. This requires the USN membership to have clear human resource development programmes and the network as a whole to prioritise this area.

It also requires much closer co-ordination of the USN to enable joint programmes between organisations, maximise available resources and give the network national development impact.

### **Tighter structure**

To achieve effective co-ordination the USN has opted for a much tighter structure. Member organisations will send representatives to a Board. The Board will be tasked with the strategic management of the USN while a small full time secretariat will facilitate inter-organisational working groups and ensure effective flows of information.

Information is currently one of the Network's major under-utilised assets. The USN is developing a co-ordinated information strategy and a linked materials development programme to spread its impact wider than its project base.

The message from the USN workshop directly contradicts the fashionable stereotyping of progressive NGOs — "lack of direction, high staff



# Afesis-corporplan



■ Organisations in the USN

## **USN mission statement**

**The Urban Sector Network (USN) brings together service organisations working for community driven development that promotes an equitable and sustainable urban environment.**

**The USN serves member organisations and promotes their common interests by creating an enabling environment in which they may achieve their goals.**

**The USN will achieve this by:**

- promoting democratic and participatory development processes and projects
- co-ordinating activities, making shared and rational use of resources, expertise, research, knowledge and information and engaging in joint programmes
- facilitating development education and training
- lobbying and building alliances with key actors in the development field
- promoting and engaging in innovative, replicable and sustainable projects
- joint engagement for sustainable funding and financing of our work

**In this we will be guided by:**

- Co-operation
- Mutual support
- Accountability to member organisations
- Democratic, non-racial, non-sexist practices and procedures

turnover, no more funds; corruption". (*Reconstruct* 15)

The USN has emerged with a clear direction, practical strategies and plans to realise its goals. The importance attached to developing the USN's human resources will consolidate its staff and have a direct impact on the further development of the capacity of

its clients. The increased potential for joint programmes across different regional development contexts, combined with new cost recovery opportunities, will go a long way to ensuring financial sustainability.

Future issues of *Reconstruct* will feature more information on the USN and its work. Watch this space! ■





GRAPHIC: ROELOF OELOFSEN

Now that a strong regional government is firmly in place in the new South Africa constitution, we should be debating options for an exhaustive restructuring of South African regional development policy. **LAURINE PLATZKY** looks at the issues

# Redefining regional development

*Investing in people in places*

**T**HE URBAN FOUNDATION CALLS for investment in people, not places. This sounds like a fine idea. However, slogans like these tend to obscure the fact that people live in places and that improving their access to physical facilities is part of improving their quality of life. Rather than development in places, the focus should be on development of places. For example, a new mine on the West Coast will not bring much development, beyond the creation of a few low paying jobs to the area if the ore extracted there is processed in the PWV, if the mine is managed from the PWV and the if owners pay tax in the PWV. This is development in a region, not of a region.



## Lessons from the past

The existing regional development policy is spelt out in the Regional Industrial Development Programmes (RIDP). The RIDP was designed to attract investment and create jobs in the poorest regions — the Bantustans. The government identified Industrial Development Zones (IDPs) where investors were given concessions and other incentives to relocate industries. Botshabelo near Bloemfontein is a good example of such an IDP.

The RIDP clearly furthered the apartheid agenda — it was a way of trying to make the bantustans economically viable. Horror stories abound of Taiwanese fly-by-night operations who relocated to the IDPs — exploiting workers and wasting public money. These companies were given grants by the Taiwanese government to relocate to lesser developed parts of the world, because they couldn't succeed in Taiwan any more. They could not succeed in the IDPs either — despite all the incentives. Their failure was as much a result of poor management practices as lack of demand for their cheap plastic raincoats or mass produced poor quality clothing.

Yet, we can also learn some valuable lessons from the RIDP. There is a range of types of industries in the IDPs. Some are better than others. In designing a new regional development strategy we need to take note of this and not throw out the baby with the bath water.

The good examples may be divided into two categories. Firstly, there are such plants of large South African conglomerates, which produce unique products for domestic (and sometimes export) markets from beginning to end of the process. This involves a wide range of skilled people and not only skilled, low paid workers. Because there are more people earning reasonable salaries, the demand for a variety of goods and services increases within the region. This, in turn, invites further investment.

Secondly, there are small or medium-sized, firms that needed venture capital and access to affordable loan finance. Owing to the heavily protected monopolised South African economy, small and medium industrialists of all colours have been heavily penalised. They often resorted to the RIDP as the

only means of obtaining finance to run their industries.

Some of the firms in the IDPs can be regarded as contributors to the making of South African products competitive on world markets. They have pioneered high-tech simple production processes which employ people, particularly women, who would otherwise have remained dependent on migrant remittances and their parents' old age pensions. Rural people evicted from the farms have been given some training. Trade unions are active in certain IDPs and some industrialists in Isithebe in KwaZulu, for example, pay their staff only slightly below metro wages.

## Guidelines for the future

Big business is putting forward a strong argument that our only hope is in investing in the cities, pretending that the market can, or should, on its own redress the apartheid legacy. This is a dangerous argument. It assumes that the quality of life in poor regions will improve through a trickle-down process.

If too little investment is made in smaller towns and rural areas, poor people will still be forced to the cities. People from marginalised regions will have to relocate to get a job, to borrow money to build a home, to gain access to education and health care. They will have to relocate to survive.

A future national framework for regional development would need to address three interrelated aspects:

Firstly, local area development strategies within regions need to be integrated. There needs to be co-ordination between metro or urban and rural areas, such that the urban bias within regions is addressed.

Secondly, regional strategies should be harmonised between regions to avoid conflict and negative competition.

Rather than having to undercut each other to attract investment, regional actors should be building on existing strengths. New competitive industries and commerce, that will energise the region, should be targeted. Industries should compete — not regions.

Thirdly, although regional development is a limited strategy for improving the national economy, macro-economic policy will continue to impact profoundly on people who live in places round the country. Therefore, macro-economic policy should take regional development into account. For

example, we need to look at the extent to which capital monopolies make it difficult for smaller businesses to survive.

Priorities identified in the new provinces must inform all levels of planning for development. In turn, the regions and provinces should create a national development strategy together. Instead of reinforcing weaknesses by leaving development to market forces, cumulative advantages must be promoted and disadvantages redressed.

This means taking a careful look at what exists in each region, including the IDPs, how the firms are managing and why they came to these areas. If they are contributing to development of the region, their hands should be strengthened.

We have a long way to go to alleviate the plight of people in poor areas. A comprehensive regional development policy, if properly constructed, coordinated and implemented, is a crucial step to get us there. ■



**Rather than having to undercut each other to attract investment, the regional actors should be building on existing strengths... Industries should compete — not regions**



# Auditing the regional balance sheets

Accustomed to seeing South Africa from a national perspective we have tended to generalise the apartheid legacy. The new emphasis on regionalism demands a much closer focus on assets and liabilities of each region and a clear understanding of who is in the red and who is in the black

## Northern Cape

**T**his region has to cope with an unenviable mix of factors. It covers the largest area and has the smallest population.

It is semi arid with summer rainfall. The region includes four minor economic centres — Kimberley, Upington, Prieska and De Aar. Predominantly rural it has no major economic core and there are few development possibilities. The economy rests on agriculture and mining. Gross geographic product (GGP) is the lowest of all the regions. However per capita GGP is higher than the national average. These average figures tend to mask the huge inequalities between rich and poor.

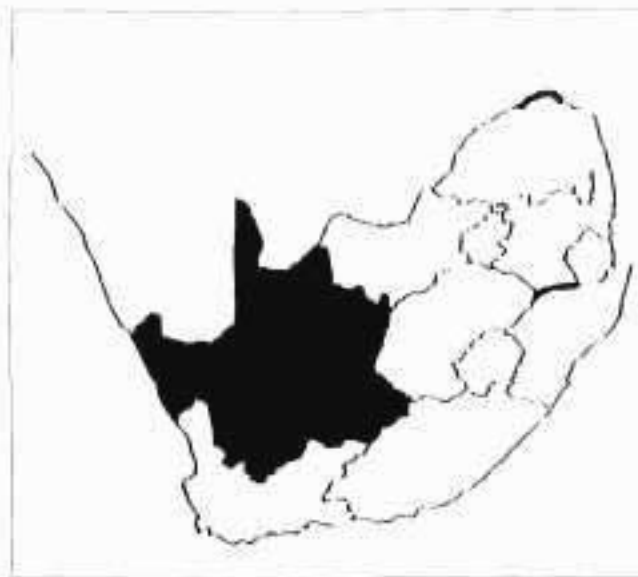
### Assets

✓ Comparative advantage in agriculture and mining.

● *This short overview has been prepared by the DAG Education Department based on information from Paul Daphne, Phillip Harrison, the Border Rural Committee and the Demolition Commission Report on further work on the demarcation/delimitation of states, provinces/regions (SPRs).*

## Eastern Transvaal

**T**his region subdivides into three functional areas — the Lowveld, Witbank-Middelburg and South Eastern Transvaal centred around Nelspruit, Witbank and Secunda respec-



### Liabilities

- ✗ Limited infrastructure to accommodate regional government
- ✗ No tertiary institutions.
- ✗ Urban overcrowding.
- ✗ Poor housing in urban areas and on farms.
- ✗ 15% of urban residents do not have adequate water while figures rise to 25-95% for rural people.
- ✗ Sanitation a major problem in urban areas with 60% of people without proper facilities.
- ✗ High infant mortality at 52/1000.

tively. The area contains the KaNgwane administration, Transvaal Provincial Administration offices and 3 Regional Services Councils.

While administrative capacity exists in the region its centralisation in the future capital of the region will be costly.

Although this region has the second highest GGP per capita of R4 974, it has the lowest ratio of personal income to GGP (42,5%). A large proportion of income generated by large companies and para-statals leave the region for head offices in the PWV.

### Assets

✓ Diverse economic resource base.

- ✗ Low doctor/population ratio at 0,3/1000.
- ✗ Poor health infrastructure.

### Facts and Figures

Population .....	726,6
Population density per sq km .....	2,1
Urbanisation level (%) .....	65,8
Urbanisation growth (%) .....	1,8
Illiteracy .....	23,4
Official unemployment rate .....	12,3
Male migrancy level .....	10,4
Real GGP (R million) .....	2 371,0
Real annual growth in GGP .....	1,6
% of SA GDP .....	2,0
Personal income/capita .....	2 817,0

### Language (%)

Afrikaans .....	71,5
English .....	2,7
Xhosa .....	6,3
Tswana .....	14,1

### Racial breakdown (%)

Black .....	31,0
White .....	14,9
Coloured .....	53,9

✓ Forestry, mining, electricity, subtropical fruit and eco-tourism.

✓ A water-rich area with a useable 6 500 million cubic metres per year with another 2 000 million cubic metres flowing into Swaziland.

✓ 3rd highest road density in South Africa.

### Liabilities

- ✗ Over 40% of the Eastern Transvaal and 80% of KaNgwane have inadequate sanitation.
- ✗ Low doctor/population ratio at 0,28/1000.
- ✗ Institutional capacity of medical services is poor.
- ✗ Over 70% of the population is with-





## Western Cape

**T**he Cape Town metro area forms the economic core of this region which has the highest urbanisation level in the country. The Western Cape has a well developed and diversified industrial base and a commercial agricultural sector which can generate sufficient income to meet the needs of the population.

Cape Town as the legislative capital provides sufficient institutional and administrative capacity to manage and develop the region. The region has the highest literacy rate. However, it is a region of contradictions and large racial

out electricity.

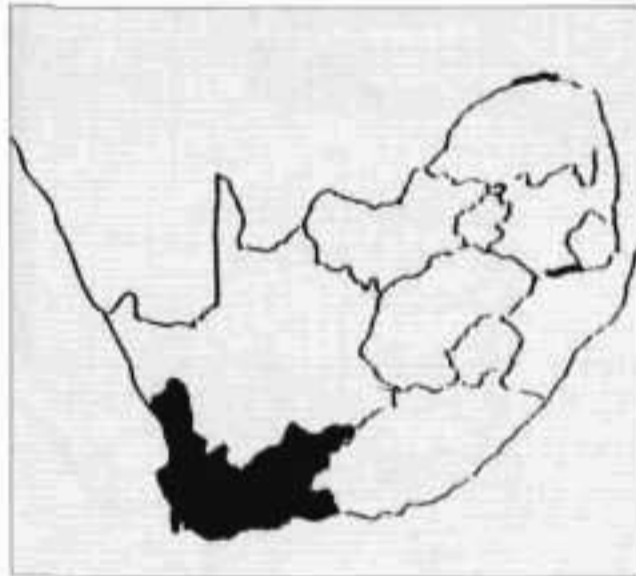
✗ No universities or technikons.

### Facts and Figures

Population .....	2129,5
Population density per sq.km .....	27,2
Urbanisation level(%) .....	35,3
Urbanisation growth(%) .....	3,5
Illiteracy .....	31,5
Official unemployment rate .....	8,9
Male migrancy inflow .....	24,6
Real GDP (R million) .....	9835,0
Real annual growth in GGP .....	3,3
% of SA GDP .....	8,1
Personal income/capita .....	2341,0

### Language(%)

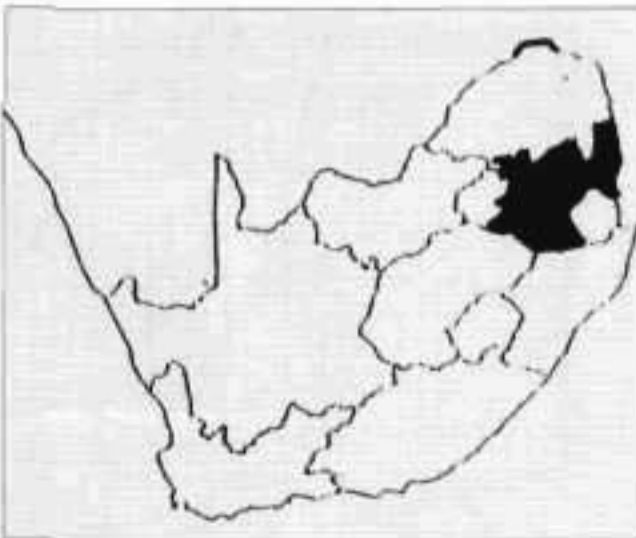
Swazi .....	37,7
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disparities in wealth, health and access to services.

### Assets

✓ Good physical infrastructure — two big ports and fairly good road and rail transport networks.



Zulu .....	27,2
Afrikaans .....	11,8

### Racial breakdown(%)

Black .....	84,6
White .....	14,0

- ✓ Strong diversified economic base — tourism.
- ✓ Strong network of higher educational institutions including three universities, technikons and other training institutions.
- ✓ Excellent health facilities —1,3 doctors/1000.
- ✓ Extensive NGO sector.

### Liabilities

- ✗ Major housing shortfall 35% of the population is homeless and another 34% lives in informal settlements.
- ✗ Unequal service access, high infant mortality rate for African children — highest TB rate in South Africa.

### Facts and Figures

Population .....	3 392,7
Population density per sq.km. ....	31,2
Urbanisation level(%) .....	86,1
Urbanisation growth(%) .....	2,5
Illiteracy .....	8,5
Official unemployment rate .....	9,6
Male migrancy inflow .....	8,5
Real GGP (R million) .....	15 620
Real annual growth in GGP .....	1,8
% of SA GDP .....	12,9
Personal income/capita .....	4 373

### Language (%)

Afrikaans .....	61,9
English .....	20,8
Xhosa .....	15,6

### Racial breakdown (%)

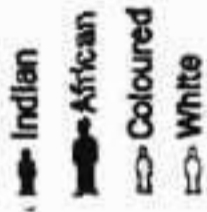
Black .....	17,8
White .....	22,1
Coloured .....	59,7



# KEY



Total number of voters in the region (in 1000's)

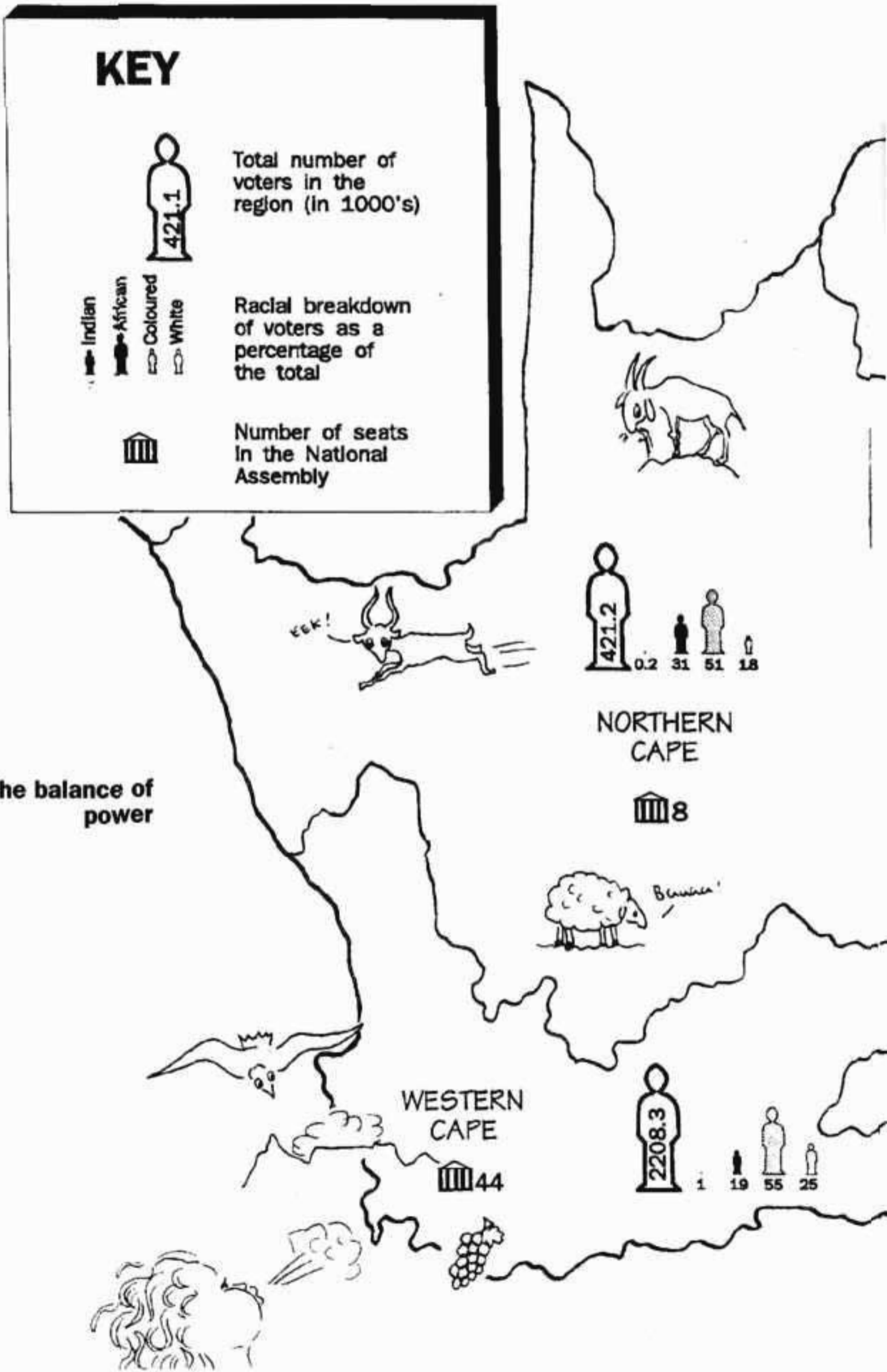


Racial breakdown of voters as a percentage of the total

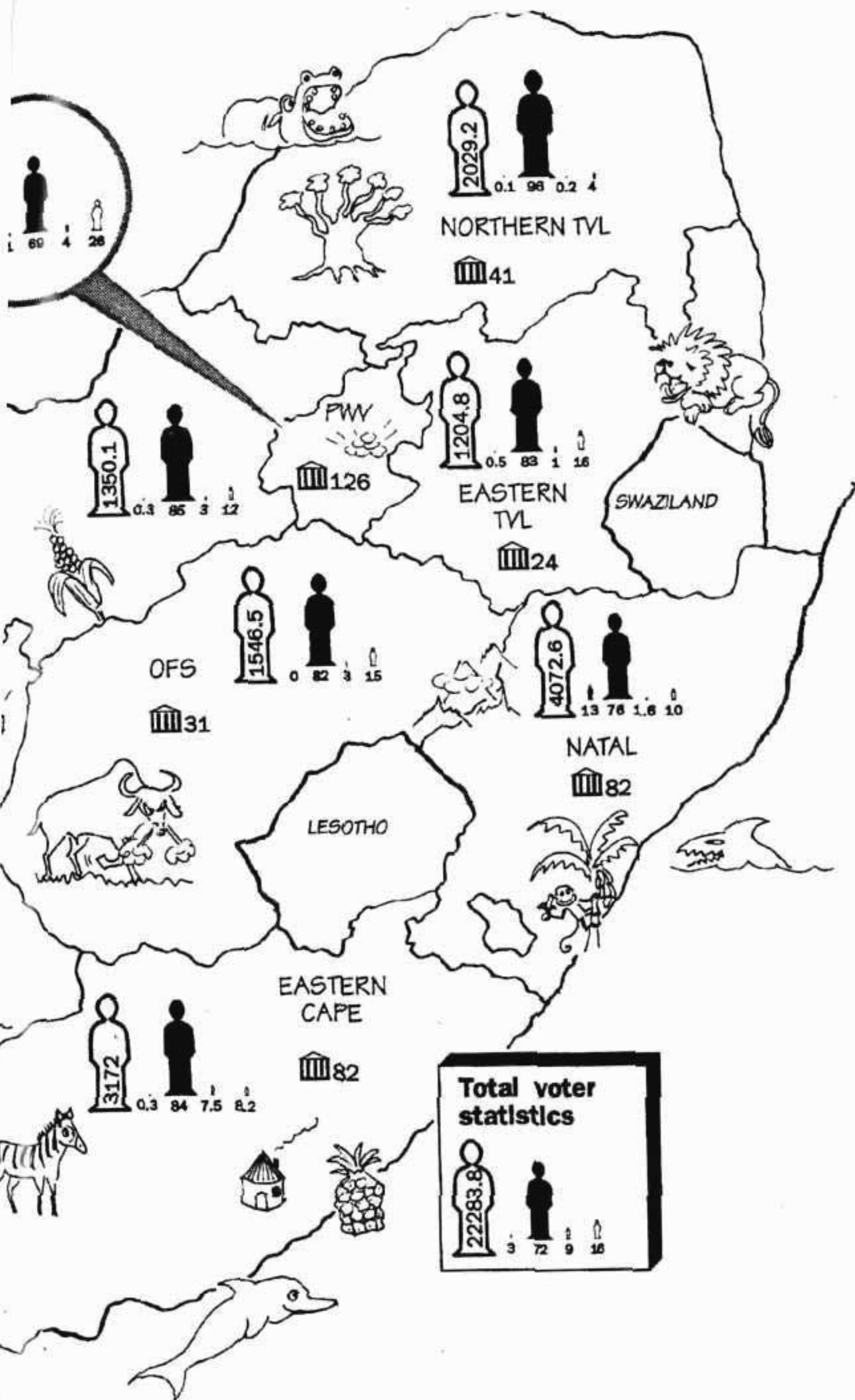


Number of seats in the National Assembly

■ The balance of power







GRAPHIC: BRIGETTE PITT



## North West

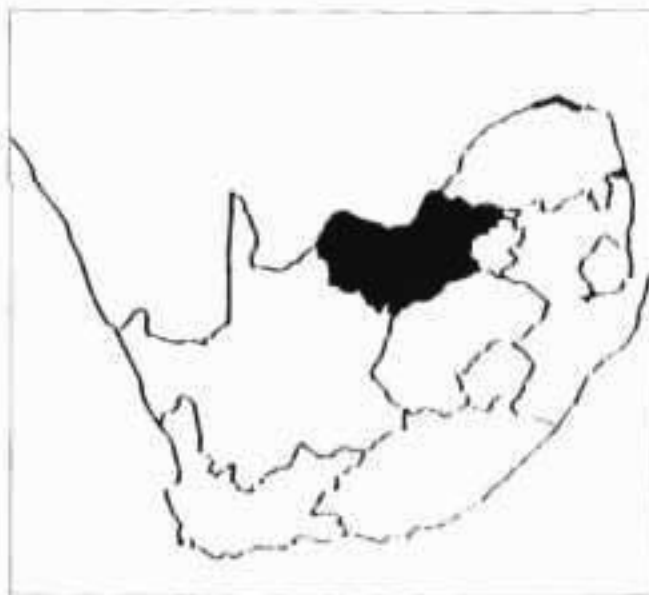
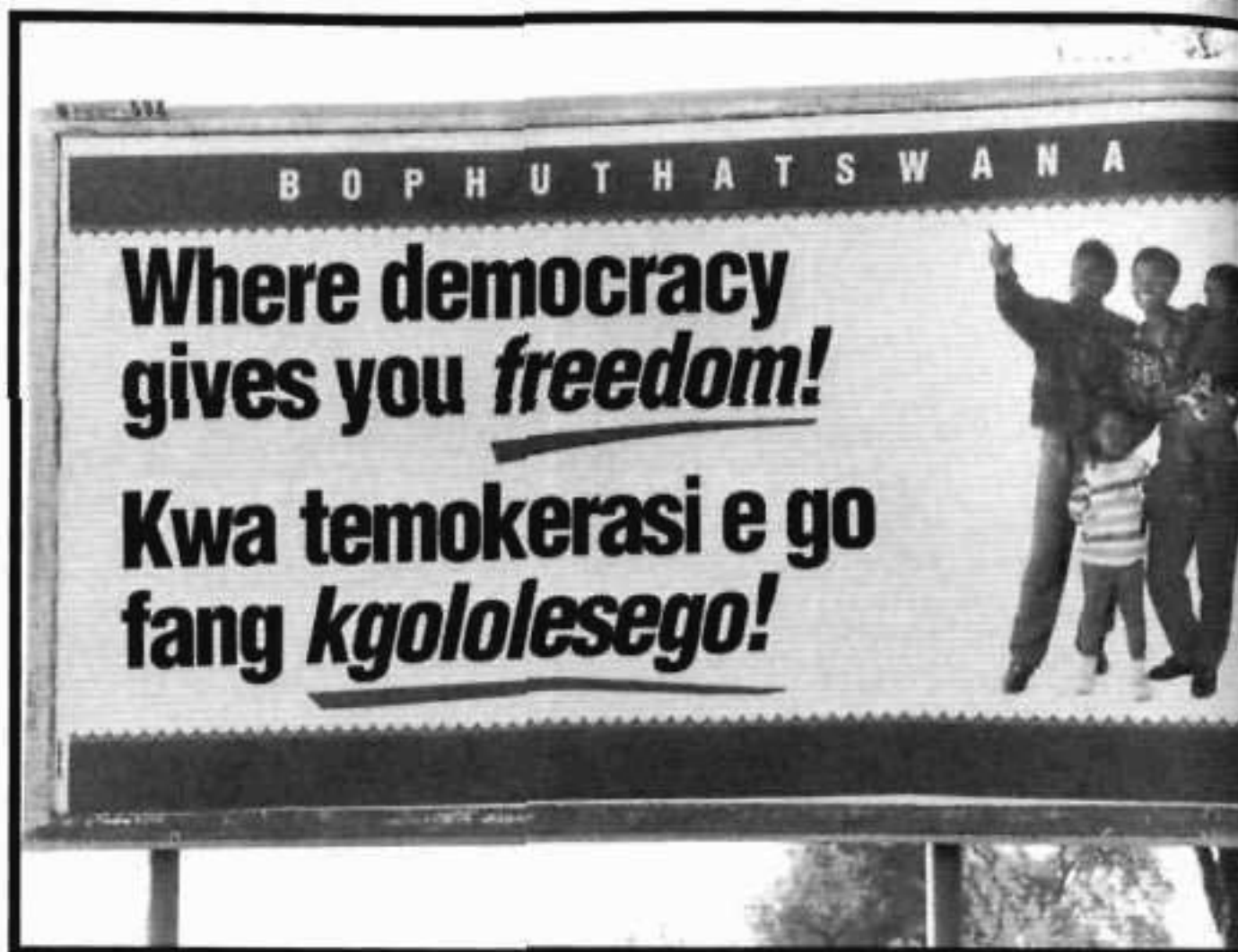
This region is largely rural with no metro centre. The major centres are Klerksdorp, Orkney and Stilfontein. Other economic centres include Mmabatho, Vryburg, Kuruman, Postmansburg and Potchefstroom. The region will face all the problems associated with reincorporating Bophuthatswana. Institutional restructuring is likely to be highly problematic. Substantial, although under-utilised infrastructure exists in Mmabatho which could serve the developmental needs of the region. Economically the region is closely linked with the mining industry whose fortunes fluctuate according to world market prices.

### Assets

- ✓ Two universities — Potchefstroom and Unibo.
- ✓ Substantial under-utilised infrastructure in Bophuthatswana.
- ✓ Functional links with PWV health services.
- ✓ Various regional offices of central government departments in Potchefstroom.

### Liabilities

- ✗ In urban areas 33% do not have access to adequate water. This rises to 75% in rural areas.
- ✗ More than half the population have inadequate sanitation.
- ✗ Services are markedly worse in Bophuthatswana than elsewhere with



the region.

- ✗ Incorporation problems including run down administration.

### Facts and figures

Population ..... 2396.6

Population density per sq.km .....	15.8
Urbanisation level (%) .....	29.3
Urbanisation growth (%) .....	2.1
Literacy .....	35.5
Official unemployment rate .....	15.1
Male migrancy inflow .....	11.8
Real GGP (Rmillion) .....	8223.0
Real annual growth in GGP .....	1.2
% of SA GDP .....	6.8
Personal income/capita .....	2000

### Language (%)

Tswana .....	66.8
South Sotho .....	5.0
Afrikaans .....	12.4
Other .....	15.8

### Racial breakdown (%)

Black .....	86.5
-------------	------

## Northern Transvaal

The Northern Transvaal is arguably one of the most problematic and complex regions. This region will definitely require additional resources from the central state if it is to meet the needs of its people. Firstly it faces the incorporation quagmire — not one homeland administration but three — Venda, Gazankulu and Lebowa. The poverty indicators are clear. The region contains 12% of the SA population but produces only 3.1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It has the highest population of children

under 15 and the second highest rate of illiteracy in the country. It has the highest outflow of migrant workers of any region and there is little potential employment. Politically volatile, the region contains a stubborn and entrenched right wing and a mass of jobless and landless people. The region is divided into two functional areas — one encompassing Ellisras, Thabazimbi, Waterberg and part of Warmbad and the other one is in Pietersburg.

### Assets

- ✓ The Pietersburg — Lebowakgomo complex has sufficient infrastructure to accommodate a regional government.
- ✓ There is capacity to carry out regional functions but developmental orienta-

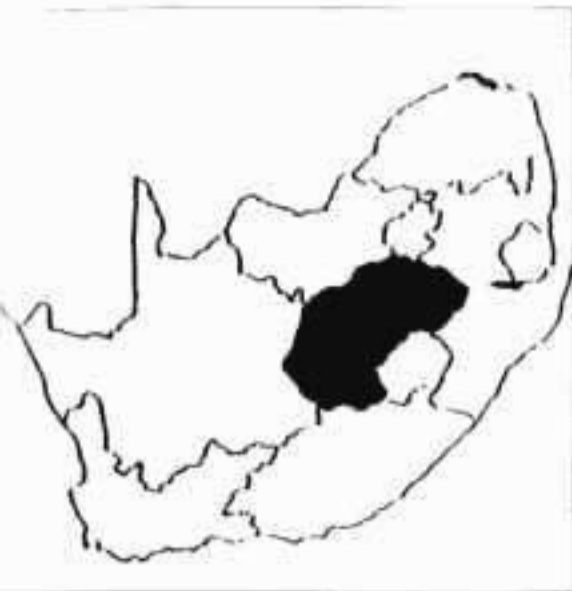
tion of the various administrations leave much to be desired.

- ✓ Road network density and provision of rural roads is at the national average.
- ✓ Potential for game farming and ecotourism in certain areas.

### Liabilities

- ✗ The region has the lowest doctor to population ratio in the country — 0.1/1000. Hospital bed to population ratio also low at 2.6/1000.
- ✗ Problematic incorporation and integration of three administrations.
- ✗ Rationalisation will almost certainly result in retrenchments and provide problems for incoming policy makers.
- ✗ 60% of the population does not have adequate water.





## Orange Free State

Bloemfontein is the major centre of economic activity. Other main centres are Welkom and Mafikeng. Mining provides the OFS its main economic base although the regional economy is diversified into important agricultural and service sectors. Major disparities exist within the province with very poor conditions in the bantustan sections and for farm workers. While there is well developed administrative and institutional capacity its developmental orientation remains dubious. The OFS will face problems reincorporating Thaba Nchu and Qwa Qwa.

### Assets

Well developed universities and training institutions.  
Road network density third highest

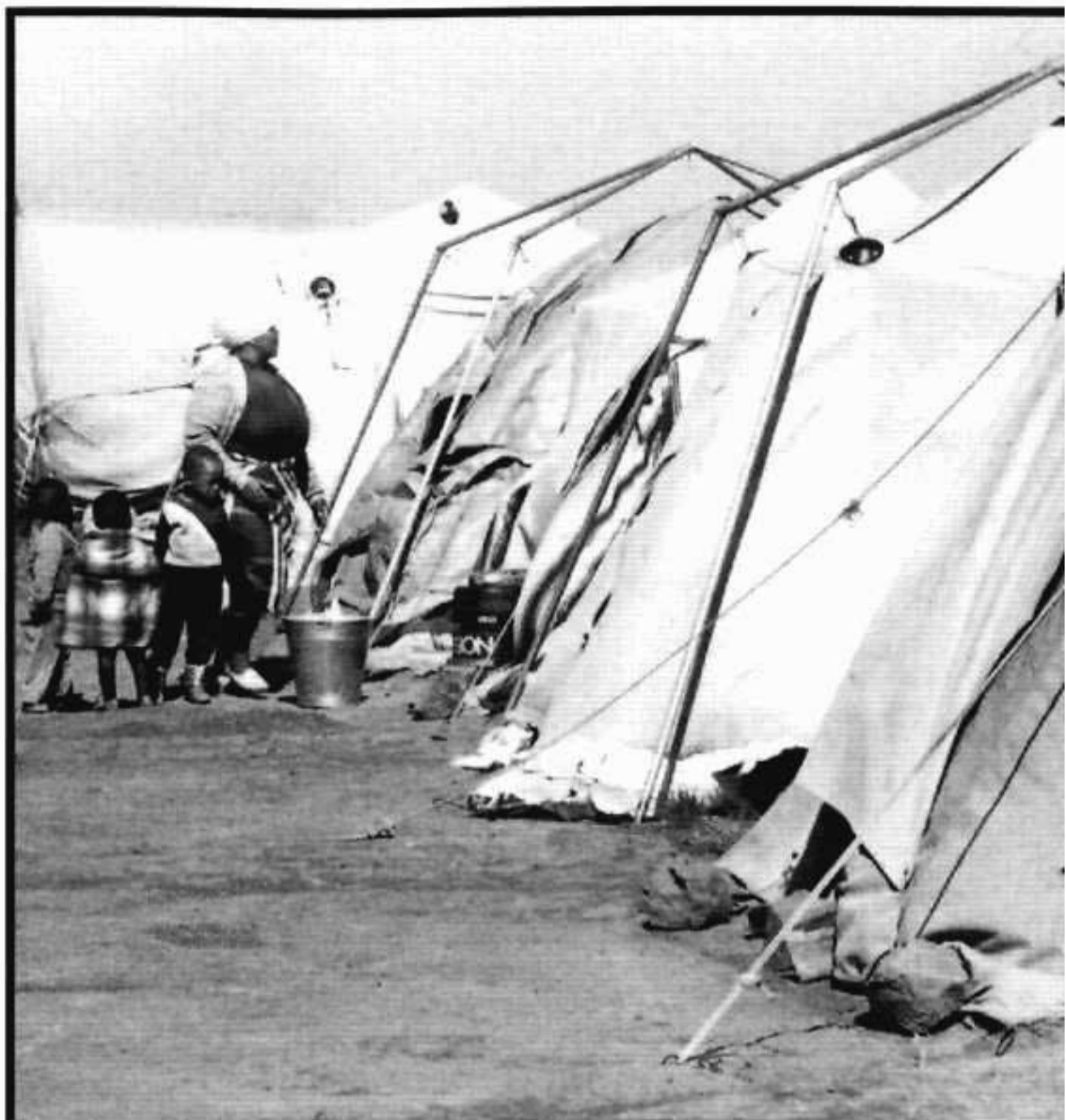
Over 70% of the population lacks adequate sanitation.  
Limited rural electricity.

### Facts and figures

Population	4525.3
Population density per sq.km	26.0
Urbanisation level (%)	8.8
Urbanisation growth (%)	3.6
Literacy	35.1
Official unemployment rate	17.0
Male migration outflow	37.1
Real GGP (Rmillion)	3786
Real annual growth GGP	4.3
% of SA GDP	3.1
Personal income/capita	725

### Language (%)

Southern Sotho	56.6
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in the country. (However poor links between the OFS and the North West reduces possibility of functionality between them).

### Liabilities

✘ Almost 20% of urban residents lack adequate water. In the rural areas the

figure is 40%.

✘ Over 42% of urban population has inadequate sanitation.

✘ Major unevenness in electricity supply. Population without electricity in Bloemfontein, rural towns, Qwa Qwa and Thaba Nchu ranges between 24%, 46% and 93% respectively.

### Facts and Figures

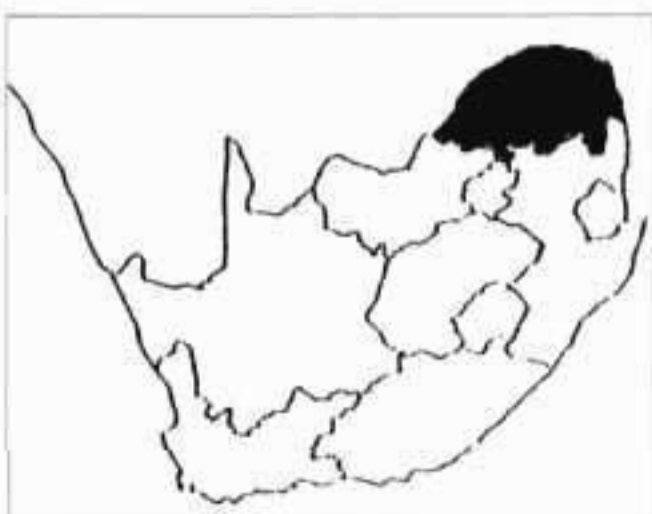
Population	2723.3
Population density per sq.km	21.2
Urbanisation level (%)	48.9
Urbanisation growth (%)	3.1
Literacy	19.8
Official unemployment rate	11.2
Male migrancy inflow	26.5
Real GGP (Rmillion)	7327.0
Real annual growth in GGP	0.6
% of SA GDP	6.1
Personal income/capita	2184.0

### Language

Tswana	7.0
South Sotho	58.1
Afrikaans	14.1
Other	20.8

### Racial breakdown (%)

Black	85.2
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Tsonga	23.1
Venda	11.5
Ndebele	3.4
Afrikaans	2.6
Tswana	1.5

### Racial breakdown (%)

Black	97.1
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# PWV

**Pretoria/**

**Witwatersrand/**

**Vaal**

**T**he PWV is the most densely populated region in the country. It is an integrated industrial complex with major areas of economic activity in five sub-regional areas — the Vaal Triangle, the East, West and Central Rand and Pretoria.

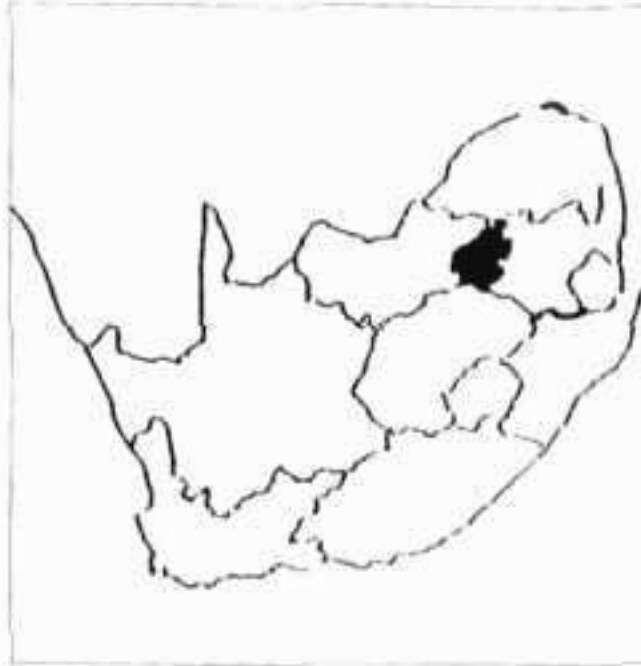
The Vaal Triangle has a strong manufacturing sector; the West Rand concentrates on primary mining while the Central Witwatersrand is dominated by the manufacturing and finance sectors with mining capital playing a major role.

The Pretoria sub-regional economy is dominated by government services, transport and related industries.

The region produces a massive 40% of GDP which is reflected in a GGP/capita that is 69% higher than the national average. Its contribution to the tax base is between 55-60% of the total national pool.

However, the economy is not growing rapidly and between 1977 and 1988 it had the second lowest real growth rate in the country.

It has the second highest official rate of urbanisation and the highest proportion of economically active people. Its economic magnetism make the



region the most socially mixed within the country. However, due to the inflow of migrant labour from poorer regions the number of men is much higher than the number of women.

Despite its economic muscle the region is weighed down with the massive problems created by segregationist planning.

This has resulted in huge informal settlements, bankrupt townships where services have long broken down and hostels which have become social and political flashpoints.

## Assets

- ✓ The national economic heartland.
- ✓ Substantial physical infrastructure including most dense major national road network.
- ✓ A number of universities, major academic hospitals and numerous training institutions.
- ✓ Significant NGO sector.

## Liabilities

- ✗ Sprawling, racially divided urban areas which will be difficult to integrate.
- ✗ Massive inequalities and substantial vested interests, violence.
- ✗ Reincorporation of sections of Bophuthatswana and KwaNdebele.
- ✗ In urban areas 15% of population lack access to adequate water while in the rural areas the figure rises to 30%.
- ✗ Over 25% of the population has inadequate sanitation. This goes up to 93% in parts of Bop and KwaNdebele.

## Facts and Figure

Population .....	9 267,2
Population density per sq.km ....	366,1
Urbanisation level(%) .....	82,4
Urbanisation growth(%) .....	3,7
Illiteracy .....	12,5
Official unemployment rate .....	13,5
Male migrancy inflow .....	35,8
Real GGP (R million) .....	47 100,0
Real annual growth in GGP .....	0,8
% of SA GDP .....	39,0
Personal income/capita .....	4 575,0

## Language (%)

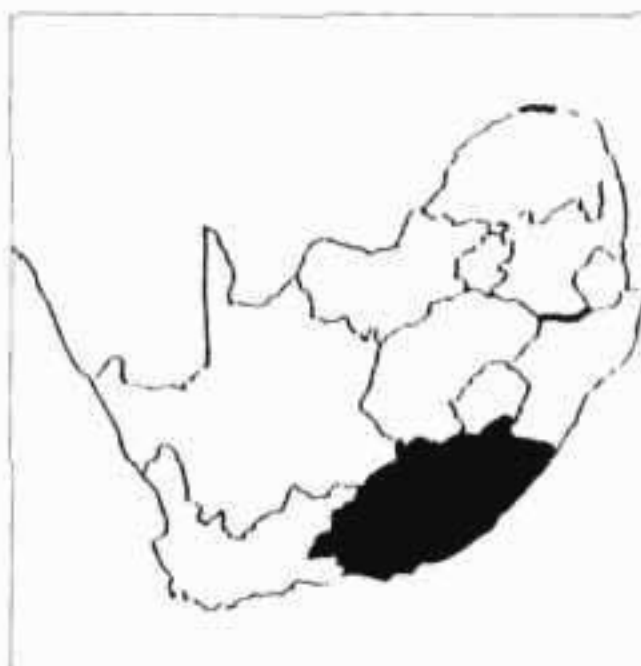
Afrikaans .....	17,5
Zulu .....	16,5
North Sotho .....	10,5
English .....	13,2
South Sotho .....	10,0

## Racial Breakdown(%)

Black .....	70,6
White .....	24,6

# Eastern Cape/Kei

**T**he region is currently fragmented into the Cape Province, Ciskei and Transkei. There are huge inequalities between the three parts. Rural rehabilitation and development will have to be central to future regional plans. Massive overcrowding, landlessness and environmental degradation which are direct results of the apartheid system will not vanish with a changed political system. The region must also grapple with other inappropriate developmental policies from the past. In order to disguise the political factions of Ciskei and Transkei the SA govern-



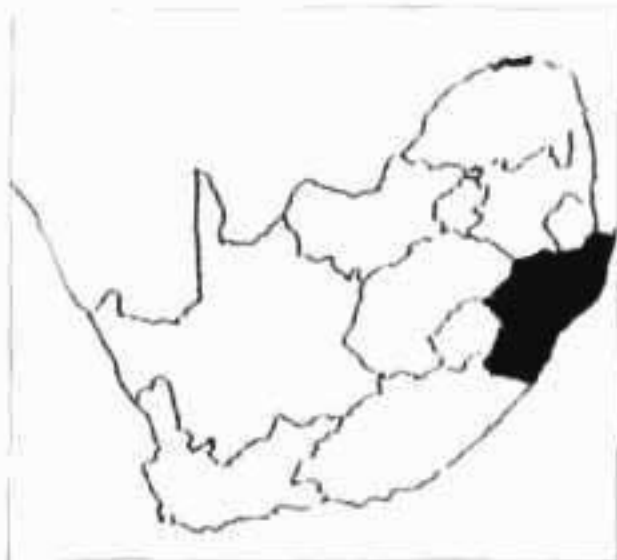
ment provided incentives to promote industrial development at designated growth points. These enterprises may not be sustainable in the long term. These problems have long lasting con-

sequences. While a new regional government is likely to come to power with a substantial popular majority it will be under major pressure to deliver quickly. Given the deep rooted problems it faces, and a limited resource base it will struggle to meet expectations.

## Assets

- ✓ Relatively substantial administrative capacity, albeit fragmented into homeland and provincial administrations.
- ✓ Administrative, executive and legislative institutions in Port Elizabeth, East London, Bisho and Umtata.
- ✓ Five universities. However these may require some rationalisation. Services and infrastructure in parts of the region are good.





## KwaZulu-Natal

**R**egional politics are extremely complex. Violent clashes between the ANC and IFP have been escalating since the mid 1980's. At the time of writing IFP's participation in the forthcoming elections is uncertain. If free political activity is constrained and percentage polls at the elections are significantly lower than the national average this could create the basis for a contested election result. Such a situation would fuel instability and stifle development.

There are threats of succession with the call by King Goodwill Zwelithini for the restoration of the pre 1838 Zulu Kingdom and at best the incorporation of KwaZulu will be highly problematic. A worst case scenario projects two contesting premiers and cabinets.

Although this region is home to 20% of South Africa's population it



only produces 14% of the GDP. Its GGP is 75% of the national average and in GGP/capita terms Natal is the third poorest after Northern Transvaal and Eastern Cape. There is a massive gap between the urban and rural areas. the region currently employs less than half the potential labour force in the formal economy resulting in a high level of migrancy to the PWV.

### Assets

- ✓ A diversified and relatively well developed economy with a strong manufacturing sector.
- ✓ Good natural resources — a water-rich region.
- ✓ Several universities, technikons and other training institutions.
- ✓ A modern transport sector and good infrastructure base (although unevenly

distributed — rural roads are below national average).

- ✓ Tourism growth potential.

### Liabilities

- ✗ Persistent political violence.
- ✗ Massive inequalities with poverty, landlessness and highly inadequate access to water, sanitation and electricity in rural areas and informal settlements.
- ✗ Rapid and badly managed urbanisation (1,8 million people in informal settlements).
- ✗ 0,5 doctors/1000 population, high infant mortality at 52/1000.
- ✗ Low education levels and high illiteracy.

### Facts and Figures

Population .....	7 590,2
Population density per sq.km .....	86,8
Urbanisation level(%) .....	39,4
Urbanisation growth(%) .....	2,0
Illiteracy .....	27,8
Official unemployment rate .....	18,8
Male migrancy outflow .....	-14,3
Real GGP (R million) .....	17 440,0
Real annual growth in GGP .....	1,9
% of SA GDP .....	14,4
Personal income/capital .....	971,0

### Language(%)

Zulu .....	83,0
English .....	15,8
Other .....	1,2

### Racial breakdown(%)

Black .....	80,0
Asian .....	11,1
White .....	7,5
Coloured .....	1,5

### Liabilities

- ✗ Economic base mainly in motor industry is relatively fragile. Huge inequalities within the region.
- ✗ Health indicators highlight the trends. 0.1 doctor/1000 — Transkei; 0.4 doctors/1000 — Ciskei; 0.7/1000 Cape province (0.6 doctors/1000 = national average)
- ✗ Major problems related to water sanitation (53% of people in Transkei don't have access to clean water).
- ✗ 84% urbanisation within Cape province implies overcrowding and poor housing and services in townships.

### Facts and Figures

Population .....	5953.0
Population density per sq.km .....	35.1

Urbanisation level (%) .....	35
Urbanisation growth (%) .....	3.1
Illiteracy .....	28.5
Official unemployment rate .....	24.8
Male migrancy outflow .....	29.4
Real GGP (Rmillion) .....	9017.0
Real annual growth in GGP .....	1.8
% of SA GDP .....	7.5
Personal income/capita .....	1360.0

### Language

Xhosa .....	82.9
Afrikaans .....	9.4
English .....	3.9
South Sotho .....	2.4

### Racial breakdown (%)

Black .....	87.2
Coloured .....	6.7
White .....	5.9



# Undoing Apartheid is going to cost us

**A**FTER THE ELECTION THE TVBC territories will be formally integrated into South Africa. Thousands who have suffered under corrupt homeland policies, are anxiously pinning their hope for a better future on this event. But the election is only the beginning of a long, hard road for these underdeveloped areas, writes Paul Daphne.

Contrary to current public perception the impending reincorporation of the homelands should be anticipated not as an event which will lead to instant savings for the taxpayer, but as a process which will lead to the more efficient utilisation of public resources, and an enhancement of the development prospects for these areas.

Decades of State policies have aimed at making homelands politically and economically independent.

This never happened. Only 9% of the budgets of the 'self governing' territories (SGTs), and 27 % of the TBVC budget, is generated from own sources of revenue. Even Bophuthatswana (which boasts an independent economy)

receives around 63% of its funding from direct budgetary aid, tax transfers, Customs Union payments, loans or other transfers from central government.

Departments providing essential services such as education, health and welfare, works and transport comprise the major portion of the total home-

lands budget allocation. Foreign Affairs, Information and others which are likely to vanish in future comprise less than 10% of the total.

Top civil service posts will be rationalised and this will achieve certain savings. Directors General in the Ciskei have an annual salary package of over R264 000. However, the overwhelming majority of the 440 000 civil servants currently in the 10 homelands will continue to function as, for example, teachers and health workers, within a restructured framework for provincial government.

After the election we will have nine new provinces which are far stronger and will have larger bureaucracies than is the case with the current provinces. So it is unlikely that regional restructuring or reincorporation will rationalise the civil service structure and yield a significant post-apartheid dividend.

## Financing the poor areas

It is no coincidence that, of the nine new provinces, those provinces with the largest homeland component namely Northern Transvaal, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu/Natal, are worst off in relation to economic and other indicators. State expenditure in the homelands has been lower on a per capita basis than in the rest of South Africa. The TVBCs had a state expenditure per capita of R1233 and R1400 in 1990/91 and 1991/92 respectively, compared to the R3085 and R3495 in the 'non-homeland' section of South Africa. So it can be anticipated that the future government will have to allocate much more than is presently the case for the provision of social services and the development of these areas.

The new government will also inherit an enormous homeland debt which stood at R14,3 billion on 31 August 1993. This debt consists partly of bank overdrafts, guaranteed by cen-

tral government.

The Transkei administration has been unapologetic about its use of these overdrafts, pointing to underfinancing by central government of essential services in the Transkei. Central government will have to accept responsibility for these debts, and their repayment and servicing will have to be included in policy formulation around the question of dealing with the national debt.

A further complicating feature of the reincorporation process is that the TBVCs have developed their own system of taxation under apartheid. In Ciskei, where companies have a choice of operating under the Regional Industrial Development Programme Incentives (RIDP) or under a zero tax rate, the harmonisation of taxation systems will probably lead to the further depletion of an already weak industrial base. Research conducted by the University of Fort Hare indicates that 106 of the 176 manufacturing concerns operating in Ciskei at the end of 1992 were operating on a tax-free basis. The consequences of a harmonisation of taxation will also be felt, although to a lesser extent, in Bophuthatswana and Transkei, where both personal taxation and company tax rates are lower than the rest of South Africa.

This uncertainty over the future of preferential tax arrangements in the homelands, will exacerbate an already unstable situation in the manufacturing sector, which has arisen as a result of recent changes to the RIDP. Under the new 'market friendly' RIDP, introduced in April 1991, the 'growth point' status of the designated industrial areas in the homelands and elsewhere no longer applies.

The new incentive package, which is production orientated rather than locality related, applies to all localities outside of the metropolitan areas, and there is no special treatment for homeland industrial sites, as was previously

**Possibly the greatest benefit that will emerge from the reintegration of the homelands, is the establishment of a rational framework for regional development planning**





the case. In Ciskei for example, 33% of the jobs in manufacturing industry were lost between late 1990 and late 1992.

### Development prospects

It is no wonder then that there is a prevailing nervousness in the homelands about whether the reincorporation of these areas is likely to lead to an improvement in their levels of service delivery or in their development prospects in general. The failure of this grand apartheid project in development terms is probably best illustrated by the fact that the 10 homelands produce only 7,6% of South Africa's GDP while containing around 42% of the South African population.

The new constitution contains for the first time a reference to regional disparities as one factor to be taken into account in the allocation of resources to

the new provinces from a national level. The provisions for the establishment of a Financial and Fiscal Commission, and the equitable allocation of resources to the poorer provinces, carry a degree of promise for the current homeland areas, and are a vast improvement over the previously arbitrary mechanisms for making such allocations.

Possibly the greatest benefit that will emerge from the reintegration of the homelands, is the establishment of a rational framework for regional development planning. The currently fragmented and distorted structure of regional government in South Africa has seriously hindered the development of the most impoverished areas of South Africa.

The restructuring of regional government will provide an administrative

and conceptual framework within which national multi-sectoral programmes for regional development can be reassessed. The ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme, for example, is currently being interpreted at a provincial level in relation to its implementation after the election. The new framework could also stimulate the activities of the regional development forums that have emerged in many parts of the country over the past few years.

Finally, the disparities within the new provinces, particularly in relation to homeland and non-homeland areas, are greater even than the disparities between provinces. It is important that similar provisions based on disparities within provinces, be put in place for the allocation of resources within the provinces. ■



# More than just serviced sites

by Kecia Rust

**T**he first component of an interim housing subsidy arrangement was agreed on 14 March 1994, by the National Housing Forum. This arrangement had been the subject of negotiations between the NHF and Department of National Housing for some time. As part of the overall, interim arrangements for housing, the subsidy policy marks the first practical step towards actually resolving the housing crisis that has crippled the housing industry and limited the poor's access to a decent standard of housing.

This interim subsidies arrangement replaces, from 15 March 1994, all existing state subsidy schemes. This includes the First Time Home Buyer's subsidy, which will be phased out, as the interim subsidies arrangement comes into effect. The new subsidy will be applied in a single, lump sum amount applicable to a wide range of tenure options and targeted to benefit the most poor, who are dependent on State assistance for access to a decent standard of housing. It is available to each household only once.

The subsidy will be provided both to individual households for application towards a single dwelling, and to approved projects. Individuals can apply for subsidies through any of the major banks, while project proposals will be submitted to the Regional Housing Board (RHB) for consideration. All applications will be evaluated against criteria agreed by the members of the NHF and the government.

People with serviced sites will become entitled to a supplementary amount; terms and conditions will be announced soon. The principle that a supplementary or retrospective subsidy can be granted, is also supported.

The interim subsidies arrangement is, however, only part of an overall strategy which includes the following integral parts:

- The subsidy scheme, which provides for both ownership and rental accommodation through a variety of tenure options.
- A mortgage indemnity insurance scheme, to provide access to mortgage loans for lower income families.
- The development of alternative retail lending capacity and wholesale funding for the low income lending sector.
- A consumer protection and education programme.

## Mortgage finance

The end user finance crisis is not just a subsidy issue. A R12 500 subsidy (see box for all subsidy levels) applied alone will give the recipient little more than a serviced site, with perhaps something left over for a sub-standard structure. It is therefore critical that the subsidy be applied hand in hand with mortgage finance. A person earning R3500 should be able, with a subsidy of R5000, to afford the bond for a house worth about R65 000. A subsidy arrangement applied in isolation, without the availability of mortgage and non-mortgage finance to the low-

income sector would be unacceptable.

For the very poor, who can't afford even a small home loan, state subsidised rental housing programmes will provide an alternative route to securing decent accommodation.

It must therefore constantly be remembered that despite its significance, the interim subsidy arrangement is really just the first step of a much larger programme. Many issues remain outstanding, and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. These include the basis on which subsidies will be made available for rental, hostels, traditional tenure, rural housing, and where appropriate, single individuals without dependents, as well as the mechanisms for the subsidisation of appropriate institutional forms of ownership. Negotiations around a Mortgage Indemnity Scheme are also incomplete, though much progress has been made. The administrative arrangements for the scheme will be constantly reviewed.

## Homes for all

The interim subsidies arrangement has been identified as interim so as not to pre-empt any longer term deliberations both within the NHF and in the post-elections Department of National Housing. Until policies are finalised, however, this scheme will work effectively towards at least beginning a long, strong push towards the provision of homes for all of South Africa's poor.

A "National Housing Summit" will be called after the elections, as soon as the other elements of a comprehensive National Housing Plan are in place, so that national consensus on the way forward can be established. ■

● *The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the NHF or of its members. This article has drawn heavily on NHF policy documents which are available to the public, from the NHF Secretariat]*

## SUBSIDY DETAILS

Beneficiary's Monthly Income	Subsidy
Up to R1 500	R12 500
R1 501-R2 500	R 9 500
R2 501-R3 500	R5 000



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# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Women's rights and the 1994 election



# Women at the crossroads

By Pat Horn

**W**e are at a crossroads. What we loosely call the women's movement is not an organised formation with structures able to make decisions about its direction. It is an organic mass made up of many women's organisations, coalitions and groupings — some of them inside other organisations — within which has evolved a broad thrust of struggle for women's rights in SA.

Within this amoebic mass, the women's wings of political organisations have played a key, sometimes leading role. But once those organisations take on their responsibilities in the government of national unity, their women's wings will be less likely to play such leading roles in the women's movement.

Repeatedly in the past 18 months, a broad spectrum of women and women's organisations have been expressing the need to build a strong women's movement to take the fight for women's rights into the new SA.

Presumably this entails a better structured women's movement which can take more self-conscious decisions about its direction.

The existing movement must surely form the basis for a more structured movement — because that is where the women are presently. But how does it transform itself?

The broadest formation that exists is the Women's National Coalition (WNC), which recently produced the Women's Charter. While the WNC represents an extremely wide cross-section of SA's women, it does not have the common purpose that enables it to

campaign effectively.

On the other hand, the individual organisations that are able to mount campaigns tend to represent narrow groupings among women.

Perhaps we will have to see the formation of a new membership-based grassroots women's organisation across political, cultural and religious divides, one that could take on a leading role in the broader women's movement. Then again, that option might be seen as too divisive bear fruit.

These are the sorts of choices that confront organised women today, as they try to transform the widespread call for a strong women's movement into a political reality.

In this special *Work in Progress* supplement, a wide range of activists and analysts take on this dilemma and the many other challenges that still separate South African

women from equality. They pin the parties down on polygamy; search for the 'gender gap'; propose ways to put rural women on the map; name the barriers that bar women from local government; reveal what's on the minds of South African women; and sketch the outlines of a strong women's movement.

Part of our challenge is to forge new alternatives that can envelop the many different realities we face. Debates like those in the pages following help us rise to that challenge.

■ Pat Horn is a long-standing union and women's activist based in Durban.



## WORK IN PROGRESS

**Head office: 9th Floor, Auckland House, 185 Smit Street, Braamfontein  
PO Box 32716, Braamfontein 2017  
Phone: (011) 403-1912  
Fax: (011) 403-2534**

**Cape Town office: PO Box 13309, Mowbray 7705  
Phone & fax: (021) 4483727**

Editor: Chris Vick  
Assistant Editor: Hein Marais  
Writers: Kerry Cullinan  
Mpho Mosimane

Administration: Thenjiwe Nhlapo

Distribution: Lawrence Ntsamai



# Crossing the line

When they teamed up at the multiparty negotiations, men dubbed them The Broomstick Brigade. But, asks **MARK GEVISSER**, when SA's new wave of female politicians sweep into Parliament, will they still stick together as women?

**W**HEN THE FEMALE REPRESENTATIVES at last year's Multiparty Negotiating Council joined forces to lobby for gender equity, some of their male colleagues began referring to them as The Broomstick Brigade.

"I found this fascinating," says Martheanne Finnemore, a Democratic Party negotiator, who heads her party's Eastern Cape list for the National Assembly.

"Housewives use broomsticks and so do witches; when they start applying the witch label to you, you know you're powerful."

A broom, she says, is the perfect metaphor "for sweeping away gender oppression". And nowhere, perhaps, will such a weapon be more necessary than SA's first democratically-elected parliament.

There have never been more than a handful of female law-makers in our history: the last tricameral parliament had a total of eight. Current National Party MP Sheila Camerer (13th on her party's PWV national list) says parliament has been a "boys' club"; an institution "wholly geared towards men."

## The Last Male Parliament

She cites the example of the parliamentary gym, "where you have to walk past open urinals to get to the showers. They just didn't think of women when they designed it". But, largely due to the ANC's quota system which reserves a third of ANC seats for women, parliament is set to lose its locker-room saltiness. The Last White Parliament was also the Last Male Parliament, and the forthcoming 400-member National

Assembly will have between 120 and 150 women sitting on its benches.

Those female MPs who persistently raise gender issues will no doubt be labelled shrill, obstructive and — that ultimate insult — divisive by some male colleagues. But many have been through these battles before in their respective parties.

Bridgette Mabandla (66th on the ANC's national list) believes "the ANC's male leadership is now firmly committed to gender equality as an essential component of reconstruction and development". ANC National Working Committee member Cheryl Carolus agrees with her, but believes "there's a window of opportunity for gender issues now".

"Suddenly," she says, "all the old men have woken up and realised that women are the majority in this country and that they need women's votes. It might be opportunism, but what the hell, we should make the most of it."

The high profile of gender issues in the election campaign is unprecedented. In early March the ANC struck out with a double-page print ad featuring an image of microphones attached to a mop, with the text: "Our plan will give women a much stronger voice." Quick as a flash, the NP hit back with an ad featuring its candidate Nana Masango with the slogan, "We women need more than just laws to protect us. We need a society that respects us."

## Time to stop fighting

But a look behind the scenes of this NP salvo shows up the difficulties of a cross-party women's lobby in parliament.

Listen to Masango, a maternity nurse and Mabopane businesswoman who, placed 16th on her party's PWV national list, has a fair chance of making it to parliament: "Yes, I think all laws discriminating against women must be scrapped, but the NP has done this already. Now women should stop fighting and go ahead and enjoy themselves. If a woman keeps on fighting she's





# Ten women who will make a difference in parliament

## **PATRICIA DE LILLE (PAC)**

As head of the PAC's negotiating team, she emerged as one of the most articulate female voices at the World Trade Centre. Her fiery rhetoric occasionally lands her in trouble, but on the whole she is one of the more considered members of the PAC team.



**DE LILLE**

## **MARTHEANNE FINNEMORE (DP)**

She rose to national prominence as a member of the DP's negotiating team and is very popular in her home-region of the Eastern Cape, where she heads the DP's national list. She's not shy about labelling herself as "aggressive".



**GOVENDER**

## **FRENE GINWALA (ANC)**

She must be credited for setting in place a women's movement in SA, with the establishment of the Womens' National Coalition. She also heads the ANC's Commission on the Emancipation of Women. She has become this country's foremost — and most articulate — spokesperson for women's rights.



**MTHINTSO**

## **PREGS GOVENDER (ANC)**

Still young (she is 33) she made her mark as project manager of the Women's National Coalition. An uncompromising but contemplative feminist and a former unionist, she now works on Cosatu's election commission.



**MANZINI**

## **BALEKA KGOSITSILE (ANC)**

Under her stewardship as secretary-general, the ANC Womens' League fought — and won — the battle for female representation in leadership structures of the ANC and at the multiparty negotiations. Her advocacy was also central to the integration of gender issues into her party's Reconstruction and Development Plan.



**CAMERER**

## **MAMLYDIA KOMPE (ANC)**

A field-worker for the Transvaal Rural Action Commit-

tee, she is a dogged and doughty fighter for the rights of rural women. Unlike many of her urban, educated colleagues, MamLydia actually hails from the constituency she represents, and holds immense respect among rural women.

## **MAVIVI MANZINI (ANC)**

With a masters degree in Womens' Studies she is one of the ANC's most impressive feminist intellectuals. Before joining the TEC's Subcouncil on the Status of Women, she worked at the Gender Project of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, doing important research into women and customary law.

## **THENJIWE MTHINTSO (ANC)**

An SACP stalwart, she was an MK commander in Botswana, and is the only woman on the Intelligence Subcouncil of the Transitional Executive Committee. Most impressive, she commanded respect — and adoration — among the thousands of unruly MK cadres in Uganda when she was Chief of Mission there between 1989 and 1991. As convenor of the SACP's gender secreteriat, she espouses socialist feminism.

## **DENE SMUTS (DP)**

The former editor of *Fair Lady* is an unlikely feminist: she is conservative on the abortion issue and firmly opposed to quotas. Nevertheless, she has been a tireless advocate for women's rights and was a founder of the National Women's Coalition.

## **NKOSAZANA ZUMA (ANC)**

A Natal-based medical doctor, she headed up the Womens' League in that province. She has moved into health policy, doing important research on Aids. She is tipped to be the next Minister of Health.

■ Compiled by Mark Gevisser



fighting her husband and her son. This feminist thing is going to drive men into the sea and, let's face it, we need men."

So strongly does Masango feel about this that she refused to put her name to the ad unless the word "fight" was removed from the copy. And so strongly does she feel about abortion that she sent a blaze of letters to newspapers after ANC PWV leader Tokyo Sexwale had publicly affirmed his party's pro-choice stance.

"This Tokyo," she says, "man as he is, soldier and macho, what does he know about abortion? They should get a woman to talk, a woman who knows about the pain of abortion, about how it destroys the body."

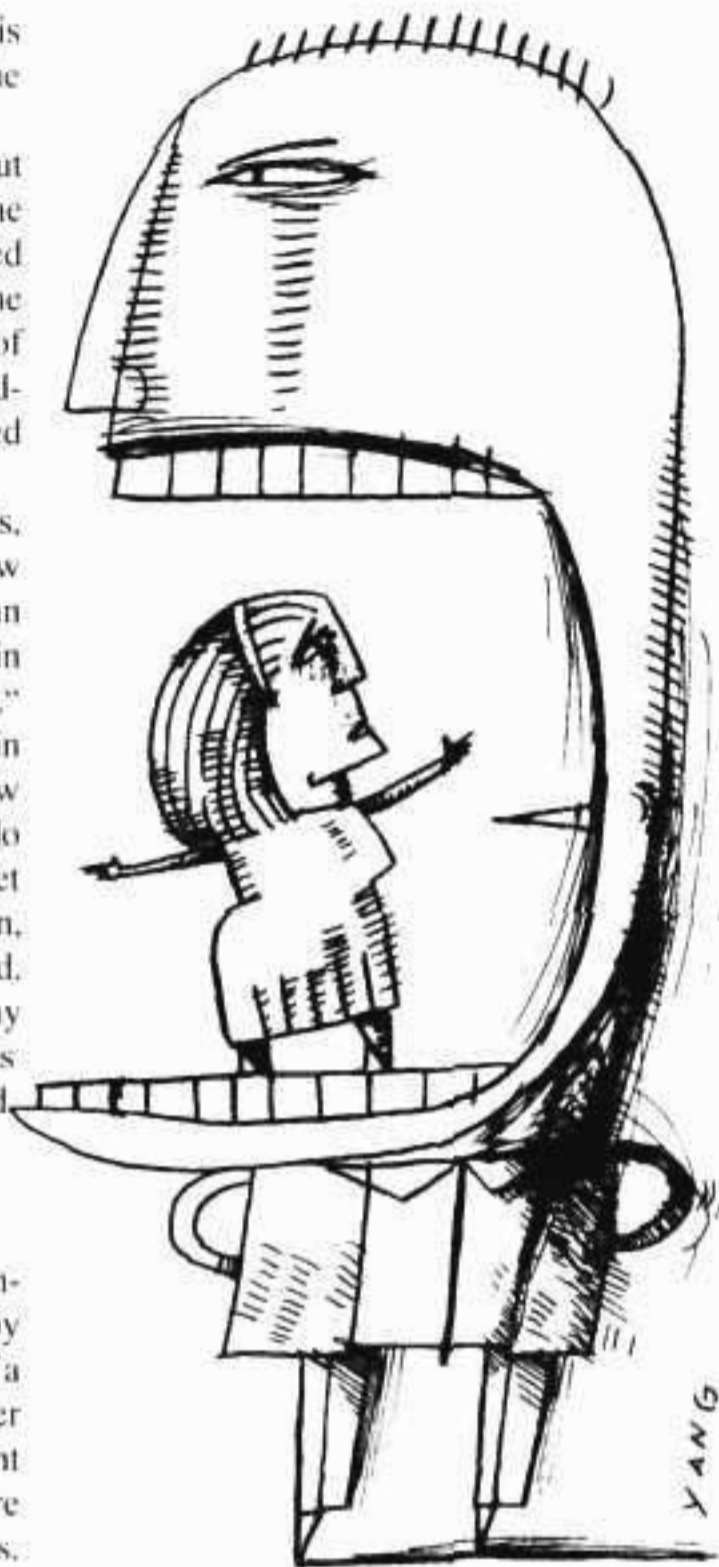
Masango says one of her main goals in parliament will be to scuttle abortion law reform. She'll be up against women who do know about the pain of botched backstreet abortions and who, for that very reason, will fight to have the procedure legalised. It's pretty hard to imagine Masango in any kind of coalition with feminist firebrands like Frene Ginwala, Baleka Kgositsile and Thenjiwe Mthintso.

### Split allegiances

Most female candidates — Masango included — look back on the womens' lobby at the negotiating council as something of a model for how women might work together in parliament. But Camerer makes the point that "our purpose at the World Trade Centre was to work together, to find consensus. Parliament, on the other hand, is an institution that is powered by confrontation. Caucusing will be more difficult".

Thenjiwe Mthintso, 33rd on the ANC's national list and convenor of the SA Communist Party's gender department, agrees, but for other reasons: "Our primary allegiances are to our political parties and their programmes. I'm going to parliament to raise the issues of the working class, and sometimes I have problems with this notion of sisterhood. I'd vote for a Chris Hani before I'd vote for a bourgeois woman any day."

In the negotiating process, female delegates sometimes broke with their parties to support issues that directly affected womens' rights. When the negotiating council seemed set to capitulate to traditional leaders and exempt customary law from the bill of rights' equality clause, an ad-hoc group of female delegates took up the cudgels — and won. It was the first effective display of female lobbying power this country has seen. The dispute put Stella Sigcau, an ANC member but a traditional leaders' delegate, in a difficult position. "I had to make a choice," she says. "At that point I



We have to take a deep breath, go into that existing power structure and transform it — PREGS GOVENDER

had to say that I was first a woman and then a traditional leader."

Sigcau, 17th on the ANC's national list and a former premier of the Transkei, credits the victory to the quota system that compelled every delegation to have one male and one female member. But Dene Smuts, third on the DP's national list, slams quotas: "When you send a person into public life under a quota system," she says, "you automatically send her in with a question hanging over her head about her competence."

Baleka Kgositsile, who was on the ANC negotiating team and is now 34th on its national candidates' list, felt the weight of that pressure: "The doors had been

reluctantly opened by force," she says, "and all sorts of subtle mechanisms were deployed to keep us in our place. You would go in and you would say to yourself, 'I'm here, but I'm sitting next to a leader and I'm not really empowered to say anything.'"

Still, she says, "our very presence there forced parties to seek and find women within their structures who were good and who could contribute. Of course that had significant impact in terms of preparing women for leadership positions."

Indeed, many of the women who cut their teeth in the negotiations process — like Kgositsile, Mthintso, Finnemore, the Natal Indian Congress' Ela Ghandi and the Pan Africanist Congress' Patricia de Lille — will be elected to next month's parliament.

Most of them are adamant, however, that they are not going in to parliament exclusively as representatives of women. Sankie Nkondo (84th on the ANC's national list) says she will be "moving in first as an ANC member elected to serve the broad interests of the ANC. Of course, because I'm a woman, I cannot avoid relating to womens' issues. And whatever desk I land up at, I'll have to make sure that women's questions are placed on the agenda". Like her, Mabandla will resist being ghettoized in a 'gender lobby': "We want to govern and make a difference. I wouldn't like to see female MPs focussing only on gender. Imagine the significance in this patriarchal country, for example, of a female Minister of Law and Order!"

### Feel the noise

We'll probably have to keep on imagining that. The truth is that women will have to fight hard to make their issues and voices heard in the din of the first democratic parliament.

At best, the NP will have 11 women in its 80-member caucus, and there will be three women in the DP's 20-member caucus. The PAC will probably only have one woman MP — De Lille. Even the ANC, with its one in three quota, has bunched most of the women in its first 100 names down near the bottom. The top of the ANC list remains a sea of testosterone.

The challenge facing women, concludes Pregs Govender (85th on the ANC list) "is how to deal with power. For those of us who are feminists, there has been the tradition of seeing the existing power structure as a corrupt one. There has been a desire to operate in different ways and resist it. Now we have to take a deep breath and go into that existing power structure and transform it." ■



# Building a women's movement

Voting into power people sensitive to women's issues is a first step. But it will take a strong, organised women's movement to hold even the most sympathetic government to its word, writes **NOZIZWE MADLALA**

**O**N THE EVE OF OUR FIRST NON-RACIAL election, South African women have broken their silence.

The fear of being marginalised even further helped spur women into united action. Though the Women's National Coalition (WNC), women from all walks of life — black and white, rich and poor, urban and rural — have joined in a campaign to draw up their demands.

Known as the "Women's Charter for Effective Equality", the document marks an important phase in the struggle for human liberation.

The Women's Charter is the result of a process where women collectively defined themselves and their needs. "It has empowered women to engage in the process of change; it is a product for the nation," Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi, chair of the SABC board, told the WNC conference that drafted the document in late February.

As we approach this historic change of government, all South Africans need to pause and consider what this change entails for women, especially black working class women.

The system of racial, class and gender domination has effectively marginalised the majority, excluding them from major decisions affecting their lives. In the workplace they are abused and exploited by their bosses. In the community they suffer political and social repression. In their homes they experience domination and violence from their male relatives — their husbands, partners, brothers and sons.

Voting into power people who will be sensitive to these issues is the first step towards addressing the problems. But, as shown in other countries, the right to vote does not automatically bring about women's emancipation and economic justice.



**FROM PROMISES TO PRACTICE: Women will have to fight for gender equality**

The struggle for emancipation depends on one key tool: *organisation*. The changes that are taking place in SA have come about as a result of sustained struggle and resistance by the oppressed. The Women's Charter itself is a product of struggle — waged over the years against removals, poor wages, detention without trial and violence against women. The clause on gender equality in the interim constitution is a victory won through struggle waged at the negotiations.

Through the charter, women are claiming their rights as full members of society. When more than 70 women's organisations two years ago committed themselves to work together despite their disparate origins, they were acknowledging the importance of legal recognition as a starting point in the struggle for emancipation. They understood that meaningful change in their

lives requires access to political power. This approach recognises that people's lives are shaped through political power.

## **The road is long**

The April elections are an important milestone in the struggle for our liberation in SA. But they will not coincide with women's emancipation and economic justice. Voting into power a government sympathetic to the needs of the majority is a starting point. A democratic, non-sexist constitution and bill of rights creates a favourable environment for the gender struggle. It does not in itself eliminate gender oppression.

One of the first challenges confronting the new government will be to translate the constitution into laws that address the legal, economic, political and social status of women.





**HARD AT WORK: Even if the law changes, sexist attitudes will remain**

The interim constitution provides for a "commission on gender equality". This commission should be part of a multi-prolonged strategy for effective equality. Its powers and functions will have to be very carefully worked out.

As part of the package, women's desks should be set up in all the government ministries to see to it that gender issues are integrated at every level. There is some controversy over the idea of a women's ministry. One of its key disadvantages is that it tends to be marginalised and under-resourced. A key function of these women's structures will be to conduct research, advise, lobby and monitor all aspects of government policy and programmes in order to make them gender sensitive. We can learn from other countries' experiences with similar bodies.

Monitoring the implementation of laws

and seeing to it that women are informed about their rights is another crucial task. The police, courts and judges must be sensitised to the issues of gender. These judicial structures should be easily accessible to women and be monitored to ensure that they are woman-friendly.

Women's rights must be popularised in broader society. We know that even when laws are changed, attitudes and practices persist which negate their very essence. In a country like ours, where male domination, racism and class exploitation have become intertwined and where culture and tradition have become tools of oppression, it is even more urgent to deal concertedly with oppressive social norms, attitudes and practices.

Most urgent, though, is for women to organise themselves into a strong mass-based women's movement. This, in my

view, is the key tool for transformation of society.

Although I talk of a movement, singular, there could be more than one. Movements form when organisations decide to operate around specific issues at points. The aim, obviously, is to use their collective strength to achieve specific goals. So when I talk of a mass-based women's movement I'm referring to a strategic popular alliance of women's organisations, united in action.

In our context, where race, class and gender domination has resulted in extreme poverty and disadvantage for the majority of women, it makes sense for working class women's organisations and rural women to come together in an alliance.

### **Collective power**

The alliance would be strategic, enabling the most disadvantaged to use their collective power to assert and win their demands. It would be strengthened by the participation of women from the more privileged classes, provided there is a clear understanding that leadership should be drawn from the disadvantaged themselves. There would have to be a clear understanding that black working class and rural women should be at the centre of such a movement.

For this to happen we must be sensitive to the effects of the years of subjugation endured by women. It means allowing women to speak in a language they feel comfortable in. It means holding meetings at times and venues that suit the majority of women. We know many women in SA cannot read and write. Many cannot attend meetings because they spend their time travelling long distances to fetch fuel and water, or commuting to work.

For a women's movement to be mass-based, it has to prioritise the issues that the majority of women feel strongly about. It must recognise that women are not a uniform species. They do not suffer oppression in the same way. While women can and should form alliances, it is important that differences be allowed to surface, rather than be brushed under the carpet in the interests of unity. For unity to be sustained, debate must be encouraged.

Cooperation does not mean women must shed their multiple identities. More importantly, in my view, women's unity will be enhanced if they are open and transparent about their political beliefs. There is no place here for hidden agendas. Women should face up to the reality that, for years, a few have enjoyed advantages while the majority have suffered disadvantages. We must be sensitive to the power relations that exist among us which implies also that



women should create space to enable the less-privileged to grow and gain confidence.

We must acknowledge that, where there is inequality, there will be tension and conflict. The unity we build must be based on a common understanding of the terms of our cooperation.

### First things first

What of the immediate future, the elections?

The challenge is to get women to the polls. When the majority have never voted, how do we make sure that all voters know their rights? That they realise their vote can make a difference?

Many organisations have been carrying out voter education. But more work needs to be done. There must be more emphasis on reaching women voters, workers on white farms and rural people. South African women have not been encouraged to participate in politics. Violence and fear have compounded this problem. For people to feel safe going to the polls, security must be stepped up. Women must be made to know that their vote counts, that it will be secret and that no-one has the right to prescribe to them what party to vote for.

When choosing their party, women should not only look at party election manifestos. What really matters is the party's track record on gender equality. We should ask how many women are on the party's list and how committed the party is to upholding women's interests.

A significant number of women in positions of power is an important step towards women's emancipation. But it is not a question of putting *any* women into those positions. It matters what kinds of women are chosen. They should be determined to stand up for the rights of all women; black and white, rich and poor, urban and rural, able-bodied and disabled. So I don't believe women should simply vote for women.

We should also remember that it matters where political power lies. In the government of national unity, the party with the most votes will have the biggest say in decisions on policies and social programmes. Women's interests will be best protected if women win the support of the most influential party in parliament. Voting for a party simply because it calls itself a women's party would, in my view, further marginalise women.

In our context I doubt whether a women's party can claim to represent the majority of women. We do not represent a uniform species.

Historically divided along lines of race



## A checklist for organising women

- **The key to asserting and achieving women's rights in SA is the extent to which women are organised**
- **Building a strong mass-based women's movement requires that we prioritise the issues that affect the majority**
- **Alliances must be created, but not on the basis of false unity**
- **They should acknowledge the different experiences and needs of women**
- **Space must be made for the most oppressed women to grow and develop leadership skills**
- **Women should be selective in deciding who to vote for**
- **Women committed to changing the plight of all women must be voted into positions of power**
- **But, having voted a sympathetic government into power, women will have to monitor it and make sure it sticks to its promises**

and class, we have diverse experiences and interests.

### When the 'easy' part is done

Having voted, women must ensure that their party honours its promises. Does it integrate women's demands into the new constitution, the bill of rights and legislation? Women should monitor parties' respective policies and programmes.

Within parliament, women must lobby for change in attitudes and practices that perpetuate male domination. This implies taking into account the different ways in which men and women have been socialised, as well as the additional responsibilities women carry, such as child-bearing and child care.

Whether inside or parliament, women must support one another. Those outside must try and bolster the efforts of women in parliament to represent our demands. So the women's movement must, while safeguarding its independence from government, make sure it wins the support of the government.

That will be determined, firstly, by how women use their vote and, secondly, by the strength and effectiveness of the women's movement.

We cannot assume that the government will automatically be sympathetic to our demands as women. In fact, we will have to apply our united power to make sure government heeds them.

### More than a wing & a prayer

And, to challenge the hegemony of white male domination most effectively, the women's movement must be mass-based; it must broaden its base by building alliances with other sectors of society.

By now it is clear that the kind of women's movement I am advocating is broader than women's wings of political parties or women's desks of non-governmental organisations. These wings and desks are important tools for influencing and monitoring policy decisions and practice within the organisation.

Gender desks have become a common feature in many organisations. But getting the organisations to prioritise gender issues is an ongoing, uphill battle.

To be effective in mixed organisations, women need the support of other women. And it is only a strong women's movement that can give women in mixed organisations the support they require, and bring about the kinds of change which effectively will transform their status and material conditions.

■ **Madlala is high up on the ANC's list for the national assembly**



# More is better

The bill of rights, a gender commission, a women's ministry — it all moves the struggle for women's rights forward. But success, writes **PANSY TLAKULA**, will ultimately depend on other, broader innovations

**S**OUTH AFRICA MOVES INTO A NEW ERA with a bill of rights that prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. In a few months there will be a ministry of women's affairs and a gender commission. We've seen the Women's National Coalition (WNC) adopt a Women's Charter for Effective Equality.

Are these measures enough to ensure that women's issues and concerns stay on the new government's agenda?

In my opinion, they lay a solid foundation for the achievement of gender equality. But there is an urgent need to translate them into reality.

Discrimination on the basis of gender is deeply embedded in our society. For centuries men have maintained control over women by appealing to tradition. These new constitutional and legal measures alone will not eradicate gender stereotypes and oppression in our society. Strategies must be devised to take forward this struggle within and outside parliament.

In doing this, though, we dare not lose sight of our realities. South African women are not monolithic. Our strategies should not ignore the many ways in which we relate to culture, race, class, sexuality and history. Eliminating practices that oppress women require that strategies which respond to the needs of women in *diverse* cultural settings. If we fail to remember this, for instance, we risk weakening women's desires and capacities to forge a strong women's movement.

For change to meaningful, women's rights must be integrated fully into the government's development programme. There is a

perception that these rights are not of major public concern, that they do not rank high among the new government's priorities. Women who take up positions in parliament will have to keep gender equality on the agenda. They must ensure that the promotion of women's rights remains central to the human rights agenda of the new government.

## Reach out

The interim constitution calls for the establishment of a "commission on gender equality" which it tasks with promoting gender equality by monitoring and recommending legislation that affects the status of women. It will function most effectively if it cooperates and collaborates with other structures committed to promoting women's rights.

The commission's most important task will be to ensure that all laws which discriminate against women are repealed. It also will have to guarantee that all laws passed by parliament comply not only with the new constitution's provisions protect-

ing women, but with standards set out in relevant international instruments like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Hopefully, the new government will ratify that convention without delay.

To achieve its goals, the commission will need to formulate and influence government policy on women's rights by, for instance, soliciting the support and commitment of other government departments.

Also, the commission is more likely to formulate sound policy

on women's issues if there is thorough monitoring and analysis of women's status and constant pressure to safeguard women's rights. This presumes consultation and liaison with a wide range of women's groups and community organisations.

There is therefore an urgent need to build a strong women's movement which, as a source of support and pressure, can enable women to struggle more effectively for their rights.

I realise that forming a women's movement will not be easy, especially in view of the political diversity among women. But these problems are not insurmountable.

A women's movement should be entrusted with advocacy and lobbying work on-the-ground. Leaving these tasks to the women's wing of a particular political organisation will, in my opinion, not be appropriate. The movement should not be attached to any one political party. It will be counter-productive if women's rights policies become a partisan political issue. To be effective, the movement should be as inclusive as possible, representing women across the political, social, economic, racial and sexual spectra.

This movement should involve a wide range of women who are rooted in their communities. Appropriate programmes and strategies will have to be implemented at those levels to protect rural and disadvantaged women against gender discrimination.

A women's movement will need to monitor and review continuously a very wide range of matters relating to women's rights. But it will only achieve its goals through cooperating with the government, non-governmental organisations, community-based structures and other agencies committed to the advancement of women.

The women of SA have a mammoth task ahead of them. But with commitment, imagination and perseverance we will surely succeed!

■ **Tlakula is deputy director and education officer at the Black Lawyers' Association**



**BANGING THE DRUM:** Agitating for change is part of the struggle



# Feminists fighting from the fringe

'Women's rights' are on just about every politician's lips these days. But, warns **MIKKI VAN ZYL**, women's struggles are still faced with many 'no-go areas', with issues that are deemed to be 'nobody's business'. And it's from the fringes that they can be tackled best

**T**HROUGH HARD-FOUGHT STRUGGLES THE women's movement has earned itself political legitimacy and placed crucial gender issues on the agenda.

But many vital questions are still treated as political hot potatoes. Struggles that focus on gender relations like marriage and sexuality are accused instantly of interfering in personal zones or importing colonialist ideas.

No surprise then, that these struggles typically are fought on the fringes of the political arena, as they vie for legitimate political space.

## The personal is political

It is easy to understand why definitions of politics avoid interpersonal relationships: to democratise marriages and respect women's sexual and reproductive rights over their bodies, require fundamental changes in our value systems.

Political movements rarely mushroom from the grassroots overnight. They tend to emerge as small groups of people tease out an understanding of the social relations which bind them into everyday life. By naming the double standards which operate between different groups, the underlying values are exposed. In this way people's personal experiences become politicised.

Early feminist activism defined the personal as political, overcoming patriarchal definitions of politics which were focused on militarism, formal government and the economy. By insisting that interpersonal relationships were also social institutions, feminists highlighted private life as part of the political realm.

It took the Violence Against Women Movement here more than a decade to win political recognition. Spokespeople for the progressive political movements insisted



**ALL CHANGE:** Mass action has won legitimacy for debate on women's personal safety. Gay struggles have had some success, but still have to work at challenging prejudices



that it was not a political issue, that it did not affect grassroots women. Yet ordinary women from different communities, who mostly would not define themselves as 'political', voiced these needs repeatedly: "Stop rape! Stop our men from hitting us! Stop child sexual abuse!"

Eventually "politically correct" women's organisations had to listen. Women's alliances on a *feminist* issue were formed across race and class barriers. Now, in a number of countries special laws have been enacted to protect women from this violence.

A double standard for women's and men's sexual behaviour was exposed in different cultural groups, and "private" relations such as marriages became a focal point for political struggle.

### **Til death us do part**

The process of naming and defining one's oppression is an integral part of any political struggle. By enduring and accepting conditions of oppression for a long time, we tend to adopt the dominant values, and collude in our own oppression. A significant victory lies in a redefinition of identities: who are we, and how do we want to fit into the world?

Any person's social status is deeply linked to identity: as a woman I become locked into social relations where others are likely to respond to me as a "mother", "whore", "wife", "housewife", "spinster" or "widow". They will judge me according to their underlying expectations about these 'sorts' of women.

These values seep into our everyday lives, affecting our formal and informal relations. They are often tied to appearance. If you have breasts you're not able to make important decisions; if you are dark-skinned, you must be stupid. Such pseudo-scientific differences become the "formal" basis of much discrimination.

Marital status is central to defining women's social, political and economic standing. Whether urban or rural, white or black, most women's access to land and resources is mediated through men, and the most common mechanism is marriage — whether under civil law or customary law.

While many people on the gender bandwagon criticise African customary marriages, they remain blind to the patriarchal assumptions in Western custom. On the other hand, many African men will assume that they can speak for women in defending African marriage traditions. They accuse



dissenting African women of being hoodwinked by white feminists. In this way, alliances between women can be conveniently minimised in the crossfire of racist and colonialist rhetoric.

Despite loud protests from traditional leaders (men), rural women successfully are challenging polygamy in customary law, by focusing especially on their rights to land and inheritance.

By highlighting the contradiction between the gender equality clause in the Bill of Rights and traditional practices, they have shown up a fundamental double standard around gender in the rhetoric of democracy.

### **It's my body**

It's only during the last century that women's fight for the right to control their own bodies has been acknowledged. Until recently, rape laws protected a man's property — his wife — from being despoiled by another. Rape in marriage was first outlawed internationally barely 15 years ago, and only last year in South Africa. A man can now no longer assume he has sexual access to his wife without her consent.

Even though a woman may have some rights over her sexuality, we are just starting the struggle to control our own fertility. The prospect of entrusting women with the right to decide what to do about unwanted pregnancies, triggers hysterical reactions. If it weren't for a few tenacious feminists the issue would long ago have been successfully booted from the political arena.

Inevitably there are a number of issues

in SA which are still battling for political legitimacy. Many of them concern gender relations. By denying legitimacy to certain struggles, we absolve social institutions from addressing the issues. This helps keep intact the existing, discriminatory system of values.

For instance, struggles for lesbian/gay rights are labelled as threats to the social fabric — attacks on the moral or traditional order. Therefore these battles are waged through channels of civil society like churches, popular culture and the media. The dominant images of family life in our society render homosexual identity 'morally deviant'.

One of the aims of the lesbian and gay struggle is to challenge these prejudices by creating positive identities, in the style of black consciousness and feminist consciousness-raising. As a minority group they

need strong alliances to enable them to change society's homophobic attitudes. A major success was to get a protective clause into the bill of rights; in fact, SA is the first African country to adopt an officially democratic stance on lesbian and gay rights.

### **Identity crises**

But struggles of identity can be messy. Who defines the group and its interests? Often there is an assumption that a group is uniform. Black men may feel entitled to speak for black women, and gay men for lesbians. Many contradictions could be buried in the underlying social organisation of the group.

This explains the many contending struggles that are happening simultaneously within and amongst an identified group such as women.

Different struggles find themselves at loggerheads, and issues are in different stages of achieving broader legitimacy. Some are already being fought in the political arena; others are still being disputed on moral grounds.

In the process of struggling for women's rights, issues are undoubtedly redefined. Each political struggle has its season, and as one gains ascendancy, it may be used as a weapon to discredit another. In the competition for relevance and legitimacy, political discourses play into these contradictions.

The challenge for the women's movement is to identify these gender contradictions — this "unevenness" — and prevent them from dividing women. ■



# Out of sight

It's in rural areas that most black women live and work — and where they find themselves most marginalised, most forgotten. **SUE WIXLEY** set off to see how parties are faring in the bundus and what reception rural women's demands are getting

**T**HE CHANT, "ONE WOMAN, ONE MAN — one husband, one wife," has become a popular way to end voter education workshops in rural parts of the Transvaal.

The refrain highlights the thorny issue of polygamy - which rural women groups want to see addressed after the elections. Thus far, though, even the parties campaigning fiercely for the rural vote are steering clear of it.

There are so many differences between and within communities that it is difficult to talk about "rural women" in a general sense. Yet, there's no avoiding the fact that several common issues face women and their organisations in rural areas.

## Reaching out

The most active campaigning in rural areas is being done by the ANC, which has also identified women's rights as one of the main election issues (along with education, housing and jobs).

But despite the ANC's slick newspaper ads publicising their plan to improve the lives of women by "guaranteeing women the right to home and land ownership", their American-style roadshow has not been adapted for rural women. Their "peoples' forums" — aimed at stimulating grassroots participation — do not reach women who are traditionally left at home while their men make the decisions under the *kgotla* tree.

"Very little is really happening ... no political party is really taking the initiative to organise rural women and show them how to vote. We've heard about a mobile education van; we haven't seen it," says MamLydia Kompe, a rural activist and founding member of the Rural Women's Movement. She is also an ANC candidate for the national parliament.

Access to education forums is a crucial issue because women traditionally have played a minimal role in community meet-



PHOTO: PAUL WEINBERG

**STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS: The Community Land Conference agreed: 'We must work for 50/50 representation of men and women'**



ings, whether they are *kgotlas* or local committees. Their participation is limited either by formal prohibitions or by sheer male domination. Their excessive work burden — including collecting firewood and water, childcare and “men’s work”, like tending livestock — seldom leaves women with any time to attend workshops or meetings.

Even if a woman is willing and able to participate, the chief retains a power of veto: if he does not give the go ahead for voter education, it does not happen. “It is a disgrace that political parties have done nothing to stop this,” says Kompe.

Another complicating factor is illiteracy: “We are talking about women who can’t read and write and people who have never been exposed to these things,” says Kompe. “Women don’t know the parties, they don’t know the ANC ... they only know Mr Mandela. And they don’t know the NP, they only know Mr De Klerk.”

“It is not in their interests to vote for the CP, but (in mock votes) many are putting their cross next to the CP’s name,” she adds.

These women have not been able to follow the processes leading up to the elections and are unfamiliar with structures like the Transitional Executive Council and the Government of National Unity and concepts like proportional representation. Voter educators find themselves hard-pressed to convince women who have experienced homeland elections that the April 27 vote will be different.

### **Making their mark**

“It is difficult to break down the barrier between men who see they have the right to ask the questions and women who feel they have to take a backseat in politics,” comments Gill de Vlieg, national coordinator of Black Sash’s voter programmes.

The Black Sash has trained women from the Rural Women’s Movement — the only community-based organisation tackling issues of land, gender and development both nationally and locally — to run voter education programmes in their communities.

The fact that the trainers are women drawn from local communities encourages other women to take part in the education programmes. It has also brought difficulties of its own.

Most of the women who run the workshops are semi-illiterate and on some occasions men, from the local civic for example, take over the resource materials and begin running the workshops themselves. Their attitude seems to be: “You are women, how can you teach us?”

## **Living in darkness**

**‘Women are like washing lines: they carry the load, almost every load.’ — Regina Ntongana, Surplus People Project**

- **Rural South Africans make up almost 50% of voters**
- **At least 60% of them are women**
- **Only one in seven people in rural areas has access to proper sanitation**
- **Less than half the rural population has access to safe water, with women shouldering the burden of collecting the water for drinking, cooking, washing and sanitation**
- **At least 64% of South African households do not have access to electricity — the vast majority of them live in rural areas**

The men tend to dominate proceedings, even when women are in the majority, as a recent experience of Kompe’s shows: “We were having our workshop under the tree. We were mainly women. Then a small group of young guys came to disrupt. They asked irrelevant questions and they wanted to know about monitoring, because it involves money and jobs. They didn’t want to give us space.”

One way of solving this problem is to run separate workshops for women: “Women in rural areas don’t have the chance to discuss their problems all together. They only discuss them in small groups when they are collecting the firewood or fetching water from the river,” explains Kompe. “So we ask the men to excuse us. And this opens the road for women to say what they want.”

In their workshops, trainers concentrate on dispelling the widespread fears about the process of voting, by staging voting exercises.

“The workshop begins with a short play dialogue between two women people can identify with and this breaks the ice,” says De Vlieg.

“We speak a lot about intimidation — not only about political intimidation but intimidation of women by men. We emphasise that women must vote for whoever they

want, not just who their husband, father, uncle or brother tells them.”

These educators suggest that women adopt the line of least resistance: agree to vote the way their intimidators suggest and then go and vote for their own choice.

Some voting problems are shared by women and men alike, for example the harassment of voter education workshops in Bophuthatswana. Men and women working on farms are being left behind as farmers resist the electoral process. On top of this, admits Dave Husy of the Farmworkers’ Research and Resource Project, “organisations have not done enough education aimed specifically at farm workers, partly because of the geographical isolation of farm labourers.”

### **Make a plan**

It is difficult to gauge how well-prepared women in rural areas are for the election, says De Vlieg. “There is a great variance in interest and confidence of voters between the regions, which is partly due to the patchiness of voter education.”

But Barry Gilder of Matla Trust and the Independent Forum For Voter Education is more positive: “The feeling is that women in the rural areas are going to vote, although the statistics for women voters are slightly lower than for men.”

“I think the way the election is being organised will help women ... the fact that there will be a public holiday, that the elections will take place over two days and that stations won’t be further than 10km away, will help people get to the polls, Gilder adds. “By stressing in our programmes that women should vote, we’re hoping they’ll make a plan.”

### **And after the election?**

But, even if we see a strong turnout of rural women at the polls, the question remains whether a new government will take their concerns seriously.

Two documents spell out an ANC-led government’s stance on women’s issues: the Interim Constitution and the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) of the ANC alliance.

The Interim Constitution does not deal separately with rural or land issues but contains a number of clauses which will affect rural women directly: the property rights clause, the restitution clause and the equality clause.

The sections that deal with property rights and the restitution of land have been rejected by representatives of rural and landless communities. They predict that the



## The Battle of Bloemfontein

Rural women fought the battle of the sexes and came out winning at the landmark Community Land Conference held in Bloemfontein in mid-February.

Unquestionably the fieriest debates at the conference were those that tackled polygamy.

The conference shot down a demand for an end to polygamy, along with a call to abandon the tradition that a woman is "inherited" by her brother-in-law when her husband dies.

But delegates went on to accept radical demands which could imply the demise of these traditions.

Once the women's commission had made its report, the first shot had been fired. Then, Pat Shangase stood up: "We will never agree with what the women are saying. There must be a choice (between polygamy and monogamy)."

Then it was the women's turn. They spoke of their suffering in polygamous unions. "We have understood how men oppress us as women. When you marry as the first wife you become your husband's mother," said Maggie Matlala.

The argument for keeping the tradition of marrying one's late husband's brother was brought home by Milton Ncube: "Women should know that as Zulus we pay 11 cattle for a wife. That's why a person should be inherited by her husband's brother."

Then, Mike Kalipa made his plea: "We are going into a new SA. And we are saying we are going to be equal. Let us not exploit women."

Still, the two most controversial demands were shelved.

Significantly there were no voices of opposition from the men in regions such as the Transvaal where (through the Rural Womens' Movement) women have become a force to be reckoned with.

MamLydia Kompe, who was sitting in the Transvaal delegation, describes how the men in their delegation were told to "sit down and shut up" because they had already had a chance to raise their problems in regional and community meetings.

### *An inspiration for women*

The conference agreed, among other things, that women should be able to own land whether they are married or single, that they should have equal representation with men on local government and that they should be the main recipients of development programmes and training.

Although not all the women's demands were passed, the debates provided inspiration for women's organisation. For the first time rural women were able to issue their demands and argue them at the national level. It's a remarkable achievement, especially given the many factors that restrict their participation.

Michelle Friedman, gender coordinator of the National Land Committee which convened the conference, offers a few pointers about what was done to ensure this positive outcome for women:

- At local meetings women's groups had the chance to meet on their own.
- Communities were asked to choose one woman and one man to represent them.
- Childcare was provided at the conference.
- Regional reports in the plenary were presented by one woman and one man.
- A separate commission was held for women at the conference.
- The need for translation (which greatly affects women) was dealt with.



clauses will, among other things, render land reform too expensive to be carried out in any meaningful way.

Communities want the clauses scrapped or radically changed, and what they see as constitutional right to restitution and land reform recognised.

Thanks to a last minute agreement at the multiparty negotiations last year, women now have full legal status and will have access to land in their own right. Traditionally they have been denied independent rights to land, and were eligible only for allocation through men — either their husbands or sons.

The debate at the World Trade Centre negotiations was revealing in itself. On the one hand, traditional leaders demanded that constitutional recognition of custom and

traditional law should go unchallenged, despite the gender inequality it entrenched. Organised women's groups insisted that gender equality should override customary law and culture in the bill of rights.

Women's opposition to the clause was well-organised, involving groups like the Rural Womens' Movement and a women's caucus from all political parties. It argued its case soundly, and women won the

day.

The ANC's RDP offers a blueprint for future development programmes to address the socio-economic problems faced by women in the rural areas.

"It calls for the establishment of electrification programmes, water and sanitation projects and health facilities in rural areas — all of which will go a long way towards alleviating the burdens shouldered by women. The programme also identifies women as the beneficiaries of government support services and the need for "good representation on local government".

How — and whether — these plans will be seen the light of day, though, is another matter. If the experience at the multiparty negotiations is anything to go by, women will have to keep up the pressure to make sure their concerns don't go onto the backburner.

According to Kompe, that's just what they plan to do.

"We're giving the new government five years.

"If they don't deal with our issues they mustn't even bother to campaign again," she says. "We will be out protesting about our issues." ■



# Changing the country

Rural women count among the most oppressed — and ignored — sectors in our society. Changing this requires that their presence is felt and their demands are heeded. But how? **MAMLYDIA KOMPE** has a few ideas

**R**URAL WOMEN LACK THE FACILITIES AND conveniences of their urban sisters. Their access to land is limited and can usually only be gained through marriage. Traditional law severely limits their rights. In many villages they are prevented from participating in traditional decision-making.

The election brings new hopes for change. But rural women cannot assume they will gain political, economic and social rights after the vote. That will require political pressure, both now and beyond April 27. The question is: How can this be achieved?

If the new government is serious about improving women's lives, it must be committed to addressing living conditions in

rural areas.

This means rural women's issues and concerns must be put and made to stay on the political agenda. Politicians must be made aware of these women's needs and they must prioritise them. This can only happen if politicians are exposed to the issues and to constant pressure.

So it is vital that rural women are elected into positions that enable them to address the needs of their constituency — nationally, regionally and locally. These women should come from strong grassroots organisations, to which they are answerable.

Along with pushing for women to be elected into government, we need to ensure that we maintain strong pressure on politicians so that they are always aware of the issues and problems rural women face. The voices of rural women must be heard and understood by politicians, other interest groups, the media and the public at large.

Rural women can organise around several key matters. Many of them fundamentally affect women's lives: access to clean water, the lack of health care and educational facilities, and more. Indeed, the issues that confront rural women around the country are so similar that rural women's organisations can unite women relatively easily from all over the country.

*Lack of resources:* Health care facilities, water, education and land are sorely lacking. Daily, rural women's lives are affected for the worse by the absence of resources necessary to maintain the household and family.

Water and fuel must be fetched and carried great dis-

tances — tasks which can take most of the day. Not owning land means that women cannot keep their own cattle or grow their own crops. They also have no independent access to financial backing.

Lack of education limits their options in all respects, making them dependent on husbands or on more educated people — like state officials who often turn out to be corrupt. (Women's ages, for instance, are often reduced by officials who issue ID books so that their eligibility for a pension is postponed.)

*Customary laws and tradition:* Women are treated as minors. They have no say in the home, yet they carry full responsibility there — particularly while their husbands are away as migrant labourers. As a result, they tend to have low self-esteem and feel inferior to men.

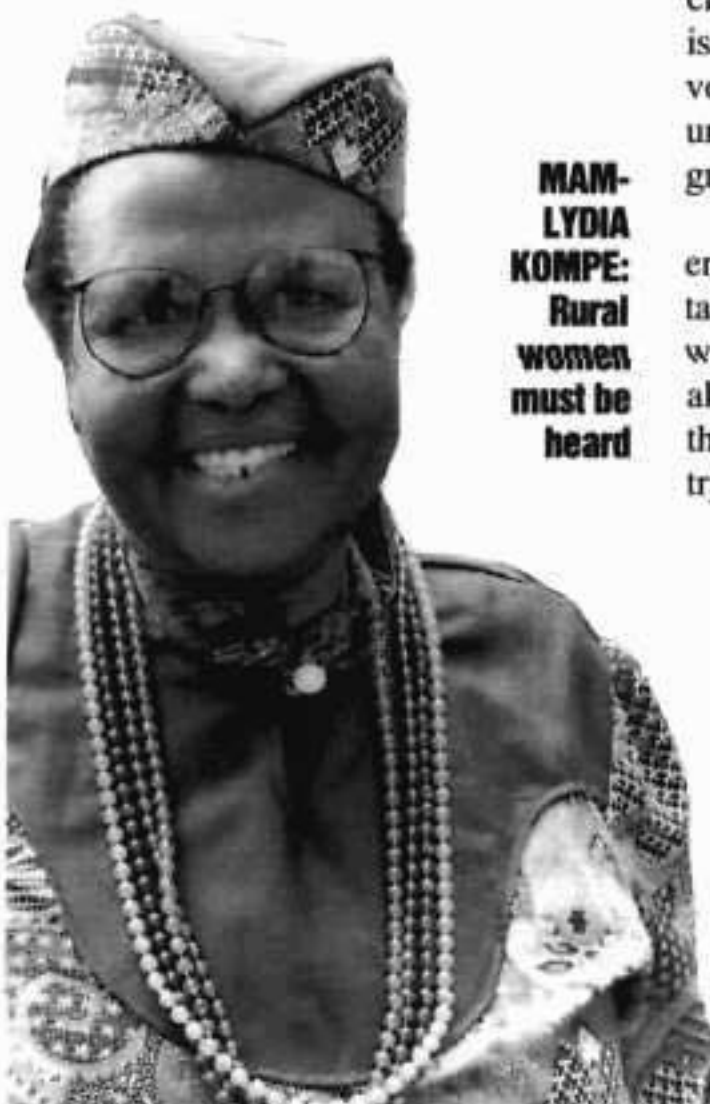
They cannot sell a goat, let alone a cow, without the husbands' permission. Often they are victims of battery, but they don't have places to go to when such problems arise.

Polygamy is a major problem, with men often having several wives in both rural and urban areas. Women know that there are insufficient resources to support more than one wife. But they feel unable to escape their marriages, because it would mean surrendering their access to land or a house.

The fact that customary marriage does not have the same legal weight as civil marriage leaves women married under customary law with very few rights. They simply can be kicked out of the home when the husband brings home a new civil-law wife.

Chiefs often dictate to women and demand their free labour. Under customary law, a woman has no right to choose the

**MAM-  
LYDIA  
KOMPE:  
Rural  
women  
must be  
heard**





man she wants to live with after her husband's death. She has to live with the husband's brother, who treats her as a possession.

And migrant labour requires that women have to fend for themselves, the children and the elderly. Rural women's husbands might desert them for an urban woman, leaving them as breadwinners of a family but with very little ability to earn money.

Despite these common concerns, it is often very difficult for rural women to become organised. Because of the patriarchal system they live under, they do not have the experience in talking publicly or forming structures. Organising usually takes quite some time and starts quietly, often "disguised" as a burial society and the like.

### Departure points

There are a number of ways for rural women to exert political pressure and push for improved conditions. Already they have staged marches around issues like health care facilities and water supplies. Authorities have been forced to take women seriously. Women have shown they have power.

In many areas women's groups have established contacts with local civic associations in an effort to earn greater recognition. Sometimes this has led to their concerns being heeded.

Networking with other structures (locally and further away) has also earned stronger recognition. The forging of strong links with youth groups has proved successful also. Often these groups share the views of women's groups on issues like polygamy.

However, these sorts of successes are not necessarily the general rule — many groups still feel threatened by organised women's groups and tend to resist them.

But through experiences such as these, rural women have gained the confidence to take up leadership positions at national and local levels.

It is important that women should go into government where they can shape laws and policies that affect rural women.

But this alone is not enough. Rural women cannot go into parliament as individuals. They must maintain strong grassroots support which can empower them to take on a system that has always worked against them.

And they must be backed by women's lobby groups that can keep the pressure on politicians and parliament.

**■ Kompe is a field worker with TRAC and a founding member of the Rural Women's Movement**

## The Polygamy Debate

Work In Progress asked some of the leading political players for their views on polygamy. Here's what they had to say:

### ■ DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The DP does not have a specific policy on polygamy; it does not believe the state should interfere in the question of marriage. However, as a women's activist movement, the DP has encountered wives who have problems with polygamy. The issue of inheritance still needs to be discussed and may lead to legislation on the care of customary wives. Wives from civil marriages tend to be the ones who benefit when the husband dies, and this is not acceptable.

The DP believes it is the state's duty to intervene in regard to customary wives and their children on the question of inheritance and maintenance.

### ■ INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY

Yet to develop a policy.

### ■ NATIONAL PARTY

Haven't developed a policy 'as it is not an issue for this election'.

### ■ PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS

Couldn't be contacted, as their phones and fax had been cut off.

### ■ AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

This is a complex issue as it deals with disadvantaged people in a family. It would not be correct to ban polygamy — what would happen to the wives and children in customary and civil marriages? This problem cannot be tackled overnight and legislation alone is not the right option. Government should only intervene if human rights are violated. Cultural life in most societies creates antagonistic relationships between men and women.

### ■ SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The struggle to end polygamy must be seen in the fuller context of the struggle for human rights. If women in our country are to be able to claim their full legal and social rights, they must be freed of the tyranny of 'traditional' practices which imprison them.

Our new constitution guarantees equality for all South Africans; we must ensure that no traditional or customary practices steal that equality from women. We cannot allow 'custom' to hold precedence over women's rights.

Polygamy today is one of the most disempowering mechanisms of women's oppression. As such it must be openly challenged, not swept under the carpet as one of those issues which is 'too sensitive to discuss at this stage'.

(Edited extract from an SACP gender department discussion document)

### ■ AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

Azapo recognises the sensitive nature of this issue. Notwithstanding this, Azapo is of the opinion that such practises have tended to commodify women.

In a patriarchal sexist society like ours, we find these practices are steeped within an ideology that subjugates women. These practices need to be scrutinised very closely, with communities engaging in debate around them. Hopefully, this would be one of the major aspects in a non-sexist society that would set it apart from the present one. In other words, it would be very reductionist to simply say these practices should be abolished without mass education and conscientisation. Women and men would be in a position to make a genuine choice. — *Researched by Thenjiwe Nhlapo*



# Making friends in a war-zone

In a province torn apart by war, the National Women's Coalition has been able to bring together — and keep together — women from a range of political parties. **ESTELLE RANDALL** looks at how it happened

IT'S A TYPICAL AUTUMN AFTERNOON IN Pietermaritzburg. It's Saturday, and the sun beats down on the deserted city streets.

Half an hour away, at Mpendle, there's a showdown between members of Inkatha and the ANC in which several people die.

But in a restored red-brick building in Pietermaritzburg, women from the two political organisations (and women of other political persuasions) are sitting down together to talk about their future.

The occasion is a report-back meeting of the Natal Midlands National Women's Coalition, and it has brought together about 30 women of diverse political views. In a province which has become known for political intolerance, the coalition — and this meeting — provide a living example of working across the barrier of party politics.

The women attending this meeting come from very different class, political and social backgrounds. Yet they share one hope: that the strength and tolerance they have built will not disappear after June, when the coalition is due to disband. What form, if any, the coalition will take after June remains to be seen. Some see a women's movement as a possibility.

## Freedom of choice

ANC activist Phumelele Ntombela believes the coalition has been able to work in the Midlands because it has allowed women the choice of participating as political party representatives or as individuals. Ntombela has been involved with the coalition since its inception, and represented the region at the WNC national conference in March.

But her involvement was almost by chance: she heard about the coalition from one of the students at Natal University, where she coordinates the internship pro-

gramme of the Centre for University Academic Development.

"The coalition gave me the opportunity to participate in my own right," she explains. "If I'd gone as a delegate from a political organisation, I'd have had to be allocated to this task. This can be restricting. As an individual, I didn't have to wait to be assigned to attend WNC meetings.

"This region has been open to women participating as individuals from the start, and this encouraged a broader layer of women — who might not be in structures — to come in and learn. Some people are genuinely afraid of political organisations because of the polarisation on the ground."

Notmbela says it would be wrong to ignore women in political organisations. But, she adds, "a strong women's movement could even empower women to challenge gender issues in their own narrow political camps. The mere bringing together of diverse resources has empowered women. I don't think one organisation could have gathered so many needs and demands so quickly."

## First-timer

It's the first time 56-year-old Cynthia Bhengu has attended a coalition meeting, but she feels she'd like to come to future events. She grew up in Sweetwaters, an IFP stronghold, and still lives there.

"It's a rural area," she says. "We have no electricity, although they are starting to put it in. And there are no proper roads. But we do have water."

With few facilities and high unemployment, life is tough in Sweetwaters. "But whether I like it or not," she points out, "at my age, what can I do?"

Since 1965, Bhengu has been running a creche. She and nine other women care for

129 children, with the money to do so coming from donations and payments from parents. "Maybe you'd like to make a donation?" she suggests.

Bhengu has been a member of the IFP and its Women's Brigade for two years and believes there's no conflict of interest between the coalition and the brigade.

"I'd like to be part of the coalition, because it's talking about women and uplifting women. We're trying to do the same in the Women's Brigade. It's a good thing the coalition is bringing all women together — I think it will encourage others to attend."

## We need the coalition

Annette Grobelaar is less keen to talk about her political involvement. That might be because of the embarrassing error the National Party made when it briefly withdrew from the coalition in March, based on the wrong assumption that one of the coalition's Midlands members was a candidate on the ANC elections list.

Since that incident, Grobelaar — who used to represent the NP at coalition meetings — doesn't seem keen to talk about her affiliations.

But she is keen on one thing: that the women's coalition should continue its work.

"I would hate to see the coalition stop," she says. "When I first attended, I did so simply as an NP delegate. But now I believe it is doing good things in bringing together women from all walks of life.

"It's made me realise how much we have in common. I, myself, got close to women from the ANC and IFP. Politics wasn't an issue.

"There's little difference in our aspirations. Women can make a difference — they should just get off their behinds." ■



# What do wo

*"We cannot march on one leg or clap with one hand," reminds part of the preamble to the Women's Charter for Effective Equality. Yet, women — more than half of SA's people — are systematically prevented from fully contributing to the society's development.*

*The Women's National Coalition (WNC) set out 18 months ago to draw South African women into the process of change by launching the most comprehensive and ambitious research project ever into their lives.*

*The study had to establish what women from all walks of life want to see changed in their lives. The findings would then be fed into the constitution-making process and other attempts to achieve women's equality.*

*The research report presents a dizzying catalogue of oppression. The subjugation of women, it finds, is systemic and confines women to the domestic arena whilst men are left to wield political power and authority. Women tend to be resolutely barred from decision-making processes, both in the private and public realms.*

*The study's tone is defiant and positive, as befits a project that wants to promote decisive interventions to alter the low status of women.*

*And, as much as respondents speak "with one voice" in censuring the roles and treatment they are subjected to, there is a keen awareness of the complexities of this oppression — especially when culture and tradition enter the frame.*

*This is a brief summary of some of the main findings of the WNC research study.*

## **EQUALITY**

- Much of the abuse women suffer — structural, physical, emotional and verbal — stems from the low status they have in South African society.
- Women are deprived of the right to independence and autonomy in civil society.
- Black women, especially, experience intense discrimination — at home, work and society in general.

## **LAW AND JUSTICE**

- Women want to be treated as equals before the law.
- Many reject their status as minors and want to be able to enter into contracts without their husbands' permission.
- Inheritance law discriminates against women.
- In polygamous situations, women living in rural areas feel strongly that both wives should be entitled to inherit if the husband dies.
- In the eyes of many women, their own rights are closely tied to the needs and rights of their children, suggesting that the issues of women's and children's rights cannot easily be separated.

## **POLITICAL AND CIVIC LIFE**

- Women must be more politically active in order to bring about social and political change.
- There is a great need for women to be informed of their political and civil rights, and a strong sense that they are under-represented in government.
- Women complain that their husbands prevent them from attending meetings and sometimes even church, accusing them of infidelity if they persist.
- Many women say they cannot vote

for the party of their choice because husbands, fathers, in-laws or chiefs tell them whom to vote for.

- Women are prevented from participating in planning and implementing development programmes.

## **THE ECONOMY**

- In the home, many women want to be paid for domestic labour, while others feel it is their duty to perform this work.
- Women employed outside the home say they have two full-time jobs.
- An especially heavy burden weighs on women in rural areas where the lack of services and infrastructure compound hardships.
- Discrimination is evident in salary scales, employment benefits and working conditions.
- Black women say they are paid less than men and white women with equal qualifications.
- They are the last to be hired, the first to be fired.
- Most black women support affirmative action, while white and Indian women view it more sceptically.
- Women are overlooked for promotions and given scant opportunity to develop their skills.
- The fact that women bear children is often used against them in the workplace, while the lack of child-care and aged-care prevents them from finding employment or accepting promotion.
- All women must receive maternity benefits.
- Women are subjected to sexual harassment by male colleagues and superiors.

## **EDUCATION**

- Women, especially black women, feel they lack education and skills, a



# men want?

handicap that leaves many with limited job opportunities or trapped in unsatisfying jobs.

- This stems from systemic discrimination — education and vocational training is male-oriented and biased towards whites.
- Women want government and companies to develop programmes and provide bursaries for further education.
- Childcare facilities should be provided at education and training institution.
- Women want better education for their children.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

- The lack of adequate health care, water, sanitation, recreational facilities, electricity and transport services (especially in rural areas) restricts women's lives in innumerable ways, with rural and disabled women especially neglected.

## FAMILY LIFE AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Partnership and joint decision-making are highly valued.
- Most women want childcare and parental responsibilities to be shared.
- They are frustrated that they have no rights in the home and in making decisions regarding their children.
- Women are angry at being prevented from controlling the household's money, even when they are the sole breadwinners.
- Some women feel the law should recognise different forms of families, such as couples living together, single-parent families etc..
- There is a strong feeling that men should be forced to maintain their children in and outside a marriage.

## CUSTOM, CULTURE AND RELIGION

- Customary law is deemed oppressive by many women because it deprives them of basic rights, though some women defend aspects of customary law.
- Many black women want *lobola* abolished.
- Many women view the extended family as a burden on their marriage, a problem that is exacerbated by the shortage of adequate housing.

## HEALTH

- Women are frustrated about their lack of control over their own bodies, especially when it comes to family planning and childbearing.
- Contraception should be a woman's own decision, since she is responsible for the birth and growth of the child.
- Health care services, where they exist, seldom meet women's specific health needs.

## VIOLENCE

- Women are deeply concerned about rape, though some feel it is brought upon when women move about outside the home.
- Most women have themselves suffered, or know someone who has suffered wife battery.
- They want the police to intervene in cases of wife battery, which they view as a human rights issue, though some are concerned that police might not be adequately trained to handle the problem of domestic violence.
- Women want better protection against violence and are angry about

the lack of concern shown by police and other officials when they report attacks.

- Women who have been affected by political violence appear to outnumber those who are aware of violence against women per se.

*At a major WNC conference in late February, women representing a broad array of organisations distilled from these research findings a "Women's Charter for Effective Equality", a set of remedies aimed at achieving equality in all spheres of women's lives.*

*"Women want to control their lives," the document announces at the outset, "We bear important responsibilities but lack the authority to make decisions in the home and in society."*

*The Charter will now become the basis for a broad range of initiatives aimed at achieving women's equality, among them efforts to effectively integrate the demands into the Reconstruction and Development Programme.*



# Looking for the gender gap

In the USA, politicians are acutely aware of the gender gap that separates men and women's attitudes on certain issues. Do South African women respond distinctively to political issues?

According to **AMANDA GOUWS**, it all depends what you call 'political'

**S**INCE THE 1980s US WOMEN COULD BE distinguished as a separate voting bloc. Steady differences between men and women in voter turnout, candidate choice and attitudes on certain issues could be sighted.

These became known as the *gender gap*, which US women now use to pursue certain policy goals.

Analyses of Markinor polls do not show a notable gender gap here in SA. Men and women differ on certain issues only, and even then gender seems to be subordinate to other factors.

What the surveys do show is that women have a multiplicity of identities — and our gender identity does not always weigh the heaviest. We are not always women first; religious or racial identities often move the fore.

In fact, the data seems to reinforce some stereotypical beliefs about women's political attitudes and behaviour — suggesting that women are apolitical, uninformed, apathetic and that they tend to personalise politics!

## He's so cute

A substantial body of literature argues that women's political participation is actually *apolitical*, citing studies done in North America and Europe which claim most women are consistently less interested in politics than men.

Women are said to personalise politics by voting for male candidates according to attractiveness, for instance.

Feminist scholars point out that most people are quite apolitical if you apply a conventional understanding of "political".

Conventional politics include voting, campaigning for parties or candidates, party membership, attending meetings and so



**EN MASSE:** The 'gender gap' is hard to see in South Africa



on. Empirical studies show clearly that fewer women vote or belong to parties, and men participate more in campaigning.

But when we broaden our concept of politics to include processes outside institutionalised politics, women's participation increases dramatically.

Often women's activities focus on issues of local or community concern — like housing campaigns, child care projects, "take-back-the-night" (anti-rape) marches and the improvement of infrastructure. Women are far more involved in these types of local *protest politics*. And they are involved in local associations that may appear apolitical but network specific communities on local issues.

### The personal is political

Feminists insist on a more appropriate definition of politics: "the personal is political". It's a definition which implies that issues which occur in the "privacy" of the home have *political* significance for women, although it is often argued that they are excluded from the public or political sphere.

This definition turns pregnancy, domestic violence, rape and childcare into political issues — issues which often spur women into taking part in less conventional sorts of politics and projects.

The Markinor polls stuck to conventional political matters and did not ask pertinent questions about issues women may find important.

Different research methodologies produce radically different pictures, though. While the research I discuss next only involved women, I would speculate that if men had taken part also, a gender gap may have emerged.

The National Women's Coalition (NWC) represents 80 women's organisations and 2-million women.

To draw up a Women's Charter, it used several research tools like single issue questionnaires, small focus groups, a chain letter, as well as community report cards (see "What Do Women Want?" on page 18).

From this research a list of demands were distilled, representing the core issues women feel strongly about. Many of them relate to basic needs or what are termed "second generation rights" — the right to housing, education and health care.

The research results show clearly that women are strongly aware of the violation of their rights, and have a clear sense of discrimination in the public and the private sphere. This often translates into anger and discontent.

Women expressed their dissatisfaction

with salary inequality based on race and gender, with unpaid domestic labour in their own homes and with sexual harassment. They demanded maternity benefits from their employers and childcare facilities. They were concerned about their lack of control over their own bodies and their lack of freedom of movement.

From the research a consensus was derived that women should have equality before the law, equal treatment in the workplace, control over their bodies and better basic needs.

### Engaging pictures

An even more fascinating picture emerges when women who already have a *political consciousness* are singled out for research.

discussing their political views outside the family circle. (A different type of questionnaire which did not enquire about such fears probably would have yielded more "evidence" of women's disinterest in discussing politics.)

Black respondents were concerned with local issues (like electricity supply, water, roads and garbage removal), while white women found environmental issues of more concern.

This supports the notion that basic needs have to be satisfied before people move on to issues further removed from their immediate circumstances.

The majority of the respondents disagreed with the statements that "men are superior to women" and that "women should



**TAKING IT TO THE STREETS: Women's political activity has centred on local issues**

In an exercise organised by the Women's Lobby, Markinor put questionnaires to a sample of 455 respondents chosen on the basis of their positive stance toward women's issues. Fully 319 said they were qualified for elected or appointed positions. Of them, 33% were prepared to raise campaign money, 28% to establish a campaign organisation and 19% to seek party candidacy.

It's worth noting that the majority of them held political opinions different from those of family or friends, and many feared

run homes and men should run the country".

Conventional survey research neither unearths these sentiments and concerns, nor does it reveal to what extent women's awareness of their situations and their immediate surroundings is "politicised".

When our researchers learn to cover these sorts of blind spots, we might well discover more clearly our very own South African gender gap.

**■ Gouws teaches politics at Stellenbosch University**





**COOKING UP A NEW DEAL:** With all those household responsibilities, will women have time for local government issues?

## Local heroes?

If the civics are anything to go by, women's tradition of struggle at the local level will not be enough to guarantee them a strong role in local government. But if we apply quotas, warns **JO-ANNE COLLINGE**, they might just backfire on the women's movement in unexpected ways

**R**EMEMBER ALL THOSE WHITE SHIRTS AND ties lined up at the Local Government Summit? Strangely, there hasn't been much political soul searching since then to find out why men so thoroughly dominate this "level of government closest to the people". Nor do we hear the odds on this state of affairs changing.

The argument is often advanced that women are "naturals" for local government because, as household managers and nurturers of children, they have a vital interest in the kinds of functions town councils usually perform. They are said to be more likely than men to get worked up about unreliable refuse removal, blocked sewerage pipes and unpredictable water cuts.

But how accessible is the institution of

local government, as set out in the interim constitution and transitional legislation, to women's participation?

The first thing to recognise about being a councillor is that it's a demanding second (or third) job — with no pay. In contrast to members of parliament and provincial government, town and city councillors get no salary. And this won't change soon.

What councillors get is an allowance. But, says Johannesburg's deputy mayor Rae Graham, even in the largest city in the land this amounts to about R2 000 a month. It's scarcely enough to cover phone bills and other costs the job incurs.

Clearly, then, both men and women who enter local government must be prepared to shoulder an extraordinary work

load. This is especially the case in big cities where policy-making comes in big, complex loads. But, since women almost invariably bear the brunt of household responsibilities and head most single parent families, they are much more likely than men to make the calculation that the burden of public office would be too heavy to bear.

Of course, it's not only gender but also class that features in this picture. Graham, who has come closer to wearing Jo'burg's mayoral chain than any woman since 1945, has not had to earn a living — her husband is the family's sole breadwinner. She quite freely admits that she could not run her home and serve her constituency in the way she does now if she were compelled to work for an income.



The practical barriers to women serving in local government ease slightly when you look higher up the socio-economics scale, where women either do not have to earn their way or have relative autonomy in professional life. The really tough question is how to achieve meaningful representation for the huge urban constituency of working class women.

To a large degree this problem has been foreshadowed by the gender-bias which the civic movement has displayed over the years — and continues to display. In contrast to the constitutional Negotiating Council, which applied quotas in relation to women at an early stage, the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) was not subject to such representational recipes. It went its unrestrained, overwhelmingly male way.

And the non-statutory side of the table (in effect the South African National Civic Organisation, Sanco) was no less gender-exclusive than the establishment, despite its claim to be the "people's" voice.

### Was it suicide or murder?

When one calls to mind the mass protests and the community meetings that are part and parcel of the growth of the civic movement, women feature strongly among the participants. Think of the rent marches, the water marches, the fights for community health services and schools. Think of the women who attempted to save their homes from destruction — sometimes by stripping naked in the face of the demolition squads. These women all seem to have suffered an obscure political death. The question is: Was it suicide or murder?

Sanco's Lechesa Tsenoli says it's a bit both. He concedes the heavy male domination of Sanco — notwithstanding Winnie Mandela's presence in the number two position — and says the organisation has been doing some soul-searching on the question. When women activists were asked about their limited participation at higher echelons "the issues which they raised related to the time of meetings, the lack of provision for child care and even sexual harassment".

Some, says Tsenoli, even felt that women were not supportive of each other. He remarks that women may be "quite aggressive and forceful" in mass meetings, but very few accept nomination when it comes to electing office bearers.

Angie Phalatse is one of the few women who have advanced through the ranks of the civic movement. Today she is treasurer



Since women bear the brunt of household responsibilities, they may feel the burden of public office is just too heavy to bear

of the Soweto Civic Association and chairperson of its Dube branch. Phalatse says it was her style of participation in general meetings that attracted the attention of other Dube residents. But when they approached her to stand for office, she initially declined. "Most women feel very reluctant to lead. They feel that men are sure to be very highly critical when women make a mistake."

Both Phalatse and Tsenoli believe that what happens in the domestic realm still tends to dictate the terms on which women participate in public life, be it in civil society or in government.

Tsenoli observes that "husbands in the struggle" are often those least likely to welcome their wives treading the same route. Phalatse, a divorcee and mother of five, reckons that her choices were simplified by the fact she was no longer married.

She says women in public life have to cultivate an almost dual personality. Public life demands an ability to deal in a hard-nosed way with the issues. This toughness contrasts rather harshly with the roles women are expected to play socially and in the home. "You cannot intimidate men in the struggle and go home and intimidate your own husband", she notes. "You cannot be strong outside and inside the home in the

same way".

Tsenoli fears that the difficulties women have participating in Sanco activities (even when regions get explicit directives to include women in their delegations) could be a warning of the impossible demands that the democratic movement has been making on activists in general. While women might be inclined to simply drop out, men tend to endure the pace until they burn out, he argues. "The inability to maintain cadres is one of the weaknesses of the democratic movement, broadly speaking. When they burn out there is little support or sympathy".

### Nine crucial months

Whether or not the reasons for weakly developed female participation in civic structures are fully understood, the implications for the first phase of local government restructuring are pretty clear.

During this phase (which will be 9-12 months) non-racial appointed structures are to be put in place, to link towns and townships, and to begin to redistribute local tax revenues. The non-racial structures will either replace existing racial local authorities (and be known as transitional local or metropolitan councils), or they will co-exist with racial local authorities, but take over certain planning and budgetary functions from these councils (and be known as local government coordination committees).

In both cases inclusive local negotiating forums, comprising representatives of the old local authorities, civic associations, local political parties and ratepayers' groups, will nominate the members of these new structures according to the famous "50/50" formula. Which means half the members of transitional local councils will come from the statutory side (organisations which participated in apartheid local government) and half from the non-statutory side (those who either opposed or did not directly participate in the apartheid dispensation).

There is no underestimating how significant it is that the civic associations will provide nominees for transitional councils (and local co-ordinating committees). While political parties in the liberation tradition have varied greatly in terms of their engagement with local government issues, civic associations right across the country have been immersed at this level.

In protracted local level negotiations with establishment councils, civic representatives have accumulated a good deal of knowledge about local government and the



technical questions town and city councillors have to make policy judgements on. They have served a kind of apprenticeship and are well-equipped to counter-balance the experience of the old-time councillors in structures set up on the "50/50" model.

The upshot is that women who have not been actively involved in local level negotiations are unlikely to be appointed as councillors on transitional local and metropolitan councils. If they are now introduced under some quota-style consciousness, they enter at a distinct disadvantage and will have to work like hell to close the gap.

Tsenoli says the question of quotas remains a "hotly debated" issue in Sanco. "Personally", he favours the device. His attitude has been shaped by a recent study tour to the Nordic countries, where women must comprise at least 40% of local government officials. "We only met one single-sex delegation in our entire tour — and that delegation was all women".

Phalatse does not think quotas are the right route. She says that in talks within the Soweto Civic Association and local branches of the Tripartite Alliance about possible candidates for transitional councils the bottom line is "that we are looking for quality candidates; the purpose of putting a person

there is that you want participation out of him or her".

Tsenoli concedes that the generally high levels of education in the Nordic countries "help to even out gender inequality" and make the quota system more workable.

### All logged up

When it comes to the second phase of local government restructuring (the first elections for non-racial local government), the quota question becomes foggy.

Those local elections, which probably will take place within the next year, will be quite different from national and provincial elections. The latter are run purely on proportional representation and all members of government are taken from party lists. In local elections, 40% of councillors will be chosen by proportional representation (on the "list" system) and the remaining 60% will have to contest specific wards.

Therefore, while parties may decide to implement quotas in choosing candidates to stand in the various wards, the final choice of councillors will be left to the voters. It is one thing for parties to affirm women by giving them a certain number of "list" positions; it is a much greater measure of confidence to name women to contest

wards — in effect, to place the party's success or failure in such wards largely in women's hands.

Local government is widely recognised as one of the bona fide routes to higher government office. A failure by women to secure meaningful participation in this first round of local elections will ripple upwards in government. And it will not be subject to change for at least three, and possible even five, years.

In the present phase, candidates' contributions to the liberation struggle are a critical factor. This will play a lesser part in subsequent elections, as more conventional political career paths will begin to develop.

Women, as much as men, are going to have to serve their political apprenticeships, making their way to the top by proven service and ability. And quotas — if they continue to exist — should merely be an additional incentive for women to accumulate the relevant experience.

In the end, quotas that enable wholesale political leapfrogging will backfire on the women's movement. This consideration, as much as a concern for fully-rounded community representation, should compel women to take up the challenge of taking part in local government now. ■

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