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PROGRESS

ANC Conference



Negotiating a thorny path

ALSO INSIDE

★ Cosatu & Alliances ★ Politics of Ethnicity ★ ANC Women's League

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EDITORIAL

The ANC goes into its crucial national conference in July at a time when its principal adversary, the Nationalist Party, is beginning an earnest campaign to capture the 'middle ground'.

South Africa's main liberation movement has come a long way since its unbanning almost a year and a half ago. Despite numerous problems and shortcomings, it has structured a legal presence that is well-poised to develop into a credible alternative to white minority rule.

As contributions to this edition indicate, the ANC has shown a seriousness about addressing the major challenges of our time. More than any other political party or movement, it has involved its membership in discussions around such vital issues as the future shape of the economy, a far-reaching health policy, a solidly grounded constitutional framework, and a policy to address land-hunger, amongst others.

In addition, the ANC's Women's Section in exile, which is now part of the Women's League, has played a major role in forcing the ANC to take seriously issues of sexism. Although only a few steps have been taken, the ANC has gone further down this road than any other national liberation movement - at least at the level of theory.

The forthcoming conference is meant to debate and decide on these and other crucial issues. Indications are that the debates will be lively and deeply meaningful.

Problems and shortcomings

But the ANC's 'problems and shortcomings' are not to be brushed aside. For example an article in this edition argues, its draft proposals for its own constitution contain many weaknesses, despite last-minute attempts, after an outcry from branches and regions, to patch over some of the holes.

The ANC's current national leadership - drawn largely from returned exiles - has shown that it has still a lot to learn about some fundamental principles of democracy and accountability, which the mass organisations have painstakingly built over the past two decades.

The most notable mass organisation, Cosatu, also faces a crucial national congress towards the end of July. One of the main issues it will grapple with is the nature of its alliance with the ANC and the SACP, in particular the question of dual or multiple leadership.

An increasing number of unionists are nervous about the way the alliance has been working thus far. They are particularly concerned about being relegated to 'junior partner' status every time the ANC makes a major policy shift. The unions' life-breath is democratic accountability, and they cannot easily accept decisions being made on their behalf without proper consultation.

Cabals and ethnicity

But not all components of the MDM/UDF can proudly claim adherence to democratic practices. For quite some time now there has been talk of a 'cabal' which used to operate within the UDF, in particular within the Natal Indian Congress. We publish a controversial interview with an ex-NIC activist who claims to have been an active 'cabal' member.

The decision of the NIC to continue operating for a while has brought to the fore the question of ethnically-based organisation. The ethnic factor has also been brought to centre-stage by Inkatha, and the recent upheavals in eastern Europe, forcing the left to take seriously the existence of ethnic divisions amongst the oppressed.

APOLOGY

WIP would like to apologize to Enrico Fourie, former Cosatu Western Cape regional executive member, for incorrectly stating that he was a Sactwu official in WIP 74.

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Devan Pillay looks at the implications of Winnie Mandela's trial. How damaging has it been for the ANC? Does Winnie's record as a leader make her unfit to hold official positions within the ANC?

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The road ahead for the ANC

WIP takes a critical look at some of the issues to debated at the ANC's July conference, in particular the organisation's internal democratic structures

— *Pages 6 to 20*



Alliance politics

As Cosatu prepares for its own national congress, the debate about the nature of its alliances with the SACP and ANC hots up. Glenda Daniels and Langa Zita report

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LETTERS

Rosa Luxemburg an honoured name

Dear Editor,
The article by David Kitson, 'Is the SACP really communist?' (*WIP* 73, p27) makes some interesting points but it is clear that Kitson has learned his political theory and history in the stalinist school.

This is particularly clear from his confusion on the differences between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg or, indeed his conception of what Rosa Luxemburg stood for. Otherwise he would not have juxtaposed Kautsky and Luxemburg (Kautskyist-Luxemburgist) as the co-inspirers of the SACP's current theoretical approach. One cannot help wondering if Kitson has ever read Luxemburg on *The National Question* or only Lenin's polemic against it.

Luxemburg was an honoured name in the communist pantheon for more than a decade after her



LETTERS

Write to: The Editor
Work In Progress
PO Box 32716
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foul murder by German reactionaries. For years, every January, the names Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg, used to appear in banner headlines on the front pages of every Communist Party paper in the world. Then, almost as an aside, Stalin whispered that 'Rosa Luxemburg was guilty of many Trotskyist errors' and, hey presto, her name became anathema in stalinist circles.

It is particularly insulting

to the memory of Rosa Luxemburg to link her name to Kautsky. She broke decisively with Kautsky - at that time regarded as the 'Pope of Marxism' - in 1911, recognising his revisionist tendencies long before Lenin.

The differences between Lenin and Luxemburg on the national question is not as simple as some people think - 'Lenin was right and Luxemburg was wrong' - and the 1919 (Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Congress opposed Lenin's position.

This is not the place to launch a full-scale debate on the differences between the two great marxists, but the threatened break up of the Soviet Union into its disparate national entities does raise the importance of the national question anew and it is important that socialists give it much thought. — *CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, Cambridge, UK*

Gangsterism is disrupting our education

Dear Editor
In the past few years education in the townships has reached a serious state of delapidation. This has worried those pupils who are looking to their future in South Africa.

As students we tend to blame outside issues. However, our weak organisations and deteriorating social conditions in the townships have resulted in an alarming increase in gangsterism, rape, gambling and intimidation.

The gloomy picture for mainly matric students worsens the morale of students already demotivated by a discredited and inefficient school system. Their efforts are not helped by an environment which is not conducive to effective learning. — *MOKETE CAMEROON, Tladi, Soweto*

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Wosa plans socialist conference

The Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (Wosa) says it plans to have a socialist conference later in the year, so that problems of the future of socialism can be discussed by all socialists, including those from abroad.

The newly-elected general secretary of Wosa, Carl Brecher said that the South African Communist Party had sent 'comradely greetings' to their first national conference held over the weekend of 1-2 June.

In the Party's message, Jeremy Cronin said he looked forward to Wosa's 'emerging perspectives and comradely debate'.

Brecher evaded the question of a socialist alliance but told *WIP* the SACP would be the first to be invited to its gathering of socialists.

The conference, held in Johannesburg, was attended by 200 delegates from seven regions, Wosa said in a statement. These include the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Natal, Southern Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal and Western Transvaal.

Nationally, Wosa is nearing its 1 000 membership mark.

Factions outlawed

But this membership figure is likely to drop because of a fall-out amongst members at the conference, which took a resolution against the existence of 'tendencies' and 'factions' in the organisation.

A group of individuals did not support this because they belonged to a particular 'tendency', said to be aligned to the British Socialist Workers

Party (SWP). The group felt that the decision to outlaw factions was 'bureaucratic'.

Brecher maintains that it was a democratic decision, as the majority supported the resolution that tendencies cease to exist.

He told *WIP*: 'We believe in a socialist democracy and there is only one version of this in Wosa.'

It appears that a faction walked out because they felt that they ought not to be obliged to support the line that the Soviet Union is neither capitalist nor socialist.

This line was argued in a paper which conference adopted. It contradicted the view that the Soviet Union is 'state capitalist', the classic thesis of the SWP.

Wosa says its programme of action revolves around the 'call for a constituent assembly, but not before a patriotic front is formed'. It will also continue its 'consistent work as a socialist interventionist' organisation by getting involved in unions, civics and mass formations and actions.

'We are not idle members', says Brecher, 'our work is to defend the image of socialism, all our activities are related to spreading the ideas of socialism and united front activity, and building independent mass formations'.

Interim government 'bourgeois'

At its conference, Wosa rejected the call for an interim government because it would not be elected and would therefore serve the interests of the ruling class. It would be a 'bourgeois institution'.

Wosa instead strongly supports a patriotic front of

all liberation organisations based on the demand for a constituent assembly, which would 'reshape class power and introduce rule by popular councils' This, believes Wosa, can only come about if 'independent structures of the working class' are built.

If a constituent assembly came about through any other means then Wosa would reject it because it would 'bring into existence a bourgeois parliament protecting the rule of capital'.

While Wosa is not anti-negotiations in principle, it believes negotiations between the ANC and the

government should cease because of the violence in the country. In a paper addressed to conference Neville Alexander, who was re-elected Wosa chairperson,

characterised President FW de Klerk as a 'reform broker on behalf of capital'.

'Reforms will be conceded but the line will be drawn when the rule of capital is seriously threatened. The violence is promoted by capital as a spoiling operation intended to promote conflict among liberation organisations and to weaken mass structures', he argued.

The National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu), the Azanian Peoples Organisation (Azapo) and the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (Glow), were among those who sent messages of support to the conference.

There were also international messages from socialist organisations and trade unions in England, Ireland, France, Mauritius, Senegal, Germany, Brazil and the United States.

Besides Alexander and Brecher, national office bearers include Professor Ndlovu (vice-chairperson) and Mercia Andrews (national organiser). - *Glenda Daniels*

The Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA), committed since 1986 to the search for alternative development strategies in Africa, has recently opened up an office in South Africa.

The arrival of IFAA comes at a time when debate about South Africa's future development path is gaining momentum. The correct lessons need to be learnt from the African experience, and IFAA is in a position to make a valuable input.

IFAA is concerned with the sharp decline in living standards for the great majority of people in Africa, where economies are faltering, education standards are falling steeply and social services are collapsing.

IFAA hopes to see a rapid economy recovery in the 1990s through alternative developmental strategies, noting that the basic problem with such strategies in the past has been their implementation.

It condemns policies 'imposed on African peoples by multi-national agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank' because of the harsh conditions tied to funding. IFAA says the payment for debt servicing are beyond the capacities of debtor countries.

According to IFAA, policies should aim at creating a new social order based on a people-centred development, popular



BRIEFS

democracy and social justice, within the context of effective African integration at sub-regional and regional levels.

This re-orientation of African development should focus on planned disengagement from international capitalism, regional food self-sufficiency, satisfaction of basic needs for all, development from below through the termination of anti-rural bias as well as a concentration on relevant small- and medium-scale enterprises. These challenges, argues IFAA, demand that urgent steps be taken by African governments.

IFAA has hosted a range of conferences and workshops since its inception.

Some of the topics

covered include the impact of the IMF and World Bank policies on the people of Africa; feminism in Africa; the history of African women; human rights in Africa; environment and development; African debt; Islam in Africa - and a host of others.

IFAA has established a sound reputation throughout Africa. According to OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim, IFAA activities and publications contribute 'immensely to the search for solutions' to Africa's problems.

Ben Turok, a long-standing ANC member who recently returned from exile, has been IFAA's director since it first opened offices in London in 1986. His

deputy is Dr Mohamed Suliman from the Sudan.

Criticism of African leaders

A unique gathering of African leaders assembled in Kampala on 19 May for a four-day conference whose significance might be easily underestimated.

The African Leadership Forum was convened in conjunction with the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The principal figures were General Obasanjo, former president

of Nigeria, and Professor Adebayo Adedeji, head of the ECA, with former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere as an important supporter.

The forum met to discuss four key issues facing Africa: security, stability, development, and co-operation. But what made it unique was that this was the first time in Africa that five presidents, three former presidents, a prime minister and former generals met in open debate with leaders of non-governmental organisations and social movements such as trade unions, churches, and liberation movements.

About 500 delegates and observers met in the historic Nile Conference Centre,

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which was built for the OAU by Idi Amin but which now saw the most biting criticism of Africa's governments in a long time.

Speakers from all sectors of society condemned the lack of democracy, and the crippling effect of corruption and mismanagement by Africa's elite. Nyerere himself spoke of Africa's serious 'deficit of democracy' as being its biggest single problem. He also pointed out that the weakness had set in from the beginning, when the OAU was founded in 1963 as an organisation of states instead of an organisation of the people of Africa.

'This time we meet with the people of Africa and not just leaders', he said.

The conference concluded that Africa must adopt political pluralism, encourage free and fair elections, and abolish detention without trial. Without these conditions there could be no democracy and no development which requires popular participation and public consent.

It also called for the establishment of a peace-keeping force.

The conclusions of the conference now go forward to a meeting of the OAU in Abuja, Nigeria in July when plans begin for the creation of an African Economic Community. - *Ben Turok*

OATUU hits out at IMF & World Bank

The general-secretary of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Hassan Sumonu, in a hard-hitting address to the Kampala Forum (see previous report), severely criticised industrialised nations and their agencies,

the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, for hypocritically 'aiding and abetting' the 'rampant corruption and political jobbery' of most African governments, and for imposing development models which deepen Africa's 'dependence and debts'.

Sumonu noted that thirty years after independence the lot of African workers and peasants has not improved. This, he felt, was because 'power has been high-jacked from the people through their denial of popular participation'.

He observed that 'one or two of our leaders are said to be richer than their countries', while at the same time 'human and trade union rights are wantonly violated in most African countries'.

While most of Africa's political leaders must be held partially responsible for the continent's neglect, and while the people of Africa must also share some of the blame for not challenging their 'despotic' leaders in time, the OATUU leader laid the major portion of blame for Africa's impoverishment squarely at the door of the industrialised countries.

Having 'impoverished Africa' through grossly unjust terms of trade - which derive from the colonial heritage - western countries 'are now blaming African leaders for being the sole cause of Africa's poverty. We cannot accept this blackmail', he said.

African governments spend \$7 billion a year on defence. Sumonu believed that this outrageous amount stems from the view that 'the security of the Head of State...can be equated with the security of the entire state and...its citizenry'.

By believing instead that 'the surest guarantee for the security of any country' is the 'well-being and happi-

ness of the people' - through the provision of food, shelter, education etc - the current African defence budget can be cut by half. This will free a substantial amount of revenue 'for the provision of basic needs of the African people', he argued.

Sumonu advocated a policy of 'food self-sufficiency' for African agriculture, as against the 'colonially-inspired "cash-crop" strategy'.

He also appealed for a 'higher volume of inter and intra-African trade', where the present 'dismal' volume of 5% is increased to 50% within the decade. This will facilitate the 'integration of African economies, leading to the establishment of an African Economic Community' by the year 2000, he said.

'What Africa needs is trade, not aid or charity', cried Sumonu. Africa wants to be 'genuine and equal partners' to industrialised countries, and 'not beggars'.

But this is hampered by the 'double standards' of these countries and their multinational companies. He concluded:

'The future of our continent and the rest of the Third World, where the majority of humankind live, should not be compromised at the altar of the greed and selfishness of a few multinationals.' - *Devan Pillay*

Books for the struggle

Progressive student groups from the United States have recently launched a scheme to distribute progressive publications to resource centres in needy areas around the country. The funds for this project come out of a successful law suit against rightwing students

who firebombed an anti-apartheid protest at an American university five years ago.

On 24 May 1986 an anti-apartheid 'shantytown' erected to protest against university ties with South Africa was firebombed on the campus of John Hopkins University, Baltimore. One protester was hospitalised with serious burns.

The attack, says a press statement released by the project, 'was consistent with those directed at struggling comrades in South Africa, especially Crossroads, which was half razed by vigilantes that very week. It gave US students a first-hand experience of the senseless violence the comrades live with daily.'

Early this year, the firebombing victims won a R185 000 law suit against the three upper-class white attackers. As a result, progressive student groups from across the United States have decided to use the entire proceeds of the suit to fund BOOKS FOR THE STRUGGLE 'as a means of raising international awareness about the ties that bind us in search for peace and justice', says the statement.

The publications, including books, magazines and newspapers, will be distributed by Phambili Books and the Bookbox Project of the Community Resource and Information Centre (CRIC), both of Johannesburg. They are intended to reach resource centres which serve their communities, youth groups, women's groups, trade unions or 'organisations of the mass movements which are part of the liberation struggle'.

A number of student groups in the US are co-sponsoring this project. The funding agent in the US is the Fund for a Free SA (Boston). •

Change, declared the record covers at a stall offering 'struggle music' during the ANC's December conference took place, is pain.

The phrase is clearly still appropriate as, six months later, the African National Congress prepares for its first full, elective conference inside the country since 1958.

Seventeen months to the day after President FW de Klerk legalised the ANC, the liberation movement is still experiencing the growing pains of transforming itself from an exile-led, commandist revolutionary centre into an open, democratic, mass movement.

The December conference marked the start of this growth, when the ANC's 200 000-plus membership (since expanded to just above 400 000) took responsibility of formulating policy for the liberation movement, its strategy and tactics.

On July 2 at the University of Durban Westville, it will take the next necessary step - deciding, in elections to the new, 90-seat national executive committee (NEC), who will implement the mandate outlined in that policy.

With relations between the government and the ANC at their lowest point since February 2, there is a strong temptation to see the organisation's elections as an opportunity to demonstrate support for the organisation's policies - by re-electing the current leadership.

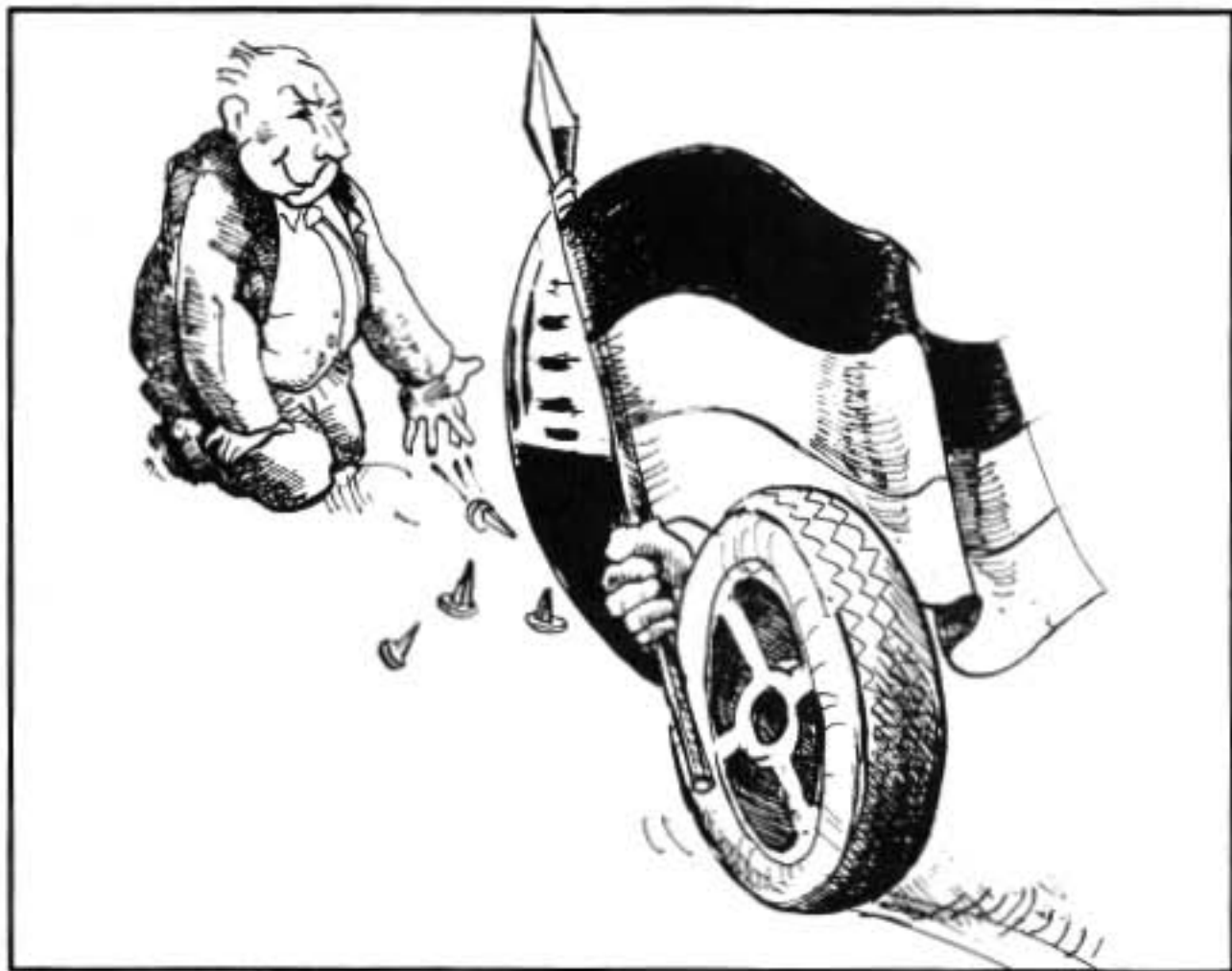
Ignoring mandates

But this ignores the reality demonstrated in the past six months that it is precisely this leadership which has dug the massive gulf between formal policy and practice.

It was the current leadership, to take the most graphic example of this gulf, which in the ANC's January 8 anniversary statement parachuted into the constitutional negotiation process outlined last December, the idea of an all-party congress.

Similarly, the idea of phased lifting of sanctions to reward each step De Klerk takes along the road to normalising South African life has its origins outside the formal decision-making process of the movement, which grants to its national conferences the ultimate responsibility of formulating policy.

This use of sanctions, as carrots to entice the National Party donkey down the road to democracy, was in fact explicitly buried at the December conference under a strategic view which demanded that sanctions remain in place until the



Outwitting the Nationalist donkey: Using the carrot or the stick?

DAVID NIDDRIE argues that, given the leadership's poor record of accountability, major changes in the structure and leadership composition of the organisation are likely at the ANC's first full elective conference since 1958

donkey had reached the point of no return - that is, until the ANC had decided the process of change was irreversible.

The idea nevertheless resurfaced as a central element of the ANC's proposals to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit at Abuja in Nigeria early this month.

There is a powerful underlying logic to the argument: refusal to have anything to do with the pace at which the sanctions walls is dismantled leaves the job to others.

But the fact that this fundamental shift in ANC policy took place in direct opposition to the December mandate and without prior public acknowledgement at home suggests that something is wrong with the decision-making processes within the

ANC.

Carrot or stick?

But the ANC's attitude to mass action demonstrates most graphically the gulf between policy and practice.

Underlying last December's endorsement of mass action as a crucial element both of negotiations and of ANC strategy more broadly is a belief in the supremacy of the stick over the carrot in keeping the National Party donkey moving.

Rooted in the experience of the 15 years since 1976, and the mass democratic movement period in particular, this view recognises that De Klerk's government is an unwilling traveller down the road towards democracy, a disobedient beast, requiring the sting of a stick on its

backside to keep it moving.

Personal chemistry between the donkey and its driver may make the process more pleasant, but provides no substitute for the stick.

The alternative perspective assumes, at its core, that a general consensus exists between driver and donkey on the ultimate destination; all that is in dispute are the finer details of the route and speed of the journey. The driver and donkey are in partnership.

Delays, detours and changes in direction arise not from the donkey's unwillingness, but from external pressures - the security forces, the far-right and individuals within the leadership of the National Party itself - reluctant travellers like Adriaan Vlok and Magnus Malan.

Partnership with De Klerk?

ANC international affairs secretary Thabo Mbeki articulated this perspective graphically last month.

"De Klerk is saying ... that there must be a non-racial ... democratic South Africa, political prisoners must be released. And there are some people who do not like that - even before you get a new constitution - and they will act against him," he told *New Nation*.

Implicit in this logic (admittedly articulated before De Klerk and his cabinet ministers opted for their harsh response to the political prisoners' hunger strike) is the idea of a partnership or alliance with De Klerk, and that De Klerk's enemies are, necessarily, the enemies of negotiations and of a democratic objective.

The problem with this logic is twofold:

- It grants to the ANC's partner, De Klerk, the power to define the enemies of the partnership. This has provided De Klerk with the opportunity, which he has used with ruthless efficiency, to intervene directly in the ANC itself. The 'hawks' and 'doves' division flows directly from this.
- Because, by definition, De Klerk is not responsible for delays, it actively discourages action against De Klerk - most explicitly in the form of mass action.

It has allowed him to manipulate the indemnity process, to take no action against the government's blatantly partisan security forces and, most crucially, to resist any initiative to limit his absolute control of the negotiating process.

The presence of both the carrot and the stick argument in the ANC leadership is responsible for the lurches in ANC decision-making in the six months since December. As the December conference



Oliver Tambo: the only Xhosa-speaking ANC president in its 79-year-old history

demonstrated, the solution must go beyond simple provision of a clear mandate.

Greater 'internal' presence

Equally important is who is elected to implement that mandate, and the structure through which they do so.

The election process and the new, 90-member NEC provided in the draft constitution will address this latter issue, ending the past six months of a leadership sitting atop a membership with which it has only an indirect relationship.

On the prior question of who is elected, names are less important than a record of commitment to and experience in direct accountability.

The pool of such experience created by the mass democratic movement will provide a valuable source from which to draw on for the incoming leadership.

Individuals from the ranks of the United Democratic Front, of Cosatu and from the group which straddled the MDM and the ANC, are likely to feature prominently in the nomination lists both for the 50 seats elected directly by the conference, and the five top posts.

The proven administrative skills, particularly within Cosatu, argues strongly for a candidate from the trade unions for the vital administrative post of secretary general - the name of NUM leader Cyril Ramaphosa is emerging with increasing regularity, provided his miners allow him to leave the union.

Other likely MDM-internal candidates include, from the UDF national leadership, Terror Lekota, Popo Molefe and Mohamed Valli Moosa and from the MDM-ANC overlap, Raymond Suttner, Gugile Nkwinti and Barbara Hogan.

The thrust for a substantial 'internal' presence among the 55 directly-elected

NEC members will squeeze out many in current former-exile NEC.

Most prominent casualty in this process is likely to be secretary general Alfred Nzo, whose administrative record saw him both widely criticised in exile and apparently powerless to impose some order on the ANC's chaotic first year of legality.

The key, however, lies not in individuals, but in publicly stated (or acted out) political positions.

Voting positions not personalities

The election is little more than extension of policy formulation - voting for people delegates trust to implement their policies.

Other issues offered up as key factors - tribal, generational or ethnic - are extraneous.

The often-raised media argument for a Zulu-speaker because of Inkatha's success in playing the tribal card clouds the central issue that delegates should vote for political positions not personalities. It also opens the way for other ethnic interests, whether Asian, Afrikaans or Venda to demand what would become little more than an extended tri-cameral parliament.

The argument of Zulu under-representation and Xhosa domination in any event ignores the movement's 79-year history. Since 1912 fully half of the movement's presidents have been Zulu-speakers from Natal. Only one, Oliver Tambo, has been Xhosa-speaking.

The fact that the issue is raised by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, probably the ANC's most strident and implacable political foe outside of the National Party should, in addition, give delegates pause to ponder its validity.

The ANC has not spent 79 years struggling to achieve non-racialism in society as a whole in order to introduce tri-cameral multi-racialism in its own ranks.

Deciding on democracy

What the conference is about is deciding on the strategy most likely to achieve the ANC's objective of a democratic society.

In doing this it does not enjoy full freedom of choice: changing international realities and domestic conditions have made negotiations a major feature of any option it chooses.

The choice before delegates on July 2 is no longer whether to ride the donkey: it is whether the stick or the carrot (or what combination of both) is the best means of moving the donkey to the ANC's chosen destination by the shortest possible route.

Debating the ANC's draft constitution Power from below?

The ANC Conference falls at a critical moment in the history of the ANC and indeed in the history of South Africa itself. Not least amongst the issues that make the conference so critical is the fact that it has to debate and adopt a constitution which will lay the basis for the organisation's work for the coming period.

After three decades of operating underground, with all the restrictions that illegality imposes on democracy and accountability, the ANC will be formulating a constitution that has to guide it through radically different conditions. What the conference will be doing will be more than just resuscitating its structures and methods of work from its period of legal existence. The movement has to adapt to circumstances which differ markedly from those of the 1950s.

The revival of the resistance movement after the 1973 Durban strikes - or even earlier with the launch of the South African Student's Organisation (Saso) - brought with it a rich heritage of democracy and accountability. Leading the field was the independent and non-racial trade union movement with its system of shop-floor representatives - the shopstewards.

This democratic tradition was thereafter generalised throughout the democratic movement - in schools, universities, youth groups and civics. In some cases direct parallels were drawn between student representative councils (SRCs) and shopsteward structures. For example, a pamphlet issued by the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) before the path-breaking November 1984 Vaal stayaway said:

'Like you workers: we want democratic committees under our control (SRCs) to fight for our needs.'

What is, however important is that democracy and accountability are not just for the sake of 'keeping the leadership in check'. Democracy is crucial to developing a broad-based leadership in

our movement, as well as to ensure that as a fighting organisation the ANC will always carry its membership behind it. It is this rich heritage of democracy and accountability that delegates will be carrying into the discussion of the ANC constitution.

During the first week of June, delegates from the ANC's national executive committee (NEC) and regional executives met to discuss contentious amendments made by the NEC to the ANC's draft constitution. This meeting resulted in a number of significant changes to the draft.

According to the original proposed amendments, the size of the NEC was to be increased from the present 35 to 120. Seventy nine members were to be elected at the national conference, thirty-two were to be *ex-officio* from the ANC regions, the Youth League and the Women's League, and fifteen were to be co-opted by the NEC.

The new proposals stipulate an NEC size of between 87 and 90 members. Fifty-five of these are to be directly elected at conference. This includes five chief officers - the president, deputy president, secretary-general, national treasurer and deputy secretary-general.

The NEC is now only allowed to co-opt a maximum of three additional members.

Whereas before the draft allowed for sixteen Women's League representatives on the NEC, this has now been reduced to two - the national president and general secretary, the same as the Youth League. However, it has also been accepted that, of the 50 directly elected NEC members, at least 30% (ie fifteen) have to be women.

(Significantly, this change prevents Winnie Mandela, as the PWV Women's League president, from being automatically elected onto the NEC).

Regional representation, on the other hand, is to be increased from fourteen (regional chairpersons) to twenty-eight (chairpersons and secretaries).

A particularly contentious provision in the original amendments was that no structure of the ANC could canvass support for particular election candidates, or mandate their delegates to vote in a particular way. A very complex nomination procedure was proposed, with the outgoing NEC having the right to propose up to 75 candidates for the incoming NEC. For the purposes of election the NEC was given the status of a region in the ANC.

This would have given the present NEC enough power to substantially shape the composition of the new NEC, even to the point of reproducing itself.

The NEC now has no such powers. A candidate, however, still has to be nominated by at least two regions. Alternatively, a nomination made at the conference has to be signed by at least a hundred delegates.

While specific prohibitions on mandating delegates and canvassing support for candidates were thrown out, according to one ANC branch official there still seems to be a feeling that 'delegates elected to go to conference are elected as political leaders in their own right, and as such ought not to be tied by the mandates of their branches'.

For many this contradicts the status of conference as the highest decision-making structure of the organisation. Such a status demands that it be *the* most democratic structure - delegates therefore ought not to have entirely discretionary powers, but should try to the best of his/her ability to represent the views of the branch or region which sent her/him there.

The existing procedures, then, arguably still limits the possibility of relatively unknown regional candidates being nominated, and

*OUPA LEHULERE and DEVAN PILLAY
look at the ANC's draft constitution and
argue that, while recent changes have
made it more democratic, more needs to be
done to limit rule from above*



places well-known national figures at a considerable advantage.

This procedure for example contrasts with that of most unions, where nominations for national office are made by structures of the organisation and the names of nominees are circulated in advance.

The National Conference

The draft constitution does not say how often the national conference should meet, except to say that the NEC will hold office for three years. The omission is particularly important in light of the rapidity of the political changes in this period.

Are events moving so fast that national conference might have to be convened at least once a year?

Consideration should also be given to whether elections to the NEC be held yearly, and whether there will be the right of recall of NEC members.

The strong reaction to the original draft amendments reflects the feeling among activists and members generally

Working class leadership ... The unions have a lot to teach the ANC about democracy and accountability

that the NEC has not always acted in a democratic manner. The call for democratic and accountable methods of work on the part of the NEC was widespread at last December's consultative conference.

Weak links with branches

In the new draft constitution there is no link between the NEC and branches except at the National Conference and through the chairpersons and secretaries of the ANC regions.

According to the original draft, this link was quite tenuous since the seventy-five directly elected NEC members heavily outweighed those with direct links to regions and the auxiliary organisations.

While the proposed changes substantially improves regional representation,

much more needs to be done to ensure that the voice of the branches can influence the NEC between conferences. Once more the unions have a lot to teach the ANC.

Regions and branches

The lack of clear lines and structures of accountability is not restricted to the NEC, and its relations with the regions and branches.

At a regional level there is also no structured and accountable relationship between the regional executive committee (REC) and branches. In fact it can be said that outside of regional and national conferences, ANC branches are isolated units.

What is at stake here is not just a question of accountability but also the existence of the ANC as a *unitary* organisation. At the moment there is no mechanism whereby ANC branches can automatically receive reports of the quarterly NEC and REC meetings.

Activists on the ground have often raised the fact that the ANC communicates to its members through the commercial press - and of course *Mayibuye*, which is however limited.

What is clearly needed is some structure that brings the branches and the REC together on a regular basis - probably similar to the old UDF general councils, but with clearly defined constitutional powers. Such a structure would make it possible for branches to interact with the NEC through the REC members who attend NEC meetings.

In this way an NEC whose composition is weighted in favour of regions would be directly accountable to members on the ground. More importantly, by establishing this kind of link the ANC would be turned into a truly unitary organisation.

What is also significant about the draft is the little attention given to branches and their role in the ANC. In fact, the very order in which the draft constitution places the various structures are from the top downwards.

Although a number of articles in *Mayibuye* have been devoted to the question building branches as *organs of struggle*, with emphasis on the branch as the basic unit of the ANC, the current draft does not reflect this emphasis. Branches surely deserve better treatment in the constitution of the movement.

The character of the ANC

A constitution is of course not only about

ANC CONFERENCE

the internal processes of an organisation. Equally important is that it must reflect the character of an organisation, its aims and objectives.

An issue of great importance is what kind of ANC are we building. It is clear that the ruling class would like a small and much-tamed ANC. For the oppressed people a democratic mass-based militant ANC with a working class base is a vital priority. The structures of the organisation must be designed in such a way that they facilitate and reflect this orientation.

It is significant that although the ANC's existing strategy and tactics document, which came out of the 1969 Morogoro consultative conference, emphasises the leading or special role of the working class in the struggle for people's power, the current draft mentions it rather obliquely.

The status of the Freedom Charter is also reduced in the document. Unlike the existing version, the role of the Charter as a guide to current struggles at a national and local level is missing.

The role of departments

Intimately related to the character of the ANC as an organisation is the role of departments such as Information and Publicity; Land Commission; Economic Policy; Political Education and so forth.

The draft constitution is silent on how the departments fit into the structure of the ANC.

If not brought into the formal structures of the ANC, there is a serious danger that departments will produce of a whole layer of ANC functionaries - employed to conduct research and make policy recommendations - which have considerable power.

In the parties of European Social Democracy, huge bureaucracies developed 'behind' the organisations and it became impossible for ordinary members to control it.

Conference will have to decide how to prevent the development of an uncontrollable bureaucracy. Does the ANC need to reproduce all the research that has up to now been conducted by progressive service organisations?

Or does the ANC need to examine which departments are vital to the daily running of the organisation, and then shape these into constitutional structures of the organisation at all levels - national, regional and branch?

Once the key departments - eg DIP, DPE and Campaigns - have been identified they could be restructured, and oth-

ers, such as Health and Social Welfare, could become NEC portfolios and not departments.

In other words, an NEC member would be appointed (by the NEC) to be in charge of, say Health and Social Welfare and his/her task would be to liaise with progressive health and welfare groups and be responsible for harnessing their knowledge and expertise in the service of the ANC and the struggle in general.

Women's and Youth Leagues

Over the past few months a debate over the relationship between the Youth League and the ANC has been raging. The key issue has been whether the Youth League should be an 'auxiliary' or 'autonomous' organisation.

The old interim constitution stated that both Leagues were auxiliary structures. The latest draft states that they are autonomous. The draft also says that the Youth League will ensure that youth 'make a full and rich contribution to the work of the ANC'.

If this is to happen, then it is crucial that the movement's youth wing be integrated into the ANC, and so make it possible for the parent body to benefit from that sector's militancy and energy. Similarly with the Women's League.

The structural questions at stake here involve not only how many League delegates sit on the NEC, but also issues like: how the Youth League and Women's League will feed into the national conference; how they will relate to structures like the departments; a clearer definition of the space the Leagues have for undertaking independent campaigns; should all eligible League members join the parent body or not.

Lively debate

The draft constitution going to the July Conference is likely to generate lively debate. The issues addressed here are not the only ones. A healthy and well-considered debate around all the issues is vital to ensure that a democratic constitution-from-below emerges.

A democratically drawn up constitution will facilitate the building of a mass-based ANC that is rooted in the traditions of democracy and accountability, which have developed over the last twenty years or so.

Anything less will ensure that the ANC becomes just another political party.

• Oupa Lehulere is an activist in the Durban Central branch of the ANC. •

The politics of specificity

DEVAN PILLAY takes a brief look at the ANC's draft Strategy and Tactics document, and argues that it can be more specific on certain crucial issues

The ANC's new draft strategy and tactics document is a substantial revision of the existing document which emerged out of the 1969 Morogoro conference, and the draft presented to the December consultative conference. While a considerable improvement over the latter, the document is vague and ambiguous where it needn't be.

One of its strengths is that it now concedes that the movement is losing the 'tactical initiative' to the De Klerk government, although it still holds the 'strategic initiative'. Such an admission allows the collective mind of the ANC to be focussed on the task of regaining the initiative. The following scenario can be distilled from the draft document:

The transition to democracy

How best can the country move from the present situation - characterised by uncertainty and rising social instability - to a stable future where the ANC's goals of non-racialism, anti-sexism, democracy and social justice are achieved?

The document puts forward the strategic demand of a *constituent assembly* - consisting of delegates chosen by the people, through a non-racial national election - as the only democratic way to draw up a new constitution.

But such an assembly cannot be elected, and cannot meet, while the present government holds power. The document therefore proposes the establishment of an *interim government* - consist-

ing of all the major parties across the political spectrum - which would ensure a 'free and fair' process towards drawing up a new constitution.

Both these demands are rejected by the current regime and its allies. The document therefore sees the necessity of the ANC reaching beyond its strategic alliance with the SACP and Cosatu, to embrace other liberation organisations - including the PAC, Azapo and independent mass organisations like the civics - which also support the idea of a constituent assembly. This *patriotic front* should include as wide a range of forces as possible, so as to put the maximum amount of pressure on the regime to give in to the demand.

The document also specifies that an *all-party congress* be convened, consisting of *all parties* with a proven constituency (including the NP, CP, Inkatha, etc) to work out the broad principles of a new constitution, and the 'modalities' for establishing an interim government and constituent assembly.

This implies that the all-party congress will not engage in substantive negotiations about a new constitution. This can only happen at a constituent assembly.

Implicit in the draft is the view that these goals will be meaningless if the current levels of *violence* continue to rise. The document therefore advocates the building of a multi-faceted campaign, including military and political self-defence. To this end the ANC should strive to seek co-operation and limited agreements with other anti-apartheid forces, nationally and internationally, in order to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy.

Vague and ambiguous

The document, however, leaves many questions unanswered. It does not sufficiently draw out the preconditions for establishing an interim government and constituent assembly. These demands are meaningless if they are not linked to an explicit strategy to ensure equal access to all the mass media - especially the TV, radio and daily press - and to control the police and army, in order to ensure that they play a neutral role during the transition.

The absence of these crucial measures will leave the ANC in an interim government with authority but no power - a particularly dangerous combination.

The document speaks of the need for *maximum consultation* within the ranks



of the movement, and with the people generally. This includes electing and mandating delegates to a constituent assembly.

However, it is vague on the mechanisms necessary to ensure accountability, such as regular intervals during the sitting of the constituent assembly, where delegates go back to their constituencies to receive fresh mandates (as proposed by Cosatu).

Accountability will also be enhanced if all sittings of the assembly are open to the public, to facilitate maximum public discussion of the various clauses of a new constitution.

The document perhaps omits to mention these specifics because of the existence of an opposing view within the ANC, namely that necessary compromises on the constitution will be inhibited by the exposure of negotiations to public scrutiny, and by tying delegates hands with specific renewable mandates.

This argument, however, does not then reveal what 'maximum consultation' is supposed to mean - except to strengthen the suspicion that the ANC is meant to merely pay lip-service to such principles.

Delegates to the ANC's December conference stressed that any major policy changes which the NEC feels is necessary has to be ratified by the membership - either through a specially convened consultative conference, or through some other mechanism (such as regional conferences).

This will surely apply to any substantial compromises delegates to a constituent assembly might want to make on the ANC's constitutional proposals, which the July conference will adopt (after debate and amendment)?

Delegates should therefore be required to continually renew their mandates, and be subjected to recall if they do not carry them out.

Other weaknesses

Among the other weaknesses of the docu-

ment, the following can be mentioned:

- The document talks about 'african unity', but fails to draw attention to the ethnically diverse nature of the 'african' constituency, and the need to engage with this reality (see pages 21-30).
- There is no mention of the diverse nature of the 'white community', and the possibilities of appealing to some white workers and farmers on a class basis.
- Scant attention is paid to the specific organisation of women and the rural areas.
- The 'leading role of the working class' and the Freedom Charter is de-emphasised (see previous article).

The strategy and tactics document is crucial. It outlines the key principles which form the character of the ANC, and as such cannot afford to be careless about key issues.

Principled and popular

The current draft reflects a growing nervousness about the necessity of the ANC to broaden its base, and reach out to the 'middle ground'. It therefore feels that it is appropriate to fudge certain key issues.

While there is a need to be sensitive to these considerations, a nebulous 'all things to all people' ANC is precisely the sort of ANC that will not appear convincing to most people.

In addition, for an organisation to be credible, it needs to provide *leadership* on key issues, and be prepared to work hard to *convince* waverers of the correctness of its policies.

This can be done without becoming a highly principled sect that ends up preaching to itself.

There is also a crucial difference between appealing to the 'middle ground' - which includes the white, coloured and indian middle classes and working class; religious communities; rural communities - and becoming acceptable to white capitalists.

Through their indirect control of the media, these captains of industry - who have most to lose from a thoroughly democratic New South Africa - have placed great pressure on the ANC to shift course and become more 'moderate'.

'Moderation' in their eyes means limiting the depth and spread of democracy, so that existing interests and privileges remain largely intact.

For the majority who suffer the daily effects of a minority's privileges, such 'moderation' amounts to extreme deprivation and neglect.

The ANC need not fall into the trap. •

ANC's constitutional proposals: Reinstating the Rule of Law

The recent publication of its draft proposals for a new South African constitution - at this early stage in the transition to a new order - reflects a welcome commitment of the ANC to subject its views to public scrutiny. While much more can be done to involve rank-and-file ANC members in the process of constitution-making, and of understanding its deeper significance, the ANC has thus far gone way beyond any other party.

The *Discussion Document On Structures And Principles of A Constitution For A Democratic South Africa* ('discussion document') is an important contribution to the process of negotiating a new constitution. It contains details of the ANC's thinking on constitutional issues, and should be read together with the ANC's draft Bill of Rights.

The document is in two parts: the first outlines the *principles* of constitutional ordering and the second, the *structures* of a constitution for a democratic South Africa.

Principles

Apartheid discriminates on the basis of race; it defines the nation in racially exclusive terms and limits membership of the political community to whites.

The struggle against apartheid has therefore taken the form of a struggle for a *united* South Africa, a *non-racial* nation, a *representative government* and an inclusive political community based on *equal citizenship rights*.

These principles of struggle are reaffirmed in the discussion document as the basic principles underlying the constitution.

Unitary state and strong central government

The ANC remains committed to a vision of South Africa as a *single, unfragmented* entity governed by an effective central parliament. A united South Africa, the discussion document argues, requires an effective parliament 'capable of dealing with the great tasks of reconstruction, of overcoming the legacy of apartheid and

of nation-building'.

There has long been a statist bias on the left and within the liberation movement. In the discussion document, traditional statism is qualified by a commitment to developing strong and effective regional and local government. A 'free civil-society', within which civic associations, religious bodies, rate-payers association, trade unions and other independent bodies will exist in constitutionally protected space, will further define the limits of the central state.

Colour-Blind Constitution

The ANC, in line with the values enshrined in the Freedom Charter, has committed itself to a colour-blind constitution which does not entrench group differences. The vote is to be extended to all *individuals* without regard to colour, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, political opinion or cultural identity.

Within this ethnically neutral framework, cultural diversity can be protected through the guarantee of *equal individual rights, non-discrimination, and the freedom of association*. In this way, cultural uniqueness is protected without legally distinguishing between individual citizens, and in a manner consistent with democracy and the concept of one South African nation.

By contrast, the National Party continues to advance proposals which will, in effect, constitutionalise ethnicity in such a way that its access to power is guaranteed, regardless of the outcome of democratic elections.

Equal rights and affirmative action

Fundamental rights and freedoms are to be guaranteed to all on an *equal basis*. The discussion document, however, recognises an important exception to this

principle of formal equality.

At all levels of government, the state will be empowered to pursue policies of affirmative action, so as to redress the inequities which result from past discrimination. The document argues further that the state, within the limits of its resources, should be obliged to establish a *guaranteed and expanding floor of social, economic and educational rights for all*.

These provisions reflect a *national consensus* that the state, *regardless of ideological orientation of the party in power*, has an important welfare function.

Gender rights

Both the draft Bill of Rights and the discussion document reflect a strong commitment to guaranteeing equal rights for women and men, in both public and private life.

Particularly noteworthy is the commitment to recognise women's right to have abortions, and to protect women against sexual violence. The latter will effectively outlaw rape in marriage, which the current rape laws do not recognise.

However, an important matter not yet addressed is the future of customary laws and other personal legal systems which conflict with the principle of gender equality.

Representative government

The *representatives* of the people at all levels of government must be chosen by the people in free, fair and regular elections. Decisions are to be made by a majority of the people's representatives. To this ordinary principle of democratic government, ANC constitutional planners have introduced an important 'amendment' - the principle of *legality* (constitutionalism).

There are at least two ideas embedded in this principle. Firstly, government is subordinate to the constitution and secondly, individuals have guaranteed rights which may be upheld against an elected government.

The drift in the ANC's thinking towards *constitutionalism* is an important development. However, it has occurred

FIROZ CACHALIA
*comments on the ANC's
latest proposals for a new
South African constitution*



without sufficient discussion or understanding of its implications among the movement's members and supporters.

An ideologically neutral constitution

In principle, constitutions should be ideologically neutral on matters of economic policy. These are matters to be decided by an elected parliament, not the courts. It follows that attempts to entrench *capitalist property relationships* should be resisted.

Furthermore, under South African conditions a property clause which guarantees private ownership as well as prohibiting the expropriation of land and the nationalisation of industries will effectively freeze existing racial imbalances. A market-based standard of compensation will not make a real difference.

On the other hand, it may be argued that without some agreement on the property question, there will be no lasting political settlement and that property owners require some protection against a majority government. If it is considered necessary to protect private property, a distinction should be made between personal and productive property - although this will most certainly not satisfy those who presently own and control the economy.

Article 14 of the German constitution, which protects private property but allows for expropriation in the public interest and for public ownership, may provide the basis for a compromise. In principle however, it is better to settle these matters through the *political* process and through negotiated social contracts rather than through constitutional

The abuse of power ... the ANC's proposals guarantee individual rights

entrenchment.

Structure of government

The powers of government will be divided amongst its three branches, the Executive, the Legislature, the Judiciary.

The discussion document recommends a mixed system of presidential and cabinet government. It leaves open the question of whether the president should be elected directly by the population or indirectly by parliament.

It can be anticipated that the National Party will oppose a popularly elected presidency because of its alleged 'majoritarian' bias. They are in favour of a 'power-sharing' formula being written into the constitution.

In principle, coalitions should be negotiated where necessary *after* elections and not by way of constitutional gerrymandering.

The discussion document advocates a two-chamber parliament, comprised of a National Assembly and a Senate.

The Lower House (National Assembly) will represent the population as a whole, and the Upper House (Senate) will represent the regions. The Senate will have the power to *delay* legislation past by the National Assembly, but not to veto legislation. The document does not, however indicate what powers the Senate will have in respect of money bills.

For some time now there has been a debate within the democratic movement on whether interests within civil society should be represented in the Upper House.

There were some suggestions that workers should be represented through trade unions and that traditional leaders and women should have special representation.

The document firmly rejects this idea of a *corporatist* chamber.

This raises the issue of the relationship between representative government and mass organisations. There is a tradition of thinking on the left which has emphasised the *limits* of parliamentary democracy and representative government. Our own recent history of popular struggle and grassroots action has encouraged an emphasis on the importance of direct, popular forms of democracy.

The discussion document, however, seeks to protect mass organisations through *guaranteed rights of organisation* rather than special representation in the institutions of government.

The discussion document also opposes the idea, advocated by the National Party, that the Upper House should be a 'community' chamber representing ethnic interests. Both houses of parliament are to be elected on the basis of proportional representation. The discussion document suggests a system of national and regional lists.

The main advantage of this system of electing the people's representatives is that it ensures that the number of representatives a particular party has corresponds with the proportion of votes it wins. This allows small parties which represent minorities to secure representation.

It is arguable however, that under this system there is little direct accountability to specific constituencies and that it concentrates power in party bureaucracies. To counter this it is to ensure that the internal procedures of political parties are democratic.

Bill of Rights and constitutional court

The discussion document confirms that the ANC is in favour of incorporating a Bill of fundamental human rights in a new constitution. The Bill of Rights, it is suggested, should harmonise the first (civil liberties), the second (welfare rights) and the third (rights to development and peace) generations of rights.

This reflects the ANC's commitment to eradicating poverty. It has, however been argued with some force that the courts should not have the power to de-

• Continued on Page 18

Healthy policies?

In September 1990, the ANC's Health Secretariat issued a 'discussion document for ANC branches towards developing a health policy'. This indicates that the ANC is committed to open discussions on the future of health in this country.

Even more encouraging is that this document was issued to branches and not just to professional health workers and experts. Democratic health workers have welcomed this initiative. That health will be on the agenda of the National Conference is cause for praise, say health workers.

The document points to the principles that will underpin a future health system under an ANC government. It is essentially a statement of principles and goals for health and health care. It is not a comprehensive health plan - it was not meant to be.

If the principles in the document are implemented, a future health system could look like anything from England's National Health Service (under the Labour government) to Cuba's miraculous free health system. Certainly, it will place South Africa in that spectrum of health systems that serve the poor more than the rich.

The document makes a firm commitment to a programme of affirmative action (redressing imbalances) and to democratic control.

But it is only partially radical in its commitment to the poor. While it makes a brave commitment to free health care, it deals only nervously with the private sector and traditional healers.

Basic Principles

While the document formally lists only 3 principles, others are evident (or implied) in the rest of the document. The section entitled 'Principles guiding ANC health policy' states:

'Health is a basic human right. This right, particularly to free essential health care, should be incorporated in the constitution and the Bill of Rights ... There is a need for a political commitment to improve the quality of life for all South Africans ... There must be preferential allo-

Members of the secretariat of the South African Health Workers' Congress, SAHWCO, look at the strengths and weaknesses of the ANC's discussion document on health policy.

cation of resources to promote health care of the most vulnerable sections of the community ...'

One of the weaknesses of the document is that the principles are not clearly and completely outlined in this section. Only if one combs the document, are the following principles evident:

- Health care is a basic human right.
- The provision of health care is the responsibility of the state.
- Health care must be free (ie, no fee for service).
- Health care must be equally accessible to all.
- Health services must be based on the principles of Primary Health Care.
- Health care must be comprehensive (with a particular commitment to preventive and promotive health).
- Health services must be planned.
- Health services must be democratically controlled.
- Health services must be decentralised (not fragmented).

All these principles should be stated in one section.

Private Sector

While the list of goals is noble and wide-ranging (to satisfy everyone from the general practitioner to the worker), it does tackle some debatable issues.

The document states categorically that health and welfare are so closely linked, that they should form part of a single 'Ministry of Health and Social Services'. This issue will certainly raise debate amongst health and social service workers.

On the question of the private sector, the document reflects the dilemma the ANC faces. On the one hand, the existence of a private sector impedes the development of a truly national health

service (since they will compete for resources). On the other hand, the health system we will inherit will depend largely on doctors whose skills may be needed to sustain the health service.

The document correctly states that the private sector drains the public service of 50% of its doctors and resources, and yet provides care for only 20% of the population. Despite this, the document states the private sector will be allowed to exist within the context of a mixed economy. It does, however, speak about finding ways to 'regulate the very high cost of private health care'.

The document stops short of calling for the long-term eradication of the private sector altogether.

Another weakness of the document is its failure to draw a distinction between the family doctor in private practice and the multi-national drug companies. The difference is crucial for a national democratic movement such as the ANC. The same way in which small business can be mobilised against monopoly capital, so too can the family practitioner be mobilised against the drug monopolies.

While the ANC might be on a collision course with directors of drug multi-nationals, this is not necessarily true for the family practitioner. Certainly, some family practitioners have joined the movement as fully fledged members (some with executive positions in branches). It would be interesting to evaluate what influence they may have on ANC health policy.

Another 'private sector' (the bigger by far) - traditional healers - is dealt with in just two lines. The document states: 'It is imperative to develop an appropriate relationship between traditional healers and the rest of the health service.'

This statement is not helpful in understanding how the ANC is really going to 'deal with' traditional healers. Does it mean that traditional healers would form an appendage to the National Health Service? Or would they be fully integrated? Would the government provide formal training? Would there be a research programme on traditional methods?

But the section on Goals of the Health Policy is not all vague. There are important and substantial concrete proposals. These are:

- The development of an essential drugs list;
- The development of a local drug industry;
- Community-based health sciences training;
- Compulsory service in rural areas and informal settlements (for all health workers);
- The setting up of 'expert committees' to investigate neglected services like occupational services, mental health services, paediatric and maternal care, dental care and rehabilitation services (an 'expert committee' on health legislation needs to be added);
- A Bill of Patients' Rights;
- A Health Charter.

These goals are concrete and measurable.

Health workers and professionals

The document never refers to 'health professionals' but to 'health workers'. This might be simply a semantic issue or it could indicate a commitment to value all health workers who sustain the health services (and not just the professionals). Sahwco, and indeed other organisations, have long struggled to break the ideology of professionalism in health and to restore the dignity of all other health workers. Sahwco has encouraged a 'health worker' consciousness and fought against the 'I am a professional' consciousness. It is encouraging that the ANC is taking this issue forward.

On labour relations, the document states: 'Management and labour relations must be improved... All health workers should be encouraged to join trade unions or other forms of organisation to represent their interests within the health service.'

While the recognition of trade unions is encouraging the document is silent on mechanisms for conflict resolution in the health sector (should there be compulsory arbitration, for example, or should health workers have the right to strike?). Silence on these issues could be because they are still being hotly debated.

But what about the issue of compulsory membership (closed shop) to organisations like the South African Nurses Association (Sana)? Had the document come out strongly against compulsory membership, it would have sent a clear message to nurses (the majority of whom would have welcomed it) and to Sana (they would have been warned!).

Gaping holes

Apart from the weak points already mentioned, there are other gaping 'holes'

strategy for health care for the entire sub-region. South Africa (the ANC in particular) has benefited tremendously from African solidarity. Surely our policies should reflect that.

The document as it is, is a broad statement of general principles and goals. Some would argue that the absence of hard facts and figures is a weakness. In the statement on goals, for example, hard facts and figures could have been useful. It could have stated what the ideal doctor:patient ratio should be (instead of

talking generally about training more health workers). It could also have stated what national life expectancy we would want to strive for, etc.

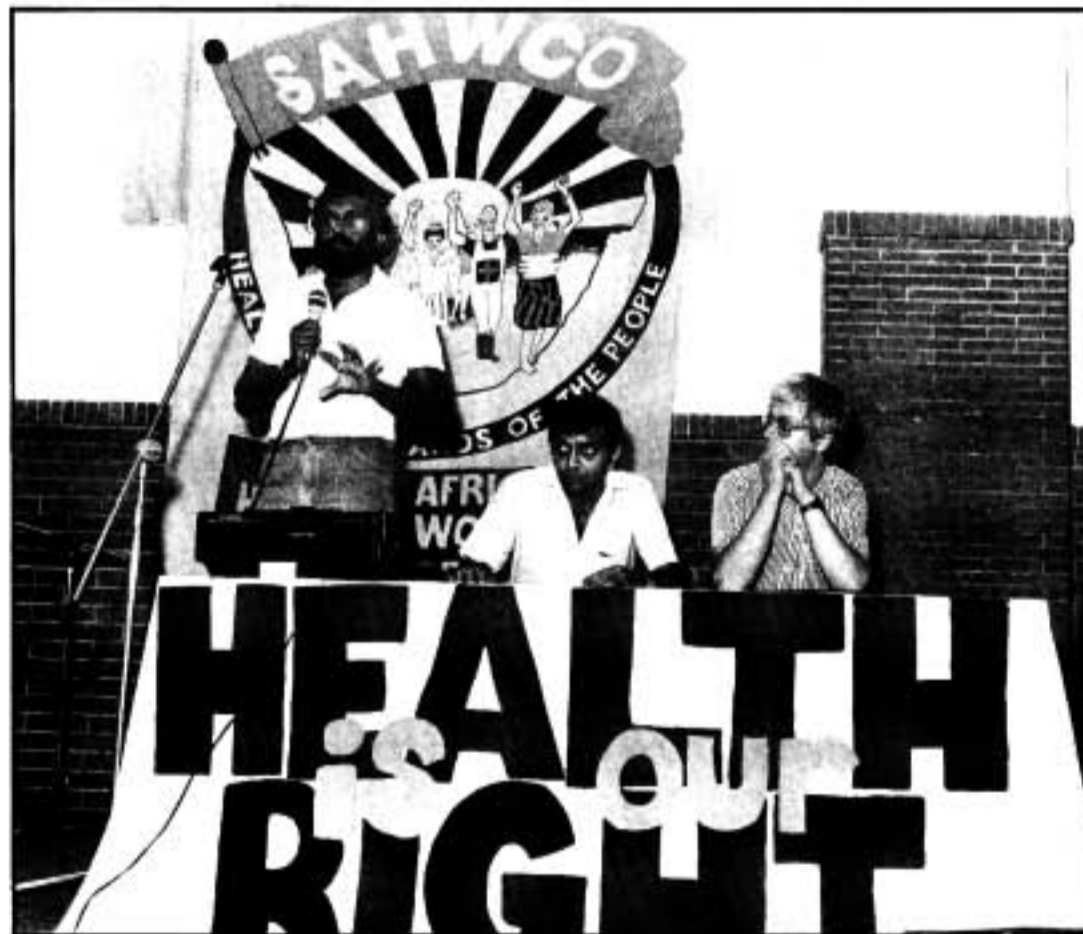
Another big problem with the document, is its failure to have a section on 'strategies for change'. How would the ANC transform the present system to that envisaged in this document? There is a mention of 'expert committees', but much clearer strategy is needed. Should there be public commissions on health issues?

Would the ANC re-educate and re-select the present bureaucrats? Ordinary ANC members would want to know whether the racist superintendent at the local hospital

would remain, or would he have to re-apply for his job? There are already elements of a strategy for change interwoven in the present document (eg a Bill of Patients Rights). This needs to be clearly spelled out in a separate section.

Despite these weaknesses, the document provides an excellent framework for the ANC to develop an advanced health policy - a health policy that speaks for the poor and oppressed and not the drug companies and health professionals who have an *investment in disease*. Hopefully, discussions within the ANC's conference will not be dominated by health professionals. It is crucial that rank and file activists speak for their communities on health.

The best thing that could happen for health in this country is that the discussions on health policy at the conference gets dominated by women (especially mothers) - for they have an *investment in health*. •



A health policy should speak for the poor and not for the drug monopolies and health professionals

in the document.

The issue of non-governmental organisations is not dealt with well (if at all). The document states: 'Interests groups such as societies (eg a diabetes society)... should have formal and easy access to policy making bodies.'

This is most encouraging for 'societies', but what about the Red Cross, Progressive Primary Health Care Network, Sahwco, Namda, etc? What will their role be in decision-making?

Most disturbing is the absence of any sense (let alone mention) of internationalism. Surely the ANC has to have a policy on international co-operation (especially Southern African solidarity). Would we train Mozambican, Namibian and Zimbabwean health workers? Would a future government encourage the disintegration of boundaries as far as health is concerned?

Here, we are not just speaking about 'infection control', but about a common

The ANC is now on the third draft of economic policy in a year, but the *Economic Manifesto* that will be presented to the national conference may yet require further revision.

What does the *Manifesto* say – and mean? How are the most pressing material concerns of the vast majority of people addressed? Does the *Manifesto* dovetail with the policies of alliance partners Cosatu and the SACP? What thorny problems are swept under the carpet?

Broad spectrum of interests

This document emerged from an Economic Workshop in May, where regions reportedly hammered an earlier draft for its lack of ambition. Yet in the spirit of the ANC's multi-class constituency, the *Manifesto* reflects a broad spectrum of interests. Absent are references to capitalism, socialism, communism. Care has generally been taken to add balance and to limit attacks on big business. A future 'growth path' is what is tabled for debate. Deplorable behaviour of Barlows, De Beers or the SA Reserve Bank is off the immediate agenda.

Yet it is also a concise, eloquent and quietly enraged *Manifesto*, admirably conscious of women's oppression and the deep legacy of rural poverty and land dispossession. It proposes a more balanced economy within South Africa, and regional and continental cooperation against the protectionist North, while 'tilting the balance of advantage in favour of the most impoverished of our neighbours'.

The *Manifesto* sets out the problems South Africa faces in stark terms (notwithstanding its omission of Aids). Yet it falls short on finding sweeping solutions – or indeed in specifying convincing means of 'fundamental restructuring'. The content behind Cosatu demands for 'workers control' is all but ignored. And instead of dramatic Freedom Charter promises, the language is often evasive.

Evasive language

A 'major inquiry' into the role of monopoly capital. 'Responsible' policies on government spending and inflation. Multinational corporations to make 'a contribution' via an investment code. (But nothing here about the menacing World Bank and IMF.) Anti-monopoly legislation to be 'considered'. And 'consideration' to be given to establishing new banks and transforming old ones, with directed investments (prescribed assets) merely



The ANC's Economic Manifesto Can it satisfy the majority's basic needs?

PATRICK BOND looks at the ANC's latest policy document on the economy

an 'option'.

So, will the fight for desperately-needed economic reforms become mere reformism?

The answer is not clear, because there is not yet a coherent leftwing alternative to *Manifesto* dithering on such crucial challenges. It's true that nationalisation has inched back into the document after grassroots feedback was registered, *but only on a 'case-by-case' basis.*

'There seems to have been a shift away from collectivist approaches towards what one may call a "mixed market" approach,' economist Vishnu Padayachee of the University of Durban-Westville concludes of the 'Great Economic Debate' conducted last year. 'The leading role for the state is less boldly asserted.'

How does all of this relate to other post-apartheid visions in the alliance? As *WIP* went to press, the SACP promised a

brand new economic policy. If current trends are any indication the debate may intensify.

'Retrench the bosses!,' screamed the headline of the May Day issue of *Umsebenzi*. Just as the establishment – joined now by Margaret Thatcher – was gearing up once again to persuade the ANC to realign rightwards, the Party boldly pronounced 'Smash Capitalism!'

Yet the path from such resplendent (and for the SACP, fresh) rhetoric to implementation is long and difficult. The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC (MWT) takes a trotskyist perspective, and predicts 'the capitalist class will be able to defeat controls designed to redirect and redistribute wealth, as has been the experience of reformist governments everywhere'.

MWT proposes to conference, 'The ANC should not stand for the partial na-

tionalisation which has proved inefficient and unpopular elsewhere, nor should it stand for the bureaucratic planned economy which has failed under stalinist regimes. Nationalisation should provide instead the foundation for a democratically planned economy, under workers' control and management'.

But even a year and a half after unbanning, there are depressingly few notions of how this might work in practice. Much of the fault lies with the intelligentsia. Given the redirection of key marxist academics within the movement towards social democratic ideas in recent years, should the ANC even bother with this debate at conference?

Many will say yes, recalling the Freedom Charter commitment to 'transferring the ownership' of banks, monopolies and mines to the 'people as a whole' (which can only be interpreted as nationalisation?). From this base, movement radicals may not settle for the *Manifesto's*

bite-sized aspirations.

The mining houses are the most difficult prospects, given their power and mobility. The NUM has suggested a phased but forthright nationalisation process that, in the words of union economist Martin Nicol, would add meat to slogans like 'Abolish all racism! Re-invest profits to create jobs! Train black workers with skills! These will be the top of the directives to nationalised industries'.

And Cosatu recently called for the nationalisation of the building and construction industry, which even the establishment concedes behaves like a cartel to drive up prices, making low-income housing unaffordable.

Furthermore, the two big mutual insurance companies (Old Mutual and Sanlam) could be nationalised quickly and costlessly, industry experts suggest, since only their management (not ownership) need be altered. And the Reserve Bank, so crucial to determining the direc-

tion (and cost) of credit in the economy, could be wrested from the banks' ownership, in line with Western social democratic practice.

The *Manifesto* may be subjected to amendments along these lines and more. If it is a document outlining 'fundamental principles,' these are sound, yet substantively weaker than the Freedom Charter. If it aims to promote short-term economic stability, it has not taken into account the current retrenchment wave, in which about 1 300 workers are sacked daily (in factories, not just fields and mines).

What may be most striking about the *Manifesto's* moderation is that, despite outreach to big business with substantial concessions, there has been very little – aside from exhortations to end sanctions and mass action – received in return.

• Patrick Bond is the author of *Commanding Heights and Community Control: New economics for a new SA.* •

Economic issues scorecard

Local or foreign markets?

The *Manifesto* is light on references to foreign markets (exports), which must annoy the state and the big industrialists and financiers no end. But post-apartheid reality will probably be different – so is it not time to specify which ('longer-term') *manufacturing* exports might succeed (if any!), and which will fail? Which local industries will need continued protection from hostile foreign competition?

Labour-intensive or capital-intensive production?

Should new foreign investment and new loans be used to bring in fancy new machinery? Or should there be much higher import tariffs on machines than have existed in the past in order to promote local 'appropriate technology'? No clues offered in the *Manifesto* – surprising, because even the World Bank has recently told the ANC that South Africa is 'unusually capital-intensive', and that this is a big problem.

Production for luxury consumption or satisfying basic needs?

The *Manifesto* slates the economy for its orientation to the wealthy minority, correctly suggesting this bias is partly to blame for the economic slump. There should instead be much more af-

fordable houses, appliances, furniture, clothing, services, and other basic goods. What, then, will be done with the existing Mercedes plant and Rosebank Mall? By what means can a parasitical economy become a people's economy? Good sentiments, but no meat on those bones.

Welfare state and inflation?

It looks like we'll see both. Big business is justifiably confused about how inflation can be kept in check given increased government spending. While the *Manifesto* is nonchalant here, ANC economist Maria Ramos has recently conceded moderate inflation may be a necessary post-apartheid evil (this infuriates bankers most of all, and makes borrowers richer, but poor people will need an even bigger safety net).

What is growth?

This is the trickiest. Is growth merely the increase in total goods and services produced (GDP)? What if bourgeois measurements conflict with growth of a healthy environment, racial and gender equality, and rising standards of health, education and welfare? (This is usually the case.) The preoccupation with growth could leave these out of the equation, to be tagged on at the end, if lucky.

• From Page 13

side policy questions, and that in any case second and third generation rights are not enforceable in court proceedings.

Some who hold this view have argued that we should instead follow the Namibian and Indian examples and incorporate provisions such as 'directives of state policy'. This will oblige the state to take these goals into account when making laws and formulating policy.

The ANC has recommended that a special court be set up to ensure that the provisions of the constitution are complied with. Steps should be taken to ensure that this court is representative of the people as a whole.

The civil service

The civil service has the power to frustrate the process of change. It is vitally important, therefore that the power to restructure and transform the civil service and other state apparatuses should remain in the hands of the people's elected representatives. There will also be a need to ensure continuity and competence in ad-

ministration. The document recommends the establishment of a Public Service Commission to oversee the recruitment, promotion and dismissal of civil service staff and to implement an affirmative action programme.

Liberal-democratic traditions

The ANC's recommendations draw upon the liberal-democratic tradition of constitutionalism. It emphasises a separation of powers, individual rights and an independent judiciary. At the same time, the concept of constitutionalism has been creatively developed to reflect the aspirations of the disenfranchised and South African realities.

The recommendations commit the state to an active role in securing a minimum standard of living for all citizens. New institutions like the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission will be established to ensure that the basic rights of citizens are effective and abuses of authority curbed.

The struggle for national liberation has focused our aspirations on substantive political, economic and social out-

comes. The liberation struggle, however, has not paid attention to specific models of political construction and constitutional development.

The idea therefore that the liberation project should culminate in the adoption of a new constitution which embodies basic rights is a relatively new one. It reflects a worldwide reassertion of the importance of universal values and legal institutions.

The leninist influences on our political thinking have also tended to make questions of law and human rights relative concepts, rather than absolute principles. In the Soviet Union new reforms have been introduced since 1988, as part of the process of perestroika and restructuring aimed at reinstating the rule of law.

The ANC's legal and constitutional committee is pointing in this direction. The trouble is these new points of departure are occurring without sufficient debate and grassroots discussion.

• *Firoz Cachalia works for the Centre for Applied Legal Services, at Wits University* •

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Defending townships: Has the ANC done enough?

Despite horrific experiences of violence which have left thousands dead in Natal, the PWV, Eastern Transvaal and other areas, very little has been done to set up defence units in the townships.

The professionalism displayed by the killers has confirmed the involvement of a mysterious 'third force' at work in these troubled areas. This has prompted the democratic movement to take responsibility for the guiding and building of defence units.

The ANC-SACP-Cosatu discussion document *For the Sake of Our Lives* is an attempt to prevent spontaneous actions, and overcome a visible lack of planning and discipline common in our communities, and to minimise casualties.

According to the document, which is being serialised in the SACP mouthpiece *Umsebenzi*, there is a need for an organised force guided by political leadership which will serve both to protect the community and ensure law and order.

The document is a guide to the task of communities organising themselves effectively. It is a contribution to an ongoing discussion, and covers tasks such as organising a street defence system, recruitment, training, weapons, communications, intelligence, erecting barricades & fortifications, first aid, auxiliary support groups, working with hostile forces etc.

Roots of defence units

The idea emerged during the mass upsurge in the early 80's and more particularly from the ANC's 1985 Kabwe conference, which placed emphasis on mass involvement in a people's war and on the building of organs of people's power through street committees.

This strategy was meant to involve communities as much as possible. Presently, the whole issue of township defence units has come to the fore not because it is a continuation of this strategy

The continuing levels of violence gripping Natal and Transvaal townships calls for decisive action on the part of the liberation movement.

MBULELO SOMPETHA
reports on the progress made in setting up defence units

as such, but because of the general outcry from communities which have been subjected to vicious, unprovoked attacks over the past year.

According to ANC Youth League organising secretary Samson Makoetla, 'the violence is an attempt by the government to weaken organisations which are seen to be championing the cause of the oppressed. Therefore the building and strengthening of defence units should be tied to the strategy of ensuring that communities which support change should not be intimidated. The role then of defence units is to ensure that a movement towards a democratic order is not hampered by violence'.



Chris Hani: Defence units should be community controlled so that they do not deteriorate into vigilante groups

If the present violence is clearly an attempt to discredit the ANC, what then has been the organisation's response? Proposals for defence units were discussed at the ANC's December Consultative Conference, where it was agreed to implement such units 'if the need arose'.

But since then very little has happened. Although communities have on many occasions in the past organised themselves against invasion, the majority have looked to the ANC for protection and direction.

So far, according to NEC member Chris Hani, the ANC's response has been to handle the situation politically, through trying to persuade the government to stop the violence and by talking to Inkatha (*New Nation* May 30, 1991).

Peace accords useless

Successive peace accords between the ANC and Inkatha, aimed at halting the carnage, have proved useless as agreements have repeatedly been broken. Many now feel that the ANC needs to seriously consider being more assertive in the formation of defence units if its mass support and confidence is to be retained.

Whatever local dimensions and specific characteristics this conflict has, it is essentially a conflict between apartheid surrogates, instigated by a 'third force' located within the repressive arm of the state, on the one hand, and the people led by the liberation movements on the other.

What is evident about the violence is that it is a well co-ordinated campaign to spread terror to almost every township where the ANC has support. On the Reef, because of its ethnically diverse nature, these forces have taken advantage of ethnic differences to sow tensions, disunity and hatred, while at the same time trying to reduce the conflict to a Xhosa-Zulu 'faction fight'.

What then is the objective of these vigilante groups? They are undoubtedly meant to serve the same strategic purpose as Unita in Angola, the MNR in Mozam-

bique and the Nicaraguan Contras. They are the agents of counter-revolutionary forces which want to maintain the essence of the apartheid system by deliberately using divisions within the black community.

But simply blaming rightwing elements within the security forces has not won the ANC any moral high ground, and more importantly it has not stopped the killings. According to Samson Makoetla, 'there has not been any discernible input by the ANC into areas where defence structures existed. I am saying discernible because the manner in which they acted did not show ANC's involvement or input'.

Slow progress

But the ANC's seeming reluctance to take the initiative in forming defence units is not the only reason for slow progress.

According to the SACP's Jeremy Cronin, this 'can be attributed to some early misconceptions on the part of the liberation movement and by people on the ground that armed struggle was an affair of MK professionals.' While that focus shifted in theory to that of a generalised people's war, he says, 'in reality there has never been a people's war. The armed struggle remained largely operated at the level of "armed propaganda"'.

There still are those who incorrectly feel that 'MK as an army must come to the defence of the communities and that self-defence units are a 'narrow professional MK affair', says Cronin. This also stems from the view that, since the ANC forced the government to release its leaders, and because Mandela is now talking to De Klerk, 'people can become spectators in the process'.

Numsa official and Alexandra resident Tony Kgobe adds that in Alex before the outbreak of violence there in April, the township only had 'monitoring units' as residents did not see any immediate need to organise themselves into defence units. Some also felt that it was incorrect to have defence units if they did not have the means to defend themselves effectively.

Who should lead?

Because of the wide range of organisations in almost every part of South Africa, a general feeling is that residents, through their civics, should take a lead in setting up defence structures. Says Kgobe: 'Defence units should be formed by residents themselves but because civics do not have people who are trained militarily

There still are those who incorrectly feel that MK as an army must come to the defence of the communities and that self-defence units are a narrow professional MK affair
— Cronin

or otherwise, you need to draw in people from other structures who have skills.'

This view is supported by SACP Transvaal regional organiser Jabu Moleketi who feels that some initiative by leaders of the civic, the party and the ANC is vital in the formation of a co-ordinating committee at township level. That co-operation must filter down to sub-branches, to street level.

To ensure that these structures are not taken over by criminal elements and that they do not become a law unto themselves, it is stressed that these units remain under the strict political discipline of the entire community.

This view was supported by Chris Hani recently, when he said that other organisations should not see the building of defence units as the ANC trying to build its own army in the townships. 'Defence units should be community controlled so that they do not deteriorate into vigilante groups', he said (*New Nation* 30/5/91).

A forum of all organisations in an area needs to be established to periodically brief the community on progress and the current situation.

According to a paper circulating on how to implement the *For the Sake of Our Lives* document, the task of building self-defence units are political and paramilitary. It goes on to stress that adopting one approach at the expense of the other must be avoided, as they are inextricably linked.

Therefore, the only way to defeat the government's strategies is to build organisations on the ground. Defence units must exist under the guidance of the political leadership of a particular locality and be linked to the demand for a constituent assembly and an interim government.

According to Tony Kgobe, the forma-

tion of defence units should be viewed as organs 'which will maintain law and order in the future and also defend our gains against counter-revolutionary forces'.

Cuban example

In Cuba defence units were launched on 28 September 1960 and were called Comites de la Revolucion (CDR). Fidel Castro called them a system of collective vigilance to counter 'lackeys of imperialism'. First committees were formed with no official guidelines and like many institutions they displayed more energy than order, more enthusiasm than discipline.

According to Castro's original idea CDR's were formed along geographical lines, in block or neighbourhood committees. Although the initial formation was to fight a counter-revolutionary threat and defend the revolution it became apparent that these objectives were but one of the responsibilities of the defence units. For example, CDRs played a central role in literacy campaigns in 1961. However, vigilance remained the main task of the CDR's during the 1960s as Cuban-American diplomatic relations deteriorated.

The CDR's were mass-based and included within its ranks members of different organisations, united by one objective: To defend themselves against possible attack. After the defeat of the US at the Bay of Pigs CDRs grew, and amongst other things played a prominent role in health campaigns, food rationing and inoculations against disease etc.

Defence a necessity

The combination of failed peace accords and an inability to respond effectively to the violence has destroyed democratic structures of the ANC. There has as yet been no indication that the democratic movement will act decisively to identify and neutralise the forces of reaction.

The creation of defence units, under the strict guidance and control of political leaders, will in the short-term stop vigilantes from carrying out their attacks with impunity.

The total elimination of apartheid and its structures lies at the centre of the solution to the current violence. The liberation movement has to seriously respond to the call of victims of the violence to be armed. With the current violence continuing and with very little guarantees for security, self-defence is a necessity.

In the long-term self-defence units will ensure that a democratic government is not surrounded by a sea of hostile reactionary forces, but by the people in arms. •

Isolating Inkatha: A strategic error?



'In Buthelezi is a combination of old ANC values and Zulu history'

HERBERT VILAKAZI argues, controversially, that the black consciousness policy of non-collaboration, which after 1976 influenced the ANC to isolate all homeland politicians, including KwaZulu's Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, lies at the root of the current wave of violence sweeping the country

To get to the roots of the ongoing violence in the african political community in South Africa, we have to go back to the '60s and '70s, to the establishment of the homeland political structures, which the white state hoped would displace the nationalist struggles of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress.

These organisations were banned and, with their leaders either in prison or in exile, a vacuum of experienced african political leadership developed. Ordinary adult african people, who had been active in the ANC and the PAC, were forced to withdraw from active liberation politics.

Buthelezi and black consciousness

It was in this context that black youth and Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi emerged as political forces. Youth emerged as part of the Black Consciousness (BC) movement which, in the '70s, was more influential in shaping black

political thought than the ANC and the PAC.

Buthelezi entered modern political life as a maverick within the homeland system. He emerged originally as a link between homeland structures and the liberation struggle, having received the encouragement of the ANC leadership of the time, to assume leadership of KwaZulu.

Unfortunately, the ANC failed to formulate its position on this new tactical policy. Consequently, there was uncertainty and confusion on the practical political stance to adopt with regard to homeland political structures, which were clearly established opposition to the interests of the african people.

The BC movement, on the other hand, formulated a different tactical policy, that of *non-collaboration*, not only with the white state, but also with homeland structures and the individuals working within these structures. Robert Sobukwe had pronounced the same policy, at the found-

THE POLITICS OF ETHNICITY

ing of the PAC. But this was during an upsurge in the revolutionary movement. He never had a chance to comment publicly on whether or not boycott of legal, oppressive structures, devised for the oppressed after the defeat of mass upsurge, was still correct policy.

Non-collaboration not a principle

The only clear statement on this issue, published some years previously, had been made by Nelson Mandela. He argued that boycotting reactionary institutions had to be seen as a tactic, wise at certain times, but unwise under other circumstances; that boycotts should not be made a principle which could not be varied under changing conditions of struggle.

The BC movement was wrong in its preaching of non-collaboration under all circumstances, and the ANC leaders of the time were correct in their approval and support of Buthelezi's struggle against apartheid *within* apartheid. However, what emerged more clearly was the ANC's uncompromising opposition to the homelands policy, and not the rider that it was conceivable, and obligatory, under those conditions to send some of their people into the 'pigsty' to educate and mobilise.

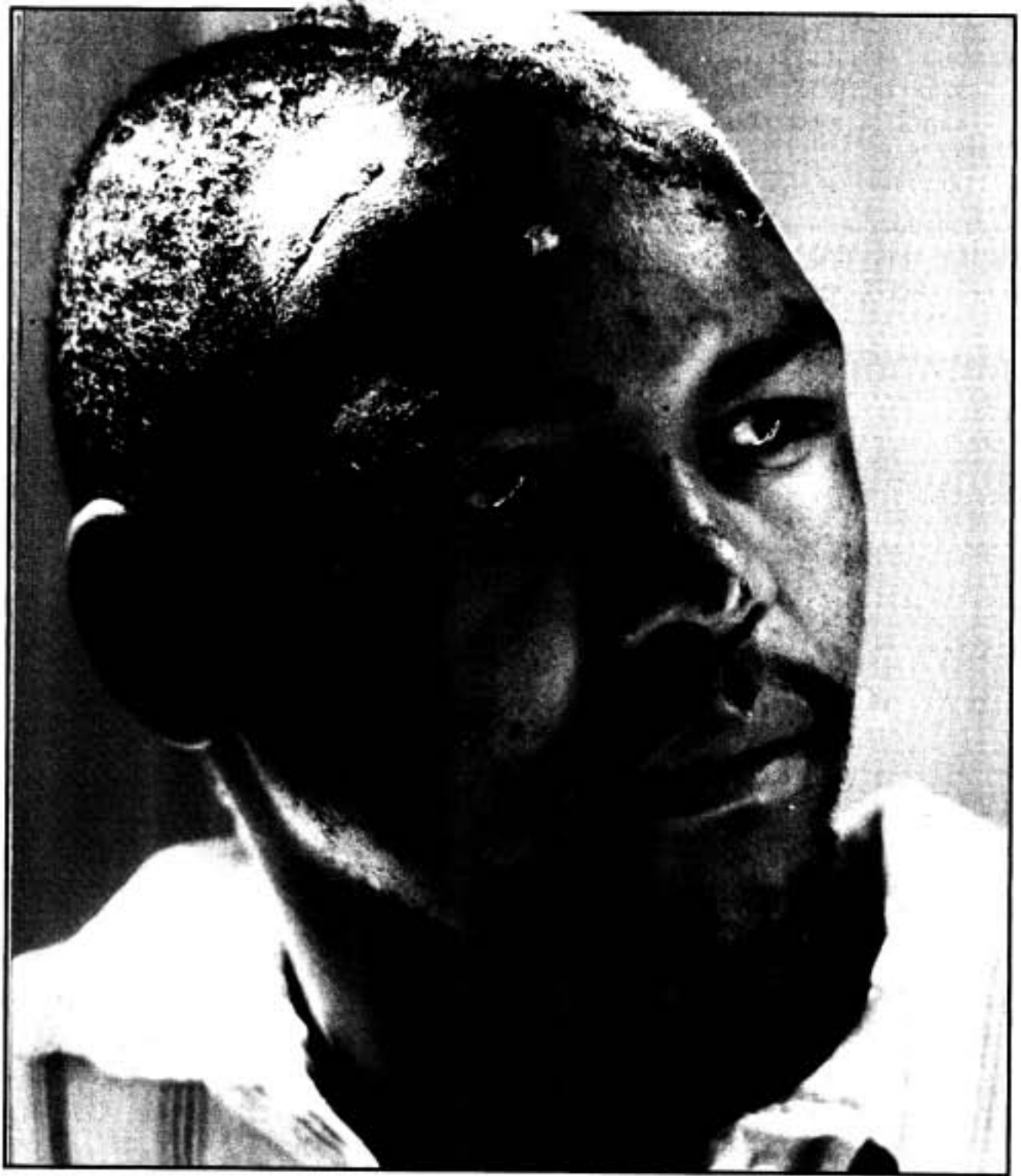
The BC movement won the day. Although both student voices and that of Buthelezi were heard against apartheid, it was the student calls which attracted more attention because the youth were more daring and defiant, and possibly more heroic. This influence penetrated into the exiled PAC and ANC, which in particular absorbed thousands of youth who had fled the country after the 1976 uprising.

Radical youth ridicule Buthelezi

Meanwhile, Chief Buthelezi continued operating legally, building up a considerable following among rural and semi-rural people in the countryside, towns, and cities of Natal, and among semi-rural, unskilled working class Zulu-speaking people outside Natal.

However, Buthelezi was regarded with suspicion, as were other individuals operating within state structures who were seen as 'sell outs'. For example, in 1977, despite being invited by the family to attend the funeral of PAC leader Robert Sobukwe, Buthelezi was physically ejected by angry youth.

Buthelezi and Inkatha were hated by radical african youth, and ridiculed and derided by educated people. The erroneous theory of non-collaboration divided the african political community, creating a chasm filled with hatred, spite and ridi-



cule, between those operating within the homeland system and those operating outside them. Thus a division also grew between rural and semi-rural people, and urban people, and between the educated and uneducated.

The schooled urban african youth, who are still playing the vanguard role in the liberation struggle, are the carriers of this deadly virus wrecking the african political community. They are culturally unfit to communicate with uneducated, peasant, or semi-peasant adult african men and women, in a manner approved by the traditional culture of rural african people.

The social class factor also enters here, in a morally indicting way: If the people being killed in this conflict were educated, professional people, effective, decisive steps would have been taken a long time ago, by all the middle-class led african organisations, to end this tragedy. But we are not touched to the quick, when it comes to the suffering, fate and death of rural, uneducated people.

To this day, the BC oriented organisations still insist that the homeland offi-

The face of township violence: A victim of the recent massacre in Soweto

cial should not be invited to participate in a proposed Consultative Conference of all the oppressed people. At the ANC Consultative Conference last December, youth protested strongly against the close relations that ANC leadership was developing with some homeland leaders, prompting a specific response from Nelson Mandela.

Neglect of rural population

There is another class-related factor here. Neither the ANC nor PAC have made any systematic efforts to root themselves in the lives of rural african communities, migrant workers, or semi-rural, semi-educated people in towns and cities. The ANC and PAC are still almost totally urban movements, largely composed of educated, professional africans, and students.

This stratum is historically the most

unreliable and even dangerous to the liberation movement, according to classical marxist theory. A solid political movement must have its roots in at least one of the basic social classes of society, linked directly to the process of production. In 20th century societies these are peasants, landlords, the industrial working class and the bourgeoisie or capitalist class.

Educated professional classes and, above all, youth or students can, of course, play a facilitating role. But alone, or totally dominating a political movement, they have been shown to be almost invariably unreliable.

It is no wonder, then, that a rural-based liberation movement of the african people, under the peculiar conditions created by white supremacy, had to emerge first with an ethnic shade. The wisest step for the exiled liberation movements would have been to link up with this and not to be rigid on a policy of non-collaboration.

Now we must find ways of reversing or undoing this disastrous error.

Buthelezi no mere homeland leader

Buthelezi was, from the very beginning, no mere homeland leader, whose political horizon ended at the boundaries of the homeland established by white supremacy. His rejection of the homeland system was integral to his ANC past. It was not for nothing that the ANC president of the time, Chief Albert Luthuli, and others of the ANC leadership, encouraged Buthelezi and the Inkatha movement to continue the ANC's struggle in that region.

The March 1973 issue of the ANC publication, *Sechaba*, had as its feature article a speech by Buthelezi titled: 'My Role Within Separate Development Politics'. Indeed, up to the very end of the '80s, Buthelezi was almost sure that friends and comrades like Mandela and Walter Sisulu would, upon their release from prison, advise, even hide, the young activists within the ANC to hush and cease their acid hostility towards him and Inkatha.

Combination of ANC values and Zulu history

In Buthelezi is a combination of old ANC values, woven out of the modern experience of subjugation of all african people in South Africa, and Zulu history. The wisest policy of the current ANC leadership was, and still is, *to avoid breaking up this unity and combination.*

The past struggle against Buthelezi and Inkatha threatened precisely to break up this unity, thereby threatening to

awaken and ignite Zulu nationalism. In Zulu folklore and historical consciousness, which is very much alive among peasants, there is still the memory of a Zulu nation-state, created by King Shaka, which was destroyed by the white invaders, not too long ago.

We must do everything to avoid igniting this memory, as a desire to revive that nation-state, or as a desire to go it alone. This will be disastrous to any effort to build a new South Africa. Good, or bad, tactical moves on this issue can make a world of a difference. So far we have been seeing thoroughly bad tactical moves.

Despite the errors of the past Nelson Mandela and Buthelezi must be credited for working ceaselessly for rapprochement between the ANC and Inkatha. The meeting of 29 January 1991 between Mandela and Buthelezi, and their executive committees, was the realisation of this rapprochement at the highest levels of the two organisations. It occurred late, after much damage had been done to the unity of old ANC values and Zulu history.

The third force

In the catalogue of the causes of violence, we must also include the role of the 'third force'. The last line of defence for racist interests is a general war among african people. Agent-provocateurs are stalking around communities, looking for opportunities to trigger off violence.

But this is not the original cause of the violence; they are merely taking advantage of the chasm that already exists within the african community. The effect of the third force would be considerably reduced were the chasm, born of non-collaboration, to be closed.

The White Right is against any genuine democracy, which would give to the african people their rightful place in the affairs of the state. There may well be other constituencies, working under the table, even in 'friendly' states abroad, that are out to make sure that african nationalism does not triumph in South Africa.

The tactic here may be to trigger so much violence among african people, that the masses of african people themselves lose confidence in the capacity of africans to rule South Africa, thereby placing their confidence, and votes, in the hands of a non-racial but white-led government.

A communal problem

What then should be done to end this violence? First, the violence in the african community should not be seen as a prob-

lem solely for the ANC and Inkatha. This is a communal problem, urgently calling for the communal effort of the entire african community towards its solution.

The ANC, IFP, PAC, Azapo and other civic and religious organisations within the african community should, collectively, have a Reunion of Peace, in a gigantic effort to create and affirm common brotherhood and sisterhood among all african people in every region of the country.

The top leadership of these organisations must hold hands together, demonstrate and affirm this fraternity, moving from village to village, hostel to hostel, town to town, and city to city, addressing rallies together, as Mandela had hoped he and Buthelezi would do, in his notable Durban speech soon after his release from prison.

Among rural and semi-rural people, this should be done according to the cultures and traditions of ordinary people, in the languages of the people.

Violence dehumanises all

It must be stressed to all our people that we are not fighting for mere political rights: we want to create a humane society. It is important for our leadership to affirm this. For decades, there has been officially sanctioned violence against african people, which has had adverse effects not only on the oppressed, but also on the oppressors, the whites themselves.

The terrible thing about officially sanctioned, perpetual violence is that the inclination for violence enters into our characters through socialization, degrading and brutalizing master and slave alike.

However, it is much easier to stop the war between the slaves and the slave-masters, than it is to stop the war among the slaves. Oppression itself is responsible for this, sowing seeds of self-hatred within the oppressed, which manifests itself in what Maxim Gorky called the morbid desire of the slaves to inflict torment upon other slaves.

Political leaders must realize that they bear a vital role as custodians of the moral and spiritual health of millions of society members whose minds and souls have been affected by racism. Our leaders also bear a humanistic mission. Goethe wrote that all learning begins with love; we should also say: all serious politics should begin with love for the masses of ordinary people.

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A NIC meeting at Pietermaritzburg's Lotus Hall in September 1989: Coloured and indian votes cannot be taken for granted

Minority Group Politics: The Right to be Different

According to recent surveys, coloured and indian people could hold the balance of power in elections for a future democratic parliament. CRAIG CHARNEY argues that the ANC needs to recognise and accommodate the specific concerns of these communities to ensure their support

Non-racialism, socialism, and support for the African National Congress have been watchwords of the opposition to apartheid in the post-1976 era. Fifteen years of struggle have left many in its ranks thinking they have won wide acceptance in all the black communities.

Yet to many activists' surprise, polls of so-called coloureds and indians show State President FW de Klerk leading Nelson Mandela. They also point to conservative attitudes on key economic and social questions.

Do they matter? Yes. In a future election, the ANC is unlikely to win an overall majority of votes without majority backing in the coloured and indian groups. Survey experts say the ANC could now hope to win around 60% of the african vote, which would amount to only 42% of the whole electorate. Moreover, these communities also possess skills and

TABLE I

Leadership Preferences: De Klerk vs Mandela

	Rand Feb '90	National July '90	Urban Oct '90
Indian			(Durban)
De Klerk	<u>54%</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>70%</u>
Mandela	34%	30%	5%
Coloured			(Cape Town)
De Klerk	<u>48%</u>	<u>58%</u>	<u>73%</u>
Mandela	<u>48%</u>	19%	6%

Sources: Feb - MMR; July - IBR; Oct - Research Surveys (see Note)

TABLE II

Economic Policy Issues

1. How can we achieve equal living standards for all?

	Indian (Durban)	Coloured (Cape Town)
Free market economy as in USA	<u>54%</u>	<u>61%</u>
Nationalise key sectors	42%	36%
	} 46%	} 40%
Nationalise whole economy	4%	4%

2. What should be the role of workers in companies?

	Indian (Durban)	Coloured (Cape Town)
Should be workers, with unions, fair wages and conditions	<u>63%</u>	<u>61%</u>
Should have part ownership or control	35%	35%
	} 37%	} 39%
Should own company	2%	7%

Source: IBR survey, July 1990.

1), even though they display substantial sympathy for democracy and the ANC. While sampling and methodological uncertainties make it unwise to take the figures produced by those surveys as precise representations of opinion, the tendency is clear. De Klerk's showing is particularly impressive if one recalls that all the parties in the tri-cameral parliament together mustered the support of only about 20% of the coloured and indian groups. Moreover, polls by Research Surveys underline that his support has grown. Approval of the State President's performance rose by 15% among coloureds in Cape Town and more than 10% among Durban indians between July and October 1990.

These findings should not be mistaken for support for white minority rule. In the national survey last July, large majorities of indians and coloureds supported a common parliament with universal franchise - 71% and 82% respectively. Likewise, in the February 1990 Reef survey, 72% of the indians and 55% of the coloureds polled supported Mandela's political views.

When the IBR asked which parties respondents would vote for, the ANC narrowly led the NP. It seems easier for members of both groups to support the reformist State President than the party which brought them 40 years of apartheid. However, Congress was fairly weak, with just 35% support among indians and 29% among coloureds. The data on the choice of a national leader, where clear majorities of both groups expressed themselves on the two principal alternatives, offer a clearer view of who they would like to rule South Africa.

Economics and minority fears

The political choices of the minority groups can be clarified by looking at their attitudes on economic and group-oriented questions.

Regarding the choice of an economic system, majorities in both groups take relatively moderate positions (Table 2). According to the poll, between 55% and 65% of each support an American-style free market economy and think that workers should not control their companies, on condition that they have trade union rights and fair pay.

Attitudes towards economic policy seem to explain part of Mandela's weakness among the coloureds and indians. In the Reef survey, some 27% of indians and 22% of coloureds favoured Mandela's political views but not his views on eco-

capital which are badly needed to help rebuild the country.

Equivocal and moderate

This article analyses recent surveys of the two black minority groups and attempts to suggest why their attitudes are moderate and somewhat equivocal. Due to their position in-between whites and africans,

they feel the pulls of both as potential allies, while worrying for their own identities and status. Winning them over means drawing the centrists who comprise the bulk of both groups towards national democratic politics.

Paradoxically, surveys have shown that coloureds and indians prefer De Klerk to Mandela as leader of the country (Table

TABLE III
Minority Identity and Interest Issues

	Indian (Durban)	Coloured (Cape Town)
1. Do you favour a minimum number of seats per racial group in Parliament to ensure minority representation?		
Yes	53%	44%
No	31%	40%
2. Which do you favour:		
A choice between mixed or single-race neighbourhoods and schools,	63%	63%
OR		
A ban on racially based institutions	38%	37%
3. Which should be the national anthem of a new South Africa?		
Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika	24%	26%
Die Stem	22%	18%
New Anthem	46%	47%

Source: IBR Survey, July 1990.

nomics.

Yet a further gap in his support remains: even among those who favoured both Mandela's political and economic views, 11% of the indians and 15% of the coloureds said they would vote for De Klerk. This residual unease about the ANC among the black minorities may be related to their concerns about the defence of group interests and identity (See Table 3 above).

Despite their support for universal franchise, the IBR survey found that the largest part of both groups wanted guaranteed representation for minorities in parliament.

Furthermore, fully 63% of each preferred a choice between mixed and single-race neighbourhoods and schools to universal integration. When the IBR asked about the future national anthem, around one-fifth of each group identified with either 'Nkosi Sikeleli' or - amazingly - 'Die Stem,' while almost half wanted a new anthem.

The IBR poll also found that a fifth of coloured Congress sympathisers wanted to vote for the UDF rather than the ANC, while a quarter of the pro-Congress in-

dian community gave the Natal or Transvaal Indian Congresses as their voting preference. These findings underline the genuine identity these organisations possessed in the minority communities.

Centrist

The overall pattern of opinion among coloureds and indians suggested by these and other results of the surveys includes:

- a very small *hardline left*, committed to socialism and ready to support a revolutionary transition, of under 5%;
- a substantially larger *centre-left*, around 35%, social democratic in sympathy and broadly non-racial in politics.

- the *centre-right* - the largest element in both communities, at roughly 40%. They are favourable to political democracy and capitalism with a conscience, but hesitant to identify with the african majority and worried about their group's right to be different;

- a *reactionary right* of around 20%. It is hostile to universal suffrage, identified with the white state, willing to vote in tri-cameral elections, and very conservative in social and economic terms.

Roughly 75% of the two groups thus fall into the two centrist categories. These findings seem broadly in line with the moderate political attitudes which the majority of the indian and coloured groups have historically displayed. If this seems surprising, remember that the most successful political movement ever among coloured people was neither the ANC, the Labour Party, nor the Unity Movement. It was Jan Smuts' old United Party!

Persistent group identities

So what explains the political alignments within the coloured and indian groups?

The strength and persistence of group identities must be understood as a product of the organisation of reproduction, biological and social, in the two communities. The tendency of indians to marry within the community and the continuing vigour of the joint (extended) family system are well known.

While the coloured family structure is weaker and many leave the group by 'passing for white,' it has still largely reproduced itself along religious lines and acquired new members when africans 'marry up.' Members' social experiences are further shaped by the fact of living in shared neighbourhoods or townships.

All classes within these communities are also linked by networks of associations and institutions, including religious bodies, schools, welfare organisations, management committees, business groups and racially-based trade unions. These organisations play crucial roles in group reproduction, both by providing essential resources (housing, education, etc.) and by reinforcing identity by their teachings and practices.

In other words, apartheid structures did not create these groups - they were fastened upon pre-existing communities. They sought to deepen distinctions between them and others and institutionalised political representation on ethnic lines.

'In the middle'

The peculiarity of the indian and coloured groups in the South African context is that they are 'in the middle.' They find themselves between the politically and economically dominant white minority and the numerically dominant african majority. Their economic position has made most members ideological moderates, who feel they have a stake in the society. In political terms they tend to regard the pre-eminent issue as the de-

fence of the interests of their group, not their class.

Of course, both groups are internally differentiated by class. However, these differences are to some extent prised by group positions, leading to opinions unpredictable through simple class analysis. For instance, unskilled coloured and indian workers are often the most hostile to africans, fearing their competition, while professionals and students are among the most progressive elements. Moreover, the class structure and ideological outlooks of both groups have changed relatively slowly - while their preferred political options have shifted much more rapidly.

Contest for the centre

Political alignments among coloureds and indians have responded above all to differences on group interest, expressed as a choice of alliance: 'above' with whites or 'below' with africans. The contest has largely been one in which minorities of the left and right compete for the support of the majority in the centre.

The dominant force at any moment has been determined by a variety of conjunctural factors, including the possibilities offered by the country's political and economic situation and the struggles within each community and its institutions. In terms of these factors, the political evolution of the coloured and indian communities over recent decades can be divided into three periods:

- **The early 1960s to 1975:** the heyday of reactionary collaborationist politics. In this era, a conservative business-linked elite dominated both community institutions and government-created representative bodies. Rightwing control of the distribution of goods and services along sectional, religious, or partisan lines encouraged support or acquiescence from the centre. However, opposition appeared in the early 1970s, particularly among young students frustrated by apartheid's limitations to their horizons and excited by the example of radical and nationalist movements in Africa and elsewhere.

- **1976 to 1990:** the collaborationist rightwing elite faced challenge. The post-Soweto period was marked by the re-establishment of extra-parliamentary political space and the re-emergence of a left-wing counter-elite, associated with the civic organisations, progressive trade unions, the UDF and the indian Congresses. Their supporters were above all the young and the educated. Through their efforts, in many areas the rightwing

leadership was displaced, discredited, or forced to drop collaborationist stances, and acceptance of democratic politics and an alliance with africans spread. Election boycotts in 1981, 1984, and 1989 succeeded when the left persuaded the centre to join in, isolating the reactionaries.

- **1990 to the present:** The ANC's unbanning last February brought the question of group identity and alliances again to the fore for coloureds and indians. The liberal democratic state De Klerk proposes to establish promises to sweep away the issues underlying the alignments of the past three decades. A state which treats all individuals as equals and affords all access to its resources will eliminate the bases of the old reactionary 'kingpins' in their communities. It will also end the policies which angered these groups most, removals and segregation, and offer their members a fairer share of state services and jobs.

With majority rule looming, they fear that their economic, cultural, and religious interests may be trampled upon - reflected in their cautious responses on questions of group identity.

The survey results suggest that as apartheid has ceased to be the major issue for them, such economic and group interests have become the most salient factors in determining the political choices of coloured and indian South Africans.

Up for grabs

However, the two communities are sharply divided by age, reflecting the very different experiences of the pre- and post-1976 generations. The IBR survey found that in the under-40 age group, the ANC led the NP by 20% among indians and 13% among coloureds. Among the over-40s, the NP came out ahead, by somewhat smaller margins. Besides the generation gap, other cleavages are likely on lines of class, gender, and education, but the available data do not allow comment upon them.

It is clear that, politically, the coloured and indian groups are up for grabs. Thus far, De Klerk has appealed more successfully to them than Mandela has, winning support from the right and centre-right.

The challenge to the ANC is to win the centre back again. This would involve rallying the centre-left to its natural political home and convincing the centre-right that Congress is a better choice than the Nats.

These tasks would require popularising the ANC's economic and social policies, showing sensitivity to the specific

interests of the coloured and indian groups, reassuring them about the ANC's capacity to represent them and govern effectively, and reminding them of the NP's record.

Hard options for the ANC

Concretely, options to consider include:

- Maintaining organisations which play mediating roles for the ANC in indian and coloured communities. The recent decision to retain the indian Congresses was probably wise; local civic and community groups also have a role to play.

- Intensifying efforts to introduce the ANC, its policies, and its leadership in coloured and indian areas and to respond to the anxieties of those groups.

- Ensuring minority representation within ANC leadership structures through proportional representation or preference voting in internal elections. In this way, minorities (ethnic, ideological, or other) could be assured that some of their respected leaders will win places, without violating the principles of democracy and non-racialism.

Acknowledging, theorising, and responding to ethnicity is a painful and difficult task for a movement which has made a tactic and a point of honour of ignoring it in the past.

It is particularly hard when the other side has made exaggerating and institutionalising ethnic divisions their political stock in trade.

Yet for the ANC and its supporters, such an undertaking is a necessity. Building a new governing majority will require sympathetic appreciation of the differences which define the coloured, indian, and other minorities.

Note

This article is based upon data from three survey organisations. They are Marketing and Media Research, which polled 126 coloureds and 67 indians on the Reef on February 28 1990; the Institute for Black Research, which surveyed national samples of approximately 520 coloured people and 450 indians in July 1990; Research Surveys, which sampled 150 coloureds in Cape Town and 150 indians in Durban in July and October 1990.

The IBR survey results are taken from Negotiation and Change (Durban, IBR). The author wishes to thank the other two organisations for providing unpublished survey data.

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Ethnicity, the NIC and the struggle for non-racialism

Fighting fire with fire

The controversial issue of organising along ethnic lines has once again emerged on the political agenda. The decision of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) to continue existing as separate organisations, and the ANC's blessing of this decision, has created an uproar in extra-parliamentary political circles.

Opposition to the NIC/TIC decision, however has not really addressed the central and crucial issue of *ethnicity*. In our view ethnicity is not an 'epiphenomenon' that will simply disappear in time, nor will it be inevitably overridden by class forces.

Condemning those who build political parties along ethnic lines as reactionary will accomplish little - although we strongly oppose such a strategy. Instead we need to develop political strategies deriving out of our history and struggle, which will contribute to our fundamental goal of building a non-racial democracy in South Africa.

This task in our view is best addressed within non-racial organisations rather than in ethnically-based parties aligned to the movement.

Often the central issues around the notion of ethnicity have been overshadowed by other, no less serious issues. These include allegations of 'cabalism' (see page 30); that the decision to continue with the indian congresses was made at a leadership level with the ANC; the strained relationship between the ANC's Southern Natal regional executive and the NIC leadership; the problem of wearing two hats in the community: sometimes an NIC one sometimes an ANC one (sometimes both); two leaderships existing in one area, both representing the ANC; the election of the NIC in secret meetings; and the role of the NIC/TIC in racially mixed areas. These are serious issues that need to be addressed by both the ANC and the NIC/TIC.

This article however, attempts to in-

The recent decision of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses to continue operating has caused many raised eyebrows. ASHWIN DESAI, ADAM HABIB and VISHNU PADAYACHEE argue that, while ethnically-based organisation should be strongly opposed, it is equally wrong to lightly brush aside the real and widespread problem of ethnicity as we struggle to build one South African nation

vestigate, more generally, the political mechanisms required for moving from an ethnic consciousness to non-racialism. This is done through a critical analysis of the indian Congresses' insistence that they continue to exist. This investigation, we believe, is crucial for it relates directly to the task of building a single South African nation.

Ethnicity: real or imagined?

The importance of ethnicity as a factor in social and political development continues to be a matter of considerable debate. Often positions taken in this debate have become highly polarised. Jeff Guy (p2) has observed that:

'For some, ethnic or tribal divisions have structured South African society, culture and history, and tribalism is a *fundamental* consideration in any analysis of South African society. For others ethnicity or tribalism is an *invention* of the oppressor, devised to divide the majority, and even to *discuss* the concept gives it unwarranted recognition and status.' (emphasis added)

Early sociologists held the view that ethnicity will disappear with modernisation and industrialisation (see Bonacich, p10). In similar vein some marxist writers have suggested that class solidarity would

simply override national or ethnic chauvinism. However, recent developments both nationally and internationally have proven this wrong.

The opposite view which suggests that ethnicity is a 'natural', primordial bond between people is equally wrong (Bonacich, p10). Flowing from this is the view that ethnicity should be appropriated to facilitate political organisation and mobilisation. Indeed there are numerous examples where this has already occurred (see *Third World Quarterly*).

Slippery concept

Part of the problem in investigating ethnicity, of course, is that it is an extremely slippery concept. One has constantly to be sensitive to both sides of the ethnic coin: 'the popular impulses of ethnicity, coming from below' and the invention of the ruling class 'from above' (Guy, p501).

Despite our rejection of the 'primordial' explanation of ethnicity, we believe the impact of ethnic consciousness cannot be ignored and simply explained away as false consciousness. Such a position conveniently sidesteps the need to explain the persistence of ethnic divisions.

As Alexander (p50) argues: 'to deny the reality of prejudice and perceived differences, whatever their origin, is to disarm oneself strategically and tactically'.

Both activists and left academics should acknowledge the social significance of ethnicity if for no other reason than to prevent the field from being open to abuse. As Guy maintains:

'There is an intellectual debate to be won here with profound political implications...And it is clear that we have to break through these barriers, not only for improved academic discussion but for urgent questions of policy.'

The official ANC view

While conceding that the concept of ethnicity is 'slippery', the ANC's official theoretical and practical position is particularly difficult to grasp.

For most of its history the organisation



Do material conditions necessitate the maintenance of the indian congresses?

has preached an african nationalism. More recently it has discounted notions of ethnic consciousness within the african majority as the 'invention' of the ruling class. A national consciousness within the african majority was not something to be struggled for but was viewed as something that was *already* achieved.

This position however, was not held consistently in relation to *all* sectors of the black population. Within the indian and coloured constituencies, the reality of ethnicity was accepted and allowed organisational expression through the NIC, TIC, Coloured Peoples' Congress etc.

Criticism from within

This classical congress position has been challenged, especially in the 1980's. Many activists within the Congress movement felt that ethnically based ways of mobilising and organising went against building non-racialism, which the liberation movement had come to embrace in opposition to apartheid.

This opposition did not emanate solely from african activists. Indian and coloured activists pinned their banners to the UDF and youth congresses, and shunned what they saw as the 'ethnic chauvinism'

of the indian Congresses.

The ANC's recent decision to sanction the continued existence of the NIC and TIC is thus out of step with the feelings of many of its own activists. Long term NIC stalwarts like MJ Naidoo and Mewa Ramgobin have already publicly voiced their opposition, as has the ANC Youth League.

Ethnicity however, is not a problem confined to the indian community. Gaye Davis has highlighted similar problems in mobilising coloured people in the the Western Cape (see *Weekly Mail*, 23 May 1991). Ari Sitas' impressive research illustrates the significance of Zulu ethnic consciousness in the Natal region (see Vilakazi on page 21).

The issue of ethnicity needs to be confronted courageously and creatively if we are to establish a single South African nation. This, however does not mean accepting the need for an ethnically based organisation.

The NIC decision

There are sharply polarised views within the liberation movement over the continuing existence of the indian Congresses.

Some argue that, because of these or-

ganisations' long histories and traditions (the NIC was formed by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894) as well as the rapidity of contemporary political change and the accompanying violence, they are best suited to draw indian people into the ANC's fold.

How this mobilisation will come about is not clear. Some simply see the NIC as a conduit to membership of the ANC. This process will involve activists going house to house presenting themselves as NIC, and asking the people to join the ANC.

A second position sees the NIC as some type of holding mechanism. Indian people will be brought into the NIC, go through a period of consciousness raising and will then be channeled into the ranks of the ANC.

Both scenarios are fraught with problems. If the NIC is to be a conduit or holding mechanism, then it will need to exist for a while to come. It's job will, in all likelihood, not be complete in one or two generations.

Special conditions

Some argue that the particular material conditions that prevail in the indian areas necessitates the maintenance of the in-

dian Congresses. The logic of this position also points to the *permanency* of the Indian Congresses, despite public pronouncements to the contrary. Material conditions do not change in a few months or years.

With parties and individuals in the House of Delegates lining up on the side of the National Party, the pressure on the NIC to line up, as a separate organisation, on the side of the ANC becomes unavoidable. Is this the direction the NIC is going to take?

More than one strand of thinking exists within the NIC on this question. Those who challenge the ANC's resolution, as expressed in the draft constitution, to fight against ethnic chauvinism surely cannot be in the same camp as those NIC activists close to the SACP? (The question of why the party, especially in Southern Natal, so strongly supports the NIC decision to continue existing is in itself intriguing!)

NIC unsuccessful

Since its re-emergence in the early 1970's the NIC has been preparing the ground for a non-racial political platform. Except for some high points (the anti-tricameral campaign of 1983/84) the NIC's record was far from successful.

In the objective circumstances which then prevailed (with the ANC banned etc), it can be argued that with a more progressive strategic orientation, the NIC could have been more successful in mobilising more Indians into the non-racial tradition. Now, in the wake of the ANC's unbanning, it argues that it needs more time. What was not accomplished in close on 20 years will not be achieved within six months.

Indeed, the very activists who are supposed to be torch-bearers of the path to a non-racial consciousness are straitjacketed into thinking exclusively in ethnic terms, strategising in ethnic terms, mobilising an ethnic base etc. Excluded in this way from actually building non-racialism, the NIC activist, bathed in ethnic thinking, becomes a captive of it. How then can he/she blaze the path to a non-racial, united South African nation?

Non-racial organisation...

Any plan of action to erode ethnic consciousness in favour of a more general non-racial consciousness must acknowledge the persistence of ethnicity. This however, does not mean it has to find organisational expression in ethnic exclusivity.

How then do we build a single South Africa nation and destroy the separatist tendencies amongst us? The most obvious way to do this is to open all political and economic organisations to all people regardless of colour or 'ethnic affiliation'.

These organisations must function in all geographical areas, and must be identified by all sectors of the potential South Africa nation as their very own organisation. The embryo of the South African nation must be built within the organisations of the liberation movement.

...need not ignore ethnicity

A single non-racial organisation need not ignore the ethnic factor. Instead it can ensure that ethnicity will no longer linger and fester in subsidiary organisations, but rather will be raised within the heart of the non-racial organisation (in this case the ANC). Non-racial organisations can facilitate non-racial struggle by uniting ethnically diverse communities in a common struggle against their oppression.

If the ANC wants to represent as broad a range of strata as possible, then it needs to ensure that the appropriate environment is created within its organisational apparatus. If that means that it has to be sensitive to the complexion of its leadership (depending on regional dynamics) then it must be prepared to travel that road.

We do not pretend to have all the solutions to address this issue, but if we are to avoid the kind of crises recently overtaking countries as diverse as Yugoslavia and Ethiopia, the liberation movement needs to start tackling this issue urgently. Ignoring issues of ethnicity on the one hand, or accepting the existence of ethnic political organisations on the other can, easily lead to separatist tendencies that are tearing other societies apart.

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'I joined the NIC and my eyes were opened ...'

WIP interviews an ex-Natal Indian Congress activist, who was once part of the notorious 'cabal'

How did you join the NIC?

I first came into contact with the NIC in 1984. I was convinced, against better judgement, that this was the correct organisation to belong to because of its long history against apartheid, and because it supposedly could mobilise Indians more easily.

I was very uncomfortable with an all-Indian organisation, but I was told that this was only a strategy. Ethnic-based organisations seemed like a contradiction, considering we were fighting for non-racialism. But I thought this is what the Indian community would best identify with.

Was the NIC effective?

No, I don't believe it was.

For example, during the Inanda-Phoenix crisis a few years ago, when Africans and Indians were fighting each other, there was a very strong anti-African racist attitude amongst Indians. This stemmed from a deeply ingrained fear as a minority group.

They thought they would be robbed and hacked to death because they were Indians.

The NIC was not in a position to allay these fears.

There was a very low consciousness around race issues amongst Indians (let alone on anything else) and this was an indictment on the NIC, which was supposed to be working in the community.

Because of the way they organised, instead of *building* organisation the NIC was effective in *destroying* organisation and potential growth and development amongst comrades. 'Problematic' comrades were marginalised and isolated. Many became so disillusioned that they soon left the organisation.

The UDF at the time had a better reputation amongst other progressive organisations and operated in a more non-racial and democratic way.

What is a cabal?

A small core group of people who caucus decisions, and operate in a 'democratic centralist' fashion, which is actually a cover for stalinism.

One got the impression that these people were beyond reproach and only they had the know-how, and of course, the resources. They were theoretically 'sharp' especially on 'scientific marxism'.

But they used to call each other and those they saw as potential allies 'boss' or 'chief', all negative reinforcements for me. Young activists would swell up with pride when they were addressed by the 'big chief' in that manner.

Did you belong to the cabal?

Yes, I was part of it but not in the core, which operated from 'town' (Durban city centre). I was part of their chain or network in the indian township.

How did you join it?

I had by then been recruited into the underground ANC structures. Reports would be sent to the intelligence, so that the ANC could investigate all charges of undemocratic practices and power-mongering etc.

I was informed by my ANC contact that a cabal existed within the NIC, which was trying to manipulate and dominate the struggle, with the help of some co-opted african comrades. The way to get involved in the cabal was to toe the line and be amenable and close to the key people, until it became obvious that I was sympathetic.

After a while it became clear how people got recruited. You literally got patted on your back for carrying out a task well done, and for not being critical. You accepted 'the word' as if it were gospel.

How did it operate?

In a stalinist manner, and to my mind now, completely undemocratically. There were two factions in the NIC and



The UDF operated in a more non-racial and democratic way.

we were told that this was because of 'political differences'. But to this day I don't believe there were any political differences, it was actually a power struggle. The fights in meetings used to be about meeting places and meeting times and there was never any agreement. The fighting was bitter and the two factions did not speak to each other socially. Some of them did not even look at each other.

There was always the 'correct line' that was coming from town which apparently came from individuals in exile. If activists did not toe the line they were called 'problematic', and labels could range from 'workerist' to 'racial-capitalist' or 'having tendencies', if a finger could not be put on exactly what was so objectionable about a particular person. Such people were of course sidelined and you couldn't be seen to be too friendly with them in public, or else you too might be called 'problematic'.

Those of us that were dummy-like and did not question, were drawn in closer. There were all kinds of positive affirmation. People would get puffed up with their own sense of self-importance. It was a hierarchical disempowering set-up.

The whole point was for a small group of people to maintain control over activists. The cabal was antagonistic towards young activists wanting to join the underground, especially MK. They felt that *they* had the monopoly over structures outside. The wise old men in Natal thought they had the wisdom to recruit and so everything had to go through them.

Whose interests did these people represent?

resent?

The NIC executive was composed of middle and upper class, shop owners and professional people. They had the resources to free themselves to operate almost full-time in these structures. There were some indian working class activists but they were the underlings, they carried out the instructions.

Then there was a younger group whom I was quite friendly with, which left the NIC because they didn't believe in toeing the line. They were quite critical and they were of course written off as 'problematic' or 'workerist.'

What about the relationship with the african community?

The NIC tried to dominate activists in the african townships in Natal. At one stage there was a joke that the UDF was a sub-committee of the NIC.

This control existed because the NIC had the resources and they had co-opted some africans to work within the cabal. Co-option was easy because the cabal was not a tangible entity which could be easily identified.

What lessons can be learnt from this experience?

My mission was to destroy the cabal from within but it was actually too strong. Apparently it is still intact. Because of repressive conditions these people were not challenged and democracy was undermined.

Deep-seated ethnic cleavages exist in this society, this much is obvious. We, however, cannot organise on an ethnic basis to try and change it, it makes no sense at all.

The NIC reinforces the reactionary basis of these communities rather than challenging it.

We should have africans organising in the indian community with other indians and other whites, together with africans and indians organising in the african community. This would be showing non-racialism in practice.

In the UDF this used to happen.

The indian community needs the progressive input of all sectors of our society, especially trade union comrades, where mandates and bottom-up democracy is of paramount importance. We need to unlearn the mistakes of the past.

• The interviewee, who is now a union official and a member of the ANC and SACP, prefers to remain anonymous at this stage. •

DEVAN PILLAY reviews the 'Winnie saga' and argues that, while Winnie Mandela, as a victim of acute state harassment, ought not to go to prison, her record of ill-discipline and negligence disqualifies her from occupying leadership positions



Winnie Mandela ... Has the ANC's response to the Winnie saga put into serious question the organisation's commitment to consultative democratic practices, the rule of law and political tolerance?

The Winnie saga: Will it harm the ANC?

Winnie Mandela, 'mother of the nation' or, as *Drum's* African edition called her, 'mugger of the nation'?

The wife of the mild, humane and eminently likeable ANC deputy president conjures up exactly the opposite feelings in many people. And her recently concluded trial has confirmed, in the minds of many more people, Winnie's image of cold, callous indifference.

But is Winnie really the ogre painted by the mass media? Are they not, once again, simply caricaturing a complex issue and personality? Can Nelson Mandela's support for Winnie be simply brushed aside as the classic case of Samson being blinded by Delilah? Or is there much more to it than that?

Whatever the true nature of Winnie's character, the real issues facing the ANC revolve around its appointment of Winnie to prominent office in the face of strong opposition within its ranks, and its response to her recent trial, where she was eventually sentenced to six years on four counts of kidnapping and being an acces-

sory to assault (pending an appeal). The presiding judge also accused her of gross negligence as a leader.

For many ANC activists, what is at stake here is, amongst other things, the ANC's stated commitment to consultative democratic practices, the rule of law, gay rights, political tolerance and organisational discipline. Has the Winnie saga put into serious question the leadership's commitment to these principles? Let us first briefly trace the fall and rise of Winnie's political career.

Winnie's courageous stand

Winnie Mandela was for a long time revered for her uncompromising stand against state oppression. She was banned, detained, harassed and generally ill-treated by a cruel state, which had no pity for the young and vulnerable wife of a national leader who they imprisoned for life.

During brief periods when her banning order was lifted, Winnie emerged to carry forward the banner of the ANC. She did so during the 1970s and 1980s. She became the living symbol of the ANC inside the country, at a time when no-one

else dared to openly declare support for the banned organisation.

There is no denying the courage and conviction of Winnie Mandela. But below the surface, the picture becomes much more complicated.

'Unguided missile'

After Winnie returned to Soweto from her Brandfort exile during the 1980s, she alienated an increasing number of UDF and Cosatu leaders by refusing to fall under the discipline of established structures - preferring to be what some called an 'unguided missile'. Serious lapses of judgement included:

- Her endorsement, in 1988, of a book by the rightwing free marketeers Leon Louw and Frances Kendall, called *South Africa: The Solution*. Winnie wrote the preface.
- Her notorious public support for 'neck-lacing'.
- The creation and protection of the Mandela United Football Club which, besides the Stompie affair, is alleged to have ruled areas of Soweto with an iron fist.
- Barging in, uninvited, onto the platform of a Cosatu rally and giving a speech (which apparently did not once mention 'workers').
- Allegedly agreeing, in 1989, to a rightwing black American businessman having sole rights to the Mandela name.

When the MDM publicly denounced Winnie after the murder of Stompie Mokhetsi Seipei in 1989, many thought (and hoped) that that was the end of Winnie's political career. They were wrong.

The rise of Winnie Mandela after the release of Nelson Mandela, and the unbanning of the ANC, has been phenomenal.

Winnie rises again...

When a rumour circulated last September that Winnie had, through the alleged manoeuvring of ANC general-secretary Alfred Nzo, been appointed to head the ANC's social welfare portfolio, many thought it was just a 'sick joke', only to be struck dumb when the rumour was confirmed.

But not only individual activists were speechless (and outraged). So were many social workers and newly-formed ANC branches, some of which sent letters to the NEC expressing deep concern about the appointment. The NEC is still to respond to those letters.

While some activists were outspoken, most remained tight-lipped, preferring to

mutter their concern in private. No-one wanted to offend the deputy president, who from the beginning made it clear that, no matter what, he was going to protect and defend Winnie.

So, instead of being removed from her new post, as many had hoped, Winnie's star continued to rise.

- She was seen at many trouble-spots, offering sympathy to bereaved families, and adopting militant stances, often at variance with official ANC policy, but completely in line with the feelings of the militant youth.
- She was elected onto the PWV regional executive committee - but only just. Delegates at that meeting complained afterwards that voting was done by show of hands, and not through secret ballot. With Nelson Mandela watching over the proceedings, said delegates, many hands reluctantly inched upwards to vote for Winnie.
- The PWV region of the ANC Women's League voted her in as president by a substantial margin (although a few months later she won the region's nomination for national president by only three votes).
- Some senior activists have softened their view of her over the past year, saying that she is making a serious attempt to be a more disciplined leader.

... only to stumble

But sympathy dropped substantially

Nelson Mandela ... can his support for Winnie be simply brushed aside as the classic case of Samson being blinded by Delilah? Or is there much more to it than that?



when, during her trial, she ominously threatened a journalist who had written a critical report about her in a London newspaper. In front of her hefty bodyguards she accused him of being a police spy - a virtual death warrant in many townships.

And who was this journalist? None other than Mandla Themba, who in the 1980s served eight years for Treason. But even more significantly, he was Winnie's *personal secretary* until a few days before Stompie's murder in December 1988.

The Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ), in a press statement issued soon after the incident, requested Ms Mandela to 'either substantiate her allegations or withdraw them entirely'. She has done neither.

In addition to this, the evidence that emerged from Winnie's trial, and her conviction, shocked many supporters, and there are signs that much of her support base is being eroded.

This was graphically illustrated when she failed to win the Women's League presidency (although she did get onto the national executive).

But Winnie is a tough and resilient politician. Some have likened her to Margaret Thatcher - not for her political views, but for her steely ability to weather the storms of adversity, and bounce back with renewed strength. Not long after her conviction, Winnie was seen at the forefront of mass protest, militantly confronting the police in the streets of Johannesburg over the plight of the hunger strikers.

Four approaches

Although a full and proper debate around the implications of the Winnie saga for the ANC has yet to take place within the organisation, there are basically four schools of thought, which can be summarised as follows:

Unqualified support - Winnie is a victim of state harassment, and has an impressive record of courageous resistance to the authorities. As the wife of Nelson Mandela she deserves respect and loyalty, despite her occasional errors of judgement. During the Stompie affair she was doing her duty by protecting adolescents from sexual abuse. She had no hand in the killing and kidnappings. The illegitimate white state has no right to try her.

Revolutionary approach - while Winnie may have committed grave errors in the past, she is an uncompromising militant who can be 'captured by the left', to help prevent the ANC giving too much away. During the Stompie affair Winnie oper-

ated under 'revolutionary conditions', which necessitates that *impimpis* be eliminated, as happens in any other situation of war. The white state has no right to try Winnie - if there were any irregularities in her conduct, then the ANC NEC is to blame for not investigating them. Winnie should be given tactical support to advance a militant 'leftwing' position within the ANC.

Cautiously critical - Winnie's record is damning, and the Stompie affair is cause for grave concern. However, she has redeeming qualities (otherwise Nelson Mandela would not stick his neck out for her). The state cannot try her - the ANC ought to have held an internal inquiry, and taken necessary action. Winnie should not be imprisoned, but she should also not hold any leadership positions in the ANC. But if she does, her removal ought not to be high on the agenda of any structure, because it will be highly divisive.

Outrightly critical - Winnie is capable of the worst excesses. She represents intolerance, bigotry and arrogance. Her trial was necessary and correct as it was purely a criminal affair, and not directly political. It was conducted under laws which the ANC would want to uphold if it came to power - unlike say the security laws which sent Nelson Mandela to jail. Winnie should not only hold no leadership positions, she should go to prison for her crimes.

Prison unlikely

It is unlikely that the state will send Winnie to prison. While some have argued that De Klerk, in collusion with the ANC leadership, was prepared to drop the case because it represented a threat to the negotiations process, many now believe that the trial was a well-timed ploy to tarnish the image of the ANC.

But it is surely not in the state's interests to turn Winnie into a martyr by actually jailing her. It seems much more likely that she will either be given a suspended sentence on appeal, or she will be pardoned by De Klerk.

Only the most short-sighted within the ruling bloc will want Winnie imprisoned, as it will increase the leverage of those 'stormy militants' within the ANC's ranks who never really believed in the negotiations process in the first place.

Dangers for the ANC

The Winnie saga will not disappear from the political agenda, as long as she remains a candidate for high office within the ANC. Although her chances of being

elected onto the ANC NEC at the July conference have been considerably reduced, many still believe that her election is a foregone conclusion.

If Winnie becomes an NEC member, the ANC's credibility is likely to plummet in many circles. It will seriously bring into question the ANC's commitment to political tolerance, and the creation of a democratic, non-authoritarian political culture in South Africa.

For most activists, the Winnie trial was a painful affair, in that it threatened to do damage to the ANC. The organisation almost too late distanced itself from the trial, and therefore from Winnie's actions during the Stompie affair. Particularly disturbing was Chris Hani's warning from America before the conviction, that the ANC will launch a mass campaign to free Winnie if she was sent to prison.

This strengthened the fear that an ANC government would be little different to most third world governments, where one set of rules apply to national leaders (and their relatives), and another to the rest of the nation - in particular the poor and voiceless (in this case Stompie's mother and the kidnap victims who still fear for their lives).

It is to the ANC leadership's credit that, towards the end of the trial, it adopted a lower profile. Nelson Mandela's calm dignity after Winnie's conviction, when he said the 'final word' will come from the appeal court, also encouraged many.

Divisive issue

As a recent interview in *Tribute* magazine (June 1991) indicates, Winnie Mandela is not an ogre with no redeeming qualities. However, the complexities of her character is not the issue. What is crucial is that, as a national leader in her own right, Winnie has shown gross negligence and ill-discipline.

The only way forward is for the ANC to ensure that Winnie does not become a divisive figure within the organisation. Feelings for and against her run high, and if allowed free reign could tear the ANC apart.

That is why - in the absence of an open and thorough debate within the organisation, where members can make an *informed* assessment - the ANC has to persuade Winnie not to seek any official position in the organisation.

This will allow the ANC to concentrate on winning as wide a range of support as possible if it wants to out-manoeuvre a resurgent Nationalist Party. •

ANC's Women's League: Breaking out of the mould?

GLEND A DANIELS reports on the recent national conference of the ANC Women's League, and argues that, while advances have been made at the level of theory, the League is still struggling to break out of its traditional mould

The ANC Women's League has in recent years made tremendous strides towards understanding the *specific* nature of women's oppression. However, there seems to be a wide gulf between this and the practical programme of the organisation.

The League's recent national conference in Kimberly revealed a major shift in the thinking of women leaders. Women in the ANC have always had a traditional and stereotyped image of simply being 'mothers in the struggle' who play a nurturing and supportive role to men. The conference underlined the recent shift towards a more assertive and possibly 'feminist' Women's League which will take the specific oppression of women seriously.

But whether these new policies and views translate into practice still remains to be seen. Most of the women interviewed agreed with returned exile, Frene Ginwala's view that it was not *acceptance* of policy that was the problem but rather *its implementation*.

The League recently conducted two successful campaigns, one against the violence in the country and the other against the continued imprisonment of



Newly elected Women's League president Gertrude Shope (extreme right) with deputy president Albertina Sisulu, veteran unionist Ray Alexander and ANC NEC member Ruth Mompoti

political prisoners. The question is whether the League will continue to focus energy on such *national* issues - in effect collapsing its programme into that of the ANC's - or whether it will fulfill its promise from the conference and address the specific nature of women's oppression seriously.

The conference

The conference was attended by about 800 delegates from different parts of the country, including exiles, rural and urban women.

Some of the key areas of discussion revolved around women's participation and representation at all levels of society, the current violence and women's emancipation.

Baleka Kgositsile, returned exile and newly elected general-secretary of the League, asserts that women are not going to be left behind in the drawing up of a new constitution in South Africa:

'For me, the major issue was the 1987 resolution to form a national commission on women, which will discuss gender issues, involve men, monitor representation and implement affirmative action for women. This must happen with urgency.'

Women's Charter

For some time now there have been plans to draw up a new Women's Charter to place gender issues firmly on the political agenda. But, says Kgositsile, 'We cannot do this before the ANC's July conference. Besides, it is an issue for all South African women, not just ANC women, although the League will have to spearhead the campaign.'

The League has got to address issues of the particular oppression of women, rape, sexual abuse, exploitation in the home, sexism in the workplace. These are issues that cut across class and race divides which unite women in an understanding of their oppression.

One way of addressing sexism would be to embark on the Women's Charter campaign immediately.

Resolutions mean nothing, unless they are strengthened by practice in our daily lives, says Albertina Sisulu, deputy president of the League.

Sheila Meintjes, Wits lecturer in Political Studies, says we can 'scream all the right resolutions' but the crucial issue is whether they are implemented. For example, the question of greater representation for women in leadership is not a new one, she points out, 'but we have to see if the League will be effective in having its demands met'.

National Liberation and Women's Liberation

Kgositsile observes that, when Zambia's economic situation deteriorated, the position of women worsened. 'The situation for women generally gets worse after national liberation in the countries I've seen.

'National liberation is not an automatic thing, but it has to be fought for by women.'

If national issues are going to be focused on exclusively, then the League can be criticised for relegating gender issues to a secondary status, the way the ANC does.

The first step the League will embark

on is a summit of all women to discuss ways to end the violence. While this is a crucial issue, it must be remembered that League has the responsibility to spearhead the fight against women's oppression and for ensuring that gender equality is enshrined in a new constitution for South Africa.

And if the task falls squarely on the shoulders of the women then this is where the League's energy needs to be placed.

Meintjes concedes that 'violence' is relevant to women, but argues that the League's anti-violence campaign could be made more women-specific.

The League, she argues has to carefully strategise about issues that affect women. Further, it has to assert itself and not become a service organisation, nor allow issues to become ghettoised. In fact if women's issues do not become national issues then 'I despair for a progressive future', says Meintjes.

South African society is fraught with problems relating to women, and these range from inequality within the law, rape and lack of protection of women, maternity rights and fighting sex stereotypes.

Such difficult issues have not been resolved in their entirety anywhere in the world, by any liberation movement or women's organisation.

For decades a very common view existed among ANC leaders that 'women's issues' come second to 'fighting the main enemy which is apartheid'. Often issues become ghettoised and relegated to women's structures if women don't fight for them to be adopted as policy and, more importantly, to be acted

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upon.

Changing direction

At the conference Albertina Sisulu, who has historically held traditional notions the women's role in the struggle, warned women to guard against freeing themselves only in theory 'but shackled in practice'.

The League's president Gertrude Shope, who also has a 'mother' image, said after the conference that the League would adopt a 'different character' from its traditional 'mothers' role.

But in another interview Shope emphasised that there was an 'instinct' in mothers that could bring them together to stop the violence in the country. Surely this view stereotypes women, and in effect consigns them to play specific roles?

Shope's outlook reflects the tension within the organisation, as it tries to move away from old ways of thinking to adopt newer, and fresher, insights into gender roles.

Mavivi Manzini, a returned exiled and convenor of the conference, says: 'There is a shift because of the younger people. The older women speak a different language but they are not resisting the changes.'

Shamim Meer, editor of *Speak* magazine, argues that League branches will 'have to push' to move further away from traditional thinking.

Lock men up!

Kgositsile says that it was only in the last few years that the ANC Women's Section took up gender-specific issues. Prior to this energy was placed on survival and

gaining international support for the ANC.

'1987 was the first year that we looked at gender and it was agreed that a national commission on women's emancipation be set up. This did not happen. But at this conference everyone spoke openly for the first time and we agreed for example that girlfriend and wife battery could not continue among cadres.

The traditional excuses had to stop. We took the issue up sharply and got the NEC to lock up all men that beat women.' She, however, points out the irony of women often pleading afterwards to set their men free! 'What to do - we said lock those women up as well!'

Kgositsile argues forcefully that 'Women too have to start challenging themselves quite seriously and raise their consciousness.'

Issues not middle class or intellectual

Ginwala says one of the exciting things about the conference was the fact that the views she held in exile about women's emancipation were confirmed. She discovered that these were not merely 'intellectual' issues.

There was a specific form of women's oppression which women at a grassroots level were suffering. 'In exile I was told these were intellectual questions', she says.

'When women spoke about their oppression they spoke about issues ranging from violence, marriage, housing, rape, abortion, the law and political rights, which were all translated into resolutions.

Ginwala outlines an example of sex-

ism within the ANC. Its constitutional committee was set up consisting of six men. Women agitated and one woman was included. When the ANC legal and constitutional committee was set up, it had 19 men and one woman. When this is challenged, she says, the response is always 'please give us names'.

'Have the men forgotten the names of the women lawyers that defended them?', asks Ginwala.

'Not one of those men refused to sit on the committee because the majority of the population was excluded, yet if it was a black and white issue, all of them would have noticed!', she observes.

In 1989 there was a conference on 'Women, children, the family and the future in South Africa', says Kgositsile. Here, traditional practices were discussed together with ideas on how changes can be implemented.

'But we can't go from the top down. The women on the ground have to decide what they want to do about lobola, for instance', she says.

'We will be surprised about how many women do not support it but have merely resigned themselves to it. Communication is the most crucial aspect to this whole issue. We can't alienate women.'

Right direction

Contrary to press reports, the conference was not dominated by the election contest between Winnie Mandela and Gertrude Shope. A range of issues of crucial concern to all women were discussed, and decided upon.

According to delegates, the election procedure took so long because it was done through secret ballot, in a situation where a large proportion of the women were illiterate.

Manzini comments on the election result: 'I am pleased that Shope is president because we don't want to follow the tradition in the rest of Africa where all presidents' wives head the women's wing of the movement. This is a clear indication that the ANC Women's League is now an independent body.'

It is clear from the conference that the ANC Women's League is headed in the right direction. It needs all the support it can get from other women and the ANC, which must take its resolutions seriously.

However, if the League continues to merely duplicate ANC issues, then it will be a long time before the chasm between theory and practice among the women themselves, and not just within the ANC, is bridged. •

Some Resolutions

- A call to the ANC to set up a unit proposing changes in the law relating to taxation, marriage, abortion, credit, land ownership and allocation.
- To uplift women from years of colonial and patriarchal subjugation, a Women's Training Institute should be established.
- Women-specific programmes to be embarked upon, for the League to grow as a separate organisation which would not duplicate ANC work.
- The ANCWL does not accept ethnically-based 'intermediary' bodies as the non-racial nature of the organisation needs to be reflected.
- Active work will be done to form a broad alliance of women's groups to campaign for a Women's Charter.
- Establish a national committee, which will include men but be chaired by a woman, to deal with gender issues.
- The ANC Constitution be amended to require that at least 30 percent of NEC members are women.

Cosatu ponders over its alliance with the ANC and SACP

Imperative or impediment?



Chris Dlamini: dual leadership of unions and political parties is important and necessary



Moses Mayekiso: The alliance is crucial at this stage to help build ANC and SACP branches

At Cosatu's July congress, the federation is expected to take an important decision regarding trade union independence and the nature of alliances. Debate is raging in union circles about whether the tripartite alliance is an imperative or impediment for labour.

Affiliates will state their position on whether the Cosatu-SACP-ANC tripartite alliance compromises trade union independence. Key questions to decide on are: should the alliance dissolve (or should Cosatu break away); should it be loosened up; or should it be consolidated even further. The decisions reached at the congress will have a direct bearing on the future relationship between an ANC government and Cosatu.

The debate is not a new

one, but in recent months it has assumed renewed prominence in the trade union movement. It seems that, not only is there no consensus between Cosatu affiliates, but there are differences of opinion within individual unions.

Debate 'divisive'

Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) president and Cosatu vice-president Chris Dlamini, who is also a member of the SACP's Interim Leadership Core, is adamant that there should be a strong

As Cosatu approaches its fourth national congress in July, the debate around the federation's alliance with the ANC and SACP, and the concern about unionists wearing too many hats, is hotting up. GLENDA DANIELS spoke to unionists, and found sharp, but healthy, differences of opinion.

alliance between the unions and political parties. Dual leadership of unions and political parties (and cross membership) is both important and necessary, he says.

He argues that the different organisations in the tripartite alliance share common objectives. They have no 'separate agendas', he says, although the SACP's ultimate objectives go beyond those of the other alliance partners. For him, the alliance sharpens Cosatu's political position and solidifies its objectives (see WIP 68).

A significant proportion of the union movement believes the 'alliance debate' is divisive and not even worthy of attention.

'I wonder how the debate got introduced into the liberation movement in the first place, is it from Cosatu or the enemy?' asks Mlungisi Hlongwane, general secretary of the Post and Telecommunications Workers Association (Potwa).

Alliance partners have a common agenda in the alliance, he argues. There are no antagonistic differences, but their tactics may differ.

He says that Potwa has 'eliminated the political question' and that the debate is only valid at the level of practical considerations: 'We have reached consensus that a person who is full-time in the federation has to prioritise the trade union.'

While most leading unionists would agree that union work should be their priority, in practice, more often than not, this has not happened. And insiders in the union movement complain bitterly that some leaders who hold dual leadership positions in trade unions and political organisations are not able to do justice to their union work.

Differences in the NUM

The issue was thoroughly thrashed out at the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) national congress in April. Dual leadership was accepted as necessary, provided that it did not function at the union's expense.

The congress re-affirmed its commitment to strengthening the alliance, but stressed that trade union independence must be guaranteed.

However, in his presidential address to congress, James Motlatsi made it clear that he opposed unionists wearing many leadership hats. He argued that the alliance partners should be independent equals,

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sharing the same goals, but with each retaining its freedom to interpret the means to achieve these.

'Trade unions must be free, with the right to protest and strike but, at the same time, be treated as equal partners. This freedom would be endangered if people held full-time paid positions in more than one organisation. We must be careful leaders do not get confused about who they represent', he said.

At the same time Motlatsi felt that, at rank-and-file level, there should be extensive cross-membership.

While Motlatsi's position represents a minority strand within the union, it seems to have had an effect on the eventual decision taken, namely a *qualified* support for dual or multiple leadership.

Interdependence

Cosatu assistant general-secretary Sydney Mafumadi believes there needs to be both independence and interdependence between the different members of the tripartite alliance.

The ANC, he feels, will increasingly occupy the legal space as a broadly-based political party. And while Cosatu's priority is workers' welfare, the federation should continue to work with the ANC to strengthen its the working class and socialist bias.

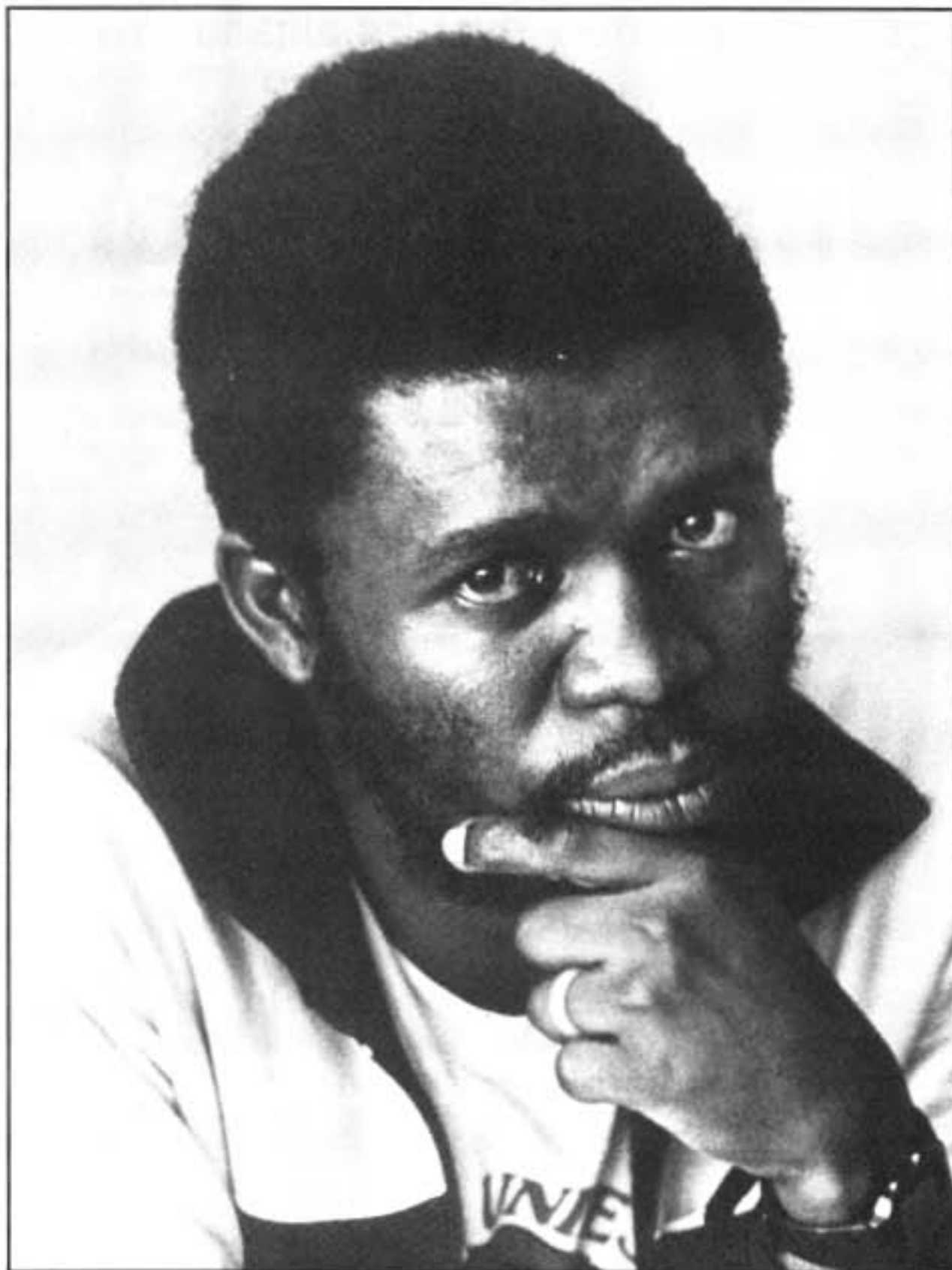
He sees no problem with dual leadership, but believes that, at its July congress, Cosatu would have to assert itself on the question of independence, which must be 'jealously guarded'.

Mafumadi feels that a Cosatu withdrawal from the alliance is highly unlikely because the federation has a 'strategic alliance' with the ANC and SACP, and shared with them a commitment to dismantling apartheid.

The National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) adopts a more cautious approach. According to general-secretary Moses Mayekiso, who is also an SACP leader, the alliance is crucial 'at this stage', because of the need for worker leaders, who have extensive experience of democratic mass organisation, to help build SACP and ANC branches. This view however, implies that the relationship would need to be reviewed at a later stage (possibly when there is a new government).

More independence

On the other side of the debate are the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (Cwiu) and the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu). Both are highly sceptical about the ability of the alliance



Sydney Mafumadi: Cosatu's independence must be jealously guarded



Mlungisi Hlongwane: Partners must have common agenda



Sam Shilowa: 'I am a victim of many hats'

to serve the interests of the working class. They believe that greater union independence is necessary in order to avoid unions in a future South Africa becoming 'sitting ducks' for bureaucratic control.

Sactwu education officer Ebrahim Patel gives two main reasons why Sactwu wants greater independence.

Firstly, he feels that lessons should be learnt from eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where trade unions had little independence from government. As a result, when governments were discredited, so were the trade union movements.

Secondly, Patel feels that democracy has to go well beyond parliament: 'For a real, vibrant democracy in a society, you have to have strong democratic institutions outside parliament. If we are tied absolutely to political parties, then we're weakening the power of civil society.'

While all Cosatu affiliates accepted the notion of trade union independence, dual leadership within the alliance compromises this independence, argues Patel:

'We can't adequately represent two, very different interests. Leadership has to be separated. It's more than a practical problem. It's a political problem and a question of who you represent. Merging the interests of all organisations is a fundamental mistake and one that has been committed elsewhere.'

Contrary to recent press reports, the debate has not manifested itself in a simple split in Cosatu's ranks. Instead the debate is in the main healthy and open, and differences exist *within* unions as well as between unions, among workers and union leaders alike. For example, *WIP* found sharply differing positions within the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU).

'Many hats' feasible

Arguing one position is Sam Shilowa, TGWU president, vice-chairperson of Cosatu's Wits region, and interim publicity secretary of the SACP Transvaal region.

He says candidly: 'I am a victim of many hats!'

Shilowa echoes the view that, while the alliance is important, independence should be respected. However, he believes that the issue is not 'too many hats' but rather 'efficiency'.

During the days of underground politics, activists were able to cope with responsibilities in different organisations, and many are still able to do this, he says.

However, he admits to having resigned from a key position in the Dobsonville

Civic Association over the last few months because he could not fulfil his tasks.

Shilowa feels a Cosatu break-away from the tripartite alliance would be 'suicidal' and would be giving in to the propaganda of the commercial press and the National Party.

However, Cosatu should retain sufficient independence from the ANC and the SACP to be able to act according to the mandate of its own constituency.

'It is important to note that the majority of Cosatu's 1,2 million members owe allegiance to the ANC and the SACP,' he says. He also points to the large presence of shopstewards at the ANC's December consultative conference: 'To break this would show that the leadership is out of touch with the grassroots'.

Dual leadership 'unworkable'

Taking a different view, TGWU education officer Desiree Daniels and assistant general-secretary Randall Howard are adamant that dual leadership is not in the unions' interests.

'To wear three executive caps and to represent different mandates is confusing. Eventually, things don't make sense. How can you effectively carry out your tasks without getting confused? Choices will have to be made', argues Howard.

Daniels, however, feels that the alliance should remain intact: 'Cosatu won't break away from the alliance at the next congress, and I don't believe it should. But we need to clearly work out our own programme and not collapse it into the ANC's programme.'

'We also need to make our own public statements and not be bound by the alliance. Dual national leadership, for me, is totally out because, if you're part of a decision-making process, you can't be objective...

'Cosatu and the ANC do not have the same composition. Cosatu is working class and the ANC is multi-class, hence there will be different interests. We need to be vigilant. Independence must be more than a statement on paper.'

Neglecting responsibilities?

Daniels concedes that the alliance partners share similar interests now, such as the campaign for a constituent assembly and an interim government. And while she disagrees with Shilowa's position, she concedes that he is hard-working and very effective in the union. But is Shilowa an exception to the rule?

When NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa occupied a central place in

the National Reception Committee at the time of political prisoner releases last year, he was accused of severely neglecting his union responsibilities. There are numerous similar examples.

Nevertheless, TGWU general secretary Nathi Nhleko feels strongly that, if a unionist can cope with the demands of being on the executive of a political organisation without neglecting union responsibilities, there is no problem. He testifies that Shilowa is the most efficient person in the union, yet also the person with the most responsibilities.

'I have never seen him in a situation where he has not carried out his functions in the union,' he says.

Conversely, Cosatu's Jeremy Baskin cites a Cosatu organiser who is *not* an ANC official, but who spends 'three quarters of his time doing ANC work'.

Nhleko feels that to break away from the alliance would be 'politically immature' and a 'major blunder'. He asserts that the alliance needs to be consolidated, as the existing problems are of a practical nature and solutions to these can be found.

'Dual leadership is not a problem at this stage, but when we attain national liberation and have an ANC government, it might be a problem', he argues.

'Unions not consulted'

These issues were debated vigorously at the recent TGWU congress and the position adopted was that 'at this stage' dual leadership was necessary.

It is one of the most important debates in the union movement at the moment, according to Nhleko, who believes that the debate needs to be encouraged.

Randall Howard, feels that the political implications of the debate are crucial. He is not satisfied about the way the alliance is working. Accountability, consultation and democracy - principles unions have always stood for - are not being adhered to, he says.

The ANC is losing a lot of grassroots support because there is such a big gap between the leadership and the membership, he believes.

TGWU information officer Kally Forrest agrees: 'Affiliates are not consulted and major decisions are taken, for example on the violence and negotiations. Affiliates don't get involved in the debate.' But, she points out, while the ANC's style of operation is being questioned, the SACP's is not.

Cosatu-SACP and Cosatu-ANC

Many unionists see a clear difference

UNIONS AND ALLIANCES

between Cosatu's relationship with the ANC, and its relationship with the SACP.

They believe that the Party can become their vehicle towards reaching working class, democratic socialist objectives. But they are sceptical of the ANC because of its constant failure to adequately consult the unions over important decisions.

Jeremy Baskin feels 'it is wrong that one person should be on the national executive of both Cosatu and the ANC'. But he is not sure when it comes to the SACP. 'Moses Mayekiso would say, if worker leaders are not there to build the party, then who will? And this is a valid point,' he says.

But Numsa's Bobby Marie, a member of the Transvaal leadership core of the SACP, believes that problems can arise if senior union officials are also in the leadership of other organisations, particularly when it comes to carrying out organisational mandates.

Marie also points to the example of Mayekiso. He argues that, if Mayekiso is involved in collective bargaining with management, then tactically he ought not to define himself as a socialist. This was easier to do in the past. However, now that he is an interim leader of the Communist Party, he takes on a specific profile, which he has to try and downplay when he negotiates with management.

The SACP is not monolithic

But the SACP's approach to trade unions is not a monolithic one. There are at least two kind of (unofficial) responses within

the Party.

On the one hand, there is the 'old school' represented by veteran Party leader Harry Gwala, who has denied that there is a crisis in socialism in Eastern Europe. His views, which have been labelled as 'stalinist', implies a 'vanguardist approach to politics' and a 'transmission belt' conception of trade unionism (D Pillay and E Webster, 'Trade Unions and the State', unpublished paper).

Representing a different approach within the Party, Jeremy Cronin places greater phasis on the need to respect trade union independence. However, he argues in the *SA Labour Bulletin* (Vol 15 No 7), this does not mean being opposed to dual leadership. For him, it is not a matter of being 'schizophrenic' but rather having a general understanding of the political needs of the time. He points to the necessity of Cosatu leaders bringing a worker perspective into ANC and SACP ranks.

'In short, while there might be pitfalls with overlapping leadership, there are also enormous positive possibilities of mutual enrichment,' he says.

Options facing Cosatu

In the light of this debate, the July congress of Cosatu faces a number of options:

- Should Cosatu withdraw from the alliance and liaise with the ANC and the SACP only on *specific* campaigns?
- Should the alliance remain, but with Cosatu being more *assertive* about raising its criticisms in the tripartite committees?

• Should Cosatu publicly state its own positions and disagreements, while pushing that the alliance develop a concrete and binding programme on agreed issues and campaigns?

• Should Cosatu be more active in developing a union perspective *before* alliance meetings?

There is a growing feeling in Cosatu that one person, irrespective of how committed he or she is, cannot perform two full-time tasks competently.

Many feel that union work has suffered, especially at a regional level, because of officials occupying positions in other political organisations.

Therefore, on the question of wearing 'many hats', Cosatu has to decide whether there should be:

• A complete separation of leadership at all levels immediately, with co-operation around some issues.

• A national and regional separation of leadership *in principle*, but during the interim Cosatu officials should help develop grassroots level structures of the ANC and SACP.

• A *permanent* overlapping of leadership as this advances working class influence in the political organisations.

Some of the political questions that unions need to focus on are:

• Is there a contradiction between the principle of independence while an alliance is maintained?

• What kind of influence does the trade union movement want to exert on the ANC and SACP?

• What rules should govern the influence Cosatu wishes to exert on the ANC?

Advancing working class interests

The options to take should depend on what best serves the interests of the union movement and workers.

While some might feel that a strong alliance compromises the independence of the trade union movement, others feel that it strengthens the position of the working class by ensuring that its interests are placed firmly on the agenda. One way or another, there are no guarantees.

The questions of democracy, mandates, confusing representation, working class leadership etc are all key questions that will have to be confronted. Not surprisingly, many unionists and workers are still undecided about where they stand on all these complex issues.

The debate at the Cosatu congress promises to be among the most challenging in its five year history. It is a critical debate for now and the future. •

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Alliance strains at the Border



Oupa Gqozo ... wields economic and political power

The Ciskei's year-old Gqozo regime continues to refuse to recognise the unionisation of public sector workers, organised under the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu). LANGA ZITA reports on tactical differences that have emerged within the Cosatu-ANC-SACP alliance over how to respond to the increasingly hostile Gqozo regime.

The ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance in the Border region has in recent months faced a number of hurdles, which have placed a great strain on relations within the movement. While progress has been made in getting over the hurdles, there is still a way to go before the alliance functions smoothly.

The problems - which have their root in the tension between unions, as organisations primarily located within the economic sphere, and political organisations - have come to the fore in response to the challenges posed to the alliance by the Gqozo administration (see *WIP 73* and *SA Labour Bulletin* Vol 15 No 5).

At the same time personality clashes, different organisational experiences and different outlooks have also played a part in creating contradictory approaches to the key questions in the region.

Struggle for union recognition

To date the major cause for dispute has been the struggle for the unionisation of public sector workers and the recognition

of the National Education and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) as their representative.

On the surface it appeared to be simply a labour issue, but in the context of the Ciskei bantustan, where the employer is ultimately Brigadier Gqozo who wields not only economic power but also political power, the labour issue could not be left to unions alone.

Thus from the very inception of the Gqozo era, the UDF and later the ANC and SACP became central to most communications with the regime on such varied questions as educational, civic and labour matters.

There were two Cosatu-affiliated trade unions which were badly affected by the Ciskei's labour decree, which forbids government employees from joining trade unions: Nehawu and the Postal and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potwa).

There has always been union activity in the public sector, even during the days of Lennox Sebe when there was a clandestine organisation responsible for the civil servants. On the eve of Sebe's fall a

long workers' strike was taking place at Cecilia Makiwane hospital which, although initially spontaneous, was supported by Nehawu. After the coup this organisation was absorbed into Nehawu, but it is unclear whether the experience it had gained was thoroughly transferred to the union.

While Gqozo agreed to the recognition of trade unions in other sectors in the Ciskei, he was against the unionisation of the public sector. Instead he proposed the Ciskei Civil Servants Association - a proposal which was rejected.

Different strategies

There were, however, voices within the democratic movement which argued that, for strategic reasons, it was feasible for activists to work within the new structure, democratise it and assert their demands from within. This was seen as an attempt to save the relationship with Gqozo but at the same time pursue the interests of the workers.

Those opposed to this argued that an employer will not give workers a instrument to hurt himself (the employer). The

debate was never fully exhausted.

Four strands of thought emerged around the best way to handle the Ciskei question. These were Nehawu's approach, that of the ANC/SACP in the region, the approach of ANC NEC member Chris Hani, who visited the region, and the position of Joel Netshitenzhe, editor of the ANC mouthpiece *Mayibuye*.

The Nehawu approach could be called the 'forward ever' approach.

Its basic thinking was that Gqozo was a puppet serving the interests of Pretoria, and the only way to deal with him was to fight him into submission. This approach left no room for flexibility and has been further complicated by the unwillingness of Nehawu to consult with its alliance partners on almost all of its major moves.

Broad front approach

The ANC-SACP approach was initially gradualist and informed by the strategic broad front approach. This thinking, though not clearly formulated at times, maintained that Gqozo was part of the middle ground which needed to be won over by the progressive forces.

In line with this thinking, the approach of the democratic forces was to go softly and try to reason with Gqozo. Initially this seemed to work, as Gqozo hosted the first Mandela rally, liberalised the political space, lent out cars to organisations, decreed relatively progressive civil and economic laws.

But Gqozo quickly showed that he was no Holomisa and moved from being an apparently uncertain, overwhelmed political novice to a man with formidable political ambitions extending beyond the confines of the homeland. He appeared to have not only the police and defence force to bolster his objectives but also a pseudo-CCB unit and a willing SADF on his side.

With this new dynamic the gradualist approach almost fell to pieces.

Transformative approach

Netshitenzhe, in his appraisal of the state of the nation after the Groote Schuur Minute and a response to the anarchy in Mdantsane following the coup, asked: Which is more revolutionary, the burning of factories or their occupation and control by the people? Implicit in this perspective was a view of the military-governed homelands - in particular the then Ciskei and Transkei - as semi-liberated areas. Thus, as in other revolutionary situations such as Mozambique, China or the Paris Commune, elements of the new



Joel Netshitenzhe: Which is more revolutionary, the burning of factories or their occupation and control by the people?

had to start to germinate.

This perspective, in concrete terms, would have meant that the formal and spontaneous emergence of organs of peoples power should have been consolidated and deepened and actually moved from formal administration of the villages and townships to substantive control of these.

Whether this was too idealistic or not is uncertain, because it was not put into practice. There are important reasons for this: Most of the key activists in the area were not full-time revolutionaries; and some of the youth that had been drawn to political life were mainly from rural areas and, as such, alien to political discipline. This resulted in expulsions of former Sebe supporters before the newly-introduced forms of authority had anchored themselves.

At another level deep-seated class contradictions manifested themselves in the form of 'undisciplined youth' chasing headmen and business people out of villages and townships. There were also commissions in many villages relating to monies squandered during the Sebe era.

In the light of these problems the SACP-ANC approach was to go into the villages and townships and extinguish the fires. In the end, after months of struggle, calm was restored. Under such conditions the transformative approach of Netshitenzhe could not be considered, let alone be implemented.

Balancing dialogue and struggle

Hani's position articulated in various forums was a delicate balance between dialogue and struggle. He maintained

that defence of the legal space did not mean sacrificing mass political activity in the homeland.

He posited a similar position to that which operated in Transkei, where mass action was taken against various elements and aspects of Holomisa's administration although Holomisa himself was acknowledged to be friendly to popular forces. Thus defence of legal space does not imply inactivity.

While Netshitenzhe's perspective did not crystallise, the other perspectives emerged at various points.

At times each approach succeeded, only to fail later because of a lack of appreciation of subjective and objective elements. But, more importantly, the approaches would fail because of mistrust and a lack of consultation - particularly from Nehawu activists.

There were, however, moments when all the components of the alliance would rhyme together - as during the medium stage of the first civil servants' strike.

Phases of civil service strike

The various phases of the civil servants strike signify the relative success of the different approaches. As already alluded to, until the shift of Gqozo, the gradualist and broad-front approach of the ANC-SACP succeeded.

The uncompromising militant and rigid stance of Nehawu played a part in forcing Gqozo to compromise in March, but it was a victory shared with the alliance partners in that there was common agreement around the need to punish Gqozo after he had failed to respond positively to an invitation to meet the alliance.

In other words to the extent that there was both mass action (a strike and a march) as well as dialogue both between Gqozo and the ANC NEC delegation led by Alfred Nzo and later discussions between Gqozo and Cosatu (including Nehawu), Hani's synthesis appeared as the solution, provided the timing was correct.

Tensions and mistrust

However, tensions and mistrust continue to hound prospects of a common and united approach, as the following cases illustrate:

- At a time of cordial relations between the progressive movement and the regime, Nehawu issued one of the most - if not *the* most - hard-hitting statements to Gqozo. Nehawu's desperation needs to be seen in the light of the long years of the repressive Sebe era, when trade unions



Addressing workers during last year's Mercedes Benz strike : 'The alliance is itself a site of struggle'.

were illegal. For Gqozo not to reverse this situation after years of bitter struggle was unbearable. This explains, but does not justify, Nehawu's failure to consult with the rest of the alliance on the issue.

- During preparations this year for the 1 February mass action to demand a constituent assembly, a delegation from the SACP and ANC was severely criticised in a meeting of workers. Leading trade unionists accused the tripartite alliance of being a paper alliance, with Cosatu assuming the position of junior partner.

- The first civil servant's strike last year - which in the specific context of the bantustan ultimately affected all structures in the alliance - was called by Nehawu without consultation with the rest of the alliance. The subsequent involvement of other structures in strikes, and their successful outcome, could have helped solve this problem, but this has not happened.

Last April, when Gqozo's promise of pay parity for civil service workers was allegedly not honoured, another strike was called by Nehawu, this time without even consulting Potwa, Nehawu's closest ally in the public sector.

As a result of this action 3 000 workers were sacked (according to official figures). In an attempt to salvage the crisis a tripartite alliance committee was formed to look solely at the problem of the fired workers. A front approach was undertaken whereby various forces ranging from business people to chiefs and lawyers were called upon to take up the plight of the workers with the Gqozo administration.

However, in violation of the decision to leave the problem in the hands of the committee, Nehawu and the King William's Town local of Cosatu unilaterally convened a meeting of mass-based organisations to consider mass action against the very chamber of commerce that had been called upon to help mediate.

- In May Cosatu organised a march to the South African embassy without consulting members of the strike committee.

Steps forward

In spite of all this, developments toward strengthening the alliance have taken qualitative steps forward. In Mdantsane and other areas in the region joint May

Day committees of the alliance were formed and very successful rallies, which included the PAC, NACTU and independent trade unions, were held.

On 18 and 19 May a regional tripartite meeting which Nehawu also attended, was held in an attempt to solve the problems.

According to an SACP official the meeting was very successful and the alliance was reconstituted.

'On the whole, the three legs of the alliance are marching in step,' he said, and the task now is to consolidate the alliance and ensure that 'it manifests itself at a local level'.

The tripartite alliance is itself a sight of struggle that has to be consistently defended. The only guarantee for its continued existence is openness, patience and, most important, mutual consultation. This is a nettle that Nehawu in the Border region needs to grasp as a matter of urgency.

Joint working relations, not only in campaigns but in workshops, will go a long way towards solving the problems that still exist. - *elnews* •

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Regulating capitalism (in not-so-simple English)

There are political errors which can be excused, and there are social gaffes which can be forgiven: but writing badly is a crime deserving of the stake or gallows. The Economic Trends Group have now published their book on South Africa's economic crisis, more than two years after their research was completed. It is not their fault that the state president changed the rules of the game in February 1990. Nor is it their fault that sanctions and disinvestment, Group Areas and the rest thereafter became history.

But it is their fault that they cannot write good, plain English - the sort of English that your ordinary person-in-the-street can understand without a third degree in semantics.

Simple English

Steven Gelb, the editor of the book and former leader of the Economic Trends Group, tells us about 'regulation theory' in his opening overview. But the word 'regulation' is not to be understood in the normal meaning of the word: that would be too simple, too easy for us common people. No, the *French* meaning of regulation is preferred, apparently because it is 'more complex'.

The reader is bombarded with such terms as 'a "racially selective Fordist" response', 'post-Fordism', 'sub-Fordism', 'regime of accumulation' and so on to the very end of the book.

There are plenty of models for writers of popular economics. *The Economist* is one. It has a standard house-style of clarity and elegance. The World Bank writes clear jargon-free English. So indeed does the South African Reserve Bank. Why can't 'our' economists do the same? One concludes that, while this book was commissioned by Cosatu, it was not meant to be read by Cosatu.

Rescuing capitalism

Lest it is pointed out that the models mentioned are conservative institutions, one must hasten to prove that the Economic Trends Group is not even faintly pink. What started out as a research project 'commissioned by Cosatu', as the cover tells us, had, by the date of publication, become a project to rescue capitalism. This is a serious accusation to make in a family journal, so it must be fully substantiated.

Steven Gelb lets the cat out of the bag in his overview. He tells us that there are two views of capitalism. The first holds that capitalism is inherently stable, if only markets were free to

function properly. The second holds that capitalism is inherently unstable, and has to be regulated by state intervention. This second view, he says, is the approach taken in the book. With this remark, the overthrow of capitalism is unceremoniously heaved out of the window, and we are left with the regulation of capitalism.

One wonders whether Cosatu knew about this before they commissioned the project.

He confirms his reformist approach to the economic crisis in the last pages of his contribution. Here he outlines an 'alternative accumulation strategy' which embraces 'selective' state intervention in sectoral planning and an anti-trust policy 'to restructure the financial networks of the conglomerates'. Is that *all* that the economic crisis needs?

'One nation' reformist strategy

The article by Mike Morris entitled 'State, capital and growth' gives further flesh to the reformist strategy. Here, the term 'one nation' is used as if it had no historical significance. Morris proposes a 'one nation' strategy as against capital's '50% percent solution'. The 'one nation' strategy combines, somehow, a 'significant re-distribution of resources towards the majority of the population' with a solution to the national question. How this is to be done in a 'one nation' context is not explained, for the owners of capital might conceivably object fairly vigorously to having their wealth re-distributed.

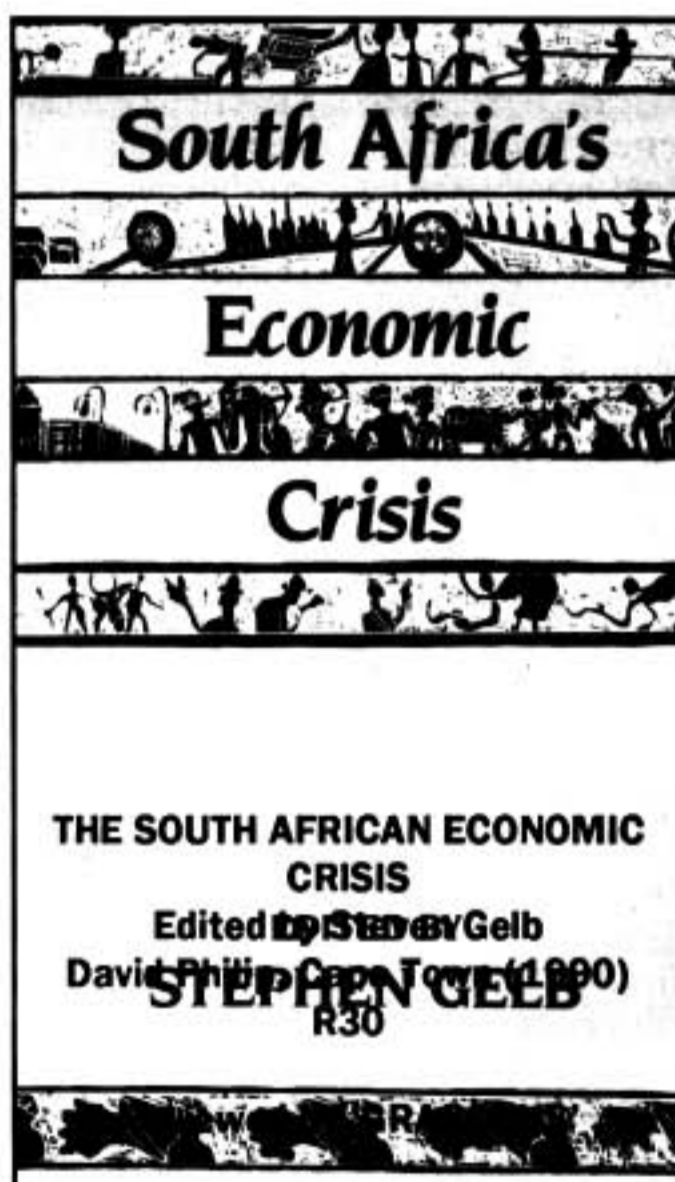
So what is the history of the 'one nation' idea? The term was coined by Disraeli, the great reformist leader of

Britain's Conservative (Tory) Party, who saved capitalism there by breaking down the class barriers to political power which existed in Britain until the 1870s.

Can the 'one nation' strategy offer anything to South Africa's working class? Can their interests possibly be reconciled with those of capital? The Economic Trends Group thinks so. One can plough through the entire book without gaining any sense of the antagonism of capital to labour except of the academic kind.

From left to centre

The political lines in this country are becoming clearer - not the least important gain of the De Klerk reforms. 'One nationalism' is the policy of the political centre. Those, like the Economic Trends Group, who were regarded as left of centre under the state of emergency, can now be seen, without their clothes, as



dead centre. Will the real left now please stand up?

Unfortunately, elements in the ANC and even Cosatu are buying the 'one nation' line with scarcely a backward look at their former radicalism. The ANC's economic discussion paper is heavily influenced by the Economic Trends Group. The views expressed in Steven Gelb's and Mike Morris's papers especially tally with the discussion document now being discussed in ANC branches. Its naivety about the political power of the capitalists is just one of its fatal failings. It is also a policy which will give us two or three glorious years of rising consumption - and then a crash of epic proportions, the hangover after the binge.

The theme of the policy is 'growth through re-distribution'. This is a nonsense as any schoolboy knows. Growth can only occur by means of investment. Investment and consumption are mutually exclusive: what is consumed cannot be invested. So a policy which boosts consumption will reduce the funds available for investment; which will therefore reduce the growth rate; and will therefore reduce *future* consumption.

Misleading the working class

On the basis of present productive capacity, there is very little scope for increasing consumption in South Africa. The utilisation of productive capacity, even in the current recession, is fairly high. An increase in consumption would merely lead to inflation. Those centre economists who are preaching this doctrine to the working class are guilty of misleading them. But it is the workers who will pay the penalty.

This messy policy is partly based on the myth that whites consume mainly imported luxury goods, and that income re-distributed from whites to blacks will give a boost to locally-made 'basic' consumption goods. In fact, very few consumption goods are imported, and it is patronising and wrong to suggest that black people will buy different goods to whites. Yes, wealthy whites will have to be taxed to pay for basic services for poor black people: but this is not going to bring about growth, it will merely re-distribute consumption.

This is the thistle which the Economic Trends Group has failed to grasp. Who will make the necessary investments in new factories, mines and agricultural projects to create jobs, earn foreign exchange and boost wages? A capitalist will only risk his own money on a project if he can earn good profits at low risk. This means low wages, tame unions, political 'stability', a compliant government, and so forth - all the things that capitalists enjoyed in this country until 1973.

To put it another way, the capitalists in South Africa will invest only on terms which are unacceptable to Cosatu. The Economic Trends Group has not reconciled this fundamental contradiction by means of such wheezes as the 'one nation' strategy.

Regulation - the cure-all

So the Economic Trends Group believe that capitalism contains no problems which a wise and far-seeing government could not solve by the appropriate regulations. Investors will invest by regulation, prices will be set by regulation, wages will be raised by regulation, dividends will be declared by regulation, foreign investment will be controlled by regulation, exports will be encouraged by regulation, there is no end to the prodigious economic feats that can be achieved by regulation! If only regulation had been discovered before! How could generations of businessmen and state officials have got it so wrong for so long?

One ventures the thought that the Group has not fully under-

stood how capitalism works, and how it retains power. Mind you, one can certainly see that there will be plenty of new jobs available for regulators.

In the entire book, the word socialism is mentioned only once. If nationalisation is mentioned at all, it escaped amongst the jargon and got clean away.

Bloodless analysis

Nevertheless, there is much of value in this book. The chapters on the balance of payments by Brian Kahn, the manufacturing sector by Anthony Black, and agriculture by Mike de Klerk are informative and valuable. David Lewis's article on unemployment contains many sharp insights. The book as a whole will be an important source of data and analysis for students and researchers.

But there is a certain bloodlessness about the analysis. Here, history is driven by abstractions, not by people or even economic forces. Human beings are not actors in the Economic Trends world, just objects of abstract ideas. The part played by mass struggle in bringing down the Botha government, for example, apparently finds no place in Mike Morris's analysis. The military stalemate in Angola which, one might argue, was a turning point in South African history, is not mentioned at all.

After ploughing through pages of turbid prose one begins to grasp what the Economic Trends Group is getting at. It goes something like this:

1. 'The South African economy is in deep trouble.
2. 'Something must be done about it.
3. 'We think the best thing is to switch income from the rich to the poor, thus giving a boost to the consumption goods sector.
4. 'Er . . . well that's it on growth.'

Socialism - the only alternative

The Economic Trends Group's policy will lead to hyperinflation and negative growth within a short period. There is no future in Keynesian solutions for the South African economy. Theirs is not only voodoo economics, however. Their policy necessarily leaves the capitalists in full possession of their economic and political power bases: so it leaves the door wide open to counter-revolution.

The South African economic problem can be simply stated, in plain English:

1. Most South Africans are poor.
2. They are poor because they do not have jobs (5 or 6 million are unemployed) or because their wages are very low.
3. There is high unemployment because there are not enough factories.
4. Wages are low mainly because the workers do not have enough machinery to help them produce.
5. There aren't enough factories and machinery because capital is mainly controlled by just a few very rich capitalists. They refuse to invest 'their' capital in new factories because they won't make enough profits (R47 billion of long-term capital is sitting idle in bank accounts at present).
6. There will continue to be poverty until vast quantities of capital *are* used to create new jobs and enrich existing jobs.
7. If the capitalists won't invest, then the State will have to take over and do the investing instead.

Yes, that means nationalisation. One hesitates to use the word in polite company, but there's no escape. And if we can couple nationalisation with democratic worker participation at factory, industry and national level, then we shall have - whisper it - socialism! There is no alternative. •

Cuba, Castro and Christianity

On April 4 this year an event occurred that went unnoticed by our local press. On that day, the Cuban Young Communist League and the Jose Marti Pioneer Organisation celebrated their 29th and 30th anniversaries. 400 000 Cuban youth gathered in Revolution Square, Havana. None had been bussed in. They had walked from the four corners of their city to celebrate the day and to affirm their commitment to the Cuban revolution.

In a recent polemical article Alan Fine, a *Business Day* journalist, claims that Cuba suffers 'from the same political and economic deficiencies as did the vanquished East European regimes'. Nobody, certainly not the Cubans, is denying that the Cuban revolution is now facing some of the most difficult challenges of its existence.

But Fine misses the absolutely essential point. Unlike eastern Europe, in Cuba the revolution retains an overwhelming popular mandate. Why?

Fidel speaks

Fidel and Religion is basically the record of four long talks between Fidel Castro and a Brazilian revolutionary, Dominican Frei (ie Brother) Betto. Although it is billed primarily as a discussion on religion, the conversations range much wider to cover Fidel's childhood and youth, the early days of the guerrilla struggle, the achievements and difficulties confronting the revolution today, and the world situation.

The discussions provide some interesting insights into Fidel's personality. 'I'm not going to say I'm a better revolutionary, but I'm definitely a better cook than Che was' (p307). Here, and in general, Fidel is not shy to speak about what he regards as his own achievements - culinary or otherwise. But he also has a voracious appetite to learn from others - throughout the interviews he seems to be busy swapping recipes with Frei Betto's mother, or asking for facts, statistics and recommended reading on liberation theology, the pope, and the Brazilian economy from his interlocutor.

It comes as no surprise to hear that Fidel, the Great Communicator of Havana's Revolution Square studied, in his youth, the orators of ancient Greece and Rome.

'I had the speeches of Demosthenes, Cicero and other orators and writers of antiquity...Analysing it now, I'd say I don't like that oratory, because it was too rhetorical and grandiloquent. It depended too much on plays on words...But anyhow, at the time, I admired Athenian democracy and even Rome's...later on I discovered that it was just a little group of aristocrats who met in the public square in Greece to make decisions. Under them

was a huge mass of citizens who had no rights...and below them was an even larger mass of slaves. That was Athenian "democracy", which reminds me of today's capitalist "democracy".' (p279-80)

The making of a revolutionary

What combination of factors in Fidel's childhood and youth led to the formation of one of the four or five outstanding revolutionary figures of our century?

In Fidel's case the essential ingredient seems to be a paradoxical combination. It is a combination of rootedness amongst the working masses, and an access to a wider world.

Fidel's father had come to Cuba from Spain. He started out as a labourer for the notorious US-based United Fruit company, but worked his way up to becoming a relatively rich landowner. The family farm was located in the deep countryside, and it was surrounded by still larger absentee landlord, US-owned farms. 'There was no bourgeois or feudal society in Biran. There weren't 20 or 30 landowners whose families would get together, always forming the same group. My father was an isolated landowner'. (p 138)

As a result, Fidel's childhood was spent in close contact with the extremely poor peasantry, and even poorer Haitian migrant families, seasonally employed on the US-owned farms. At the same time, his family was wealthy enough to send him as a boarder to the best Catholic schools on the island. So, in the rural backwater in which he grew up and to which he returned for holidays, he experienced at first-hand the life of the people. But, at the same time, he had access to a wider world of ideas.

It is this combination that seems to be the key to Fidel's early formation. It is also a combination that surely underlies the core features of the revolution with which he has become synonymous - profoundly rooted, patriotically Cuban on the one hand, outward-looking and internationalist on the other.

Two stages

The book also provides a very fascinating insight into Castro's early approach to the revolutionary process in Cuba. He became a marxist-leninist, he tells us, in his days at university, in the late 1940s. But he did not join the Communist Party.

He saw the Cuban communists as isolated. It was an isolation that was provoked by their own socialist vanguardism, as well as 'by the atmosphere with which imperialism, McCarthyism and reaction enveloped them.'

'No matter what they did, they remained isolated...I didn't



see any political possibilities for them under those circumstances. So, I worked out a revolutionary strategy for carrying out a deep social revolution - but gradually, by stages.

'I basically decided to carry it out with the broad, rebellious, discontented masses, who didn't have a mature political awareness of the need for revolution but who constituted the immense majority of the people. I said, "The rebellious masses, the untainted, ordinary people, are the force that can make the revolution, the decisive factor in the revolution. They must be led to revolution, but they must be led by stages.'" (p146-7)

It was this national democratic strategic perspective that Fidel more or less worked out on his own in his early 20s, and which formed the basis of the guerrilla struggle led by the 26th of July Movement. Within two years, in 1959, the guerrilla army swept victoriously into Havana overthrowing the corrupt, neo-colonial regime of Batista.

A national democratic programme

The initial programme of the new government was limited to basic national democratic goals. Notorious war criminals and torturers were tried and sentenced. An Urban Reform Law slashed rents by almost 50%, and those who had paid rents for many years were automatically given title to their houses. Racial and class discrimination on beaches, in parks and clubs was abolished. Workers who had been rentrenched in the climate of Batista's tyranny, going back some seven years, were re-instated.

Later, an agrarian reform was instituted, limiting land ownership to 400 hectares, except in some cases where there was well organised, intensive farming on larger properties.

A social programme, including a mass literacy campaign and the construction of roads, hospitals, polyclinics, health centres and schools was launched.

Needless to say, even these basic democratic and still non-socialist provisions were too much for Big Brother Rambo just 90 miles away in Florida. In April 1961 with John F Kennedy's US navy steaming off the Cuban coast, a counter-revolutionary, sea-borne landing of Cuban contras was launched at the Bay of Pigs. The idea was that they would gain a small toe-hold, sufficient for the US to justify coming in itself.

The revolution was still young and its armed forces undeveloped (Castro: 'we ... had more airplanes than pilots: eight planes and seven pilots' (p209)). Not for the last time, US imperialism totally underestimated the mass support for the Cuban revolution. The whole population was mobilised in defence of the revolution, the invaders were routed, and the new, socialist stage of the revolution was proclaimed.

The manner and timing of its proclamation were entirely Fidelist.

'BETTO - Was the socialist character of the Revolution proclaimed after the 1961 Bay of Pigs attack?

'CASTRO - No, not after the attack - on the day the invasion began.' (p196)

As Castro explains, his original strategic conception was of a relatively slow, methodical advance from the national democratic to the socialist phase. But the attacks from the side of US imperialism compelled a defensive speeding up of the process. To *defend* the national democratic gains, a socialist advance became necessary.

More than this, the great popular masses that Fidel and the 26th of July Movement had mobilised around basic democratic and patriotic aspirations, were now subjectively ready for the socialist phase. Socialism was no longer an abstraction. It was

the defence of their newly built schools, their newly acquired literacy, housing, land, of their state, of themselves.

Liberation theology

Notwithstanding the wide-ranging character of the book, in the end it stands as an historic encounter between one of the greatest practitioners and theorists of marxism-leninism and another major third world ideological current, liberation theology.

Frei Betto graphically describes how the Church drew closer to the poor particularly in countries such as Brazil.

'It wasn't so much a question of the Church's opting for the poor as of the poor's - forced by the repression of the people and trade union movements - opting for the Church. In other words, the poor turned to the Church in order to remain organised, articulate, conscious and active. It's no joke...but, to the same extent that the poor invaded the Church, Catholic priests and bishops started to be converted to Christianity.' (p239)

Precisely in discovering its true vocation, as a church of the poor, many of the church's leading thinkers in Latin America, like Leonardo Boff and Frei Betto himself, have turned to marxism as a scientific tool to analyse and explain the poverty of the poor they hope to serve.

But is there not a contradiction between religious belief and marxism?

This is a question that Betto and Fidel come back to in many different ways throughout their four days of discussion. According to Fidel, marxism is a body of scientific theory explaining socio-economic and historical realities. It is a tool to be used. Medical researchers, whether they are by religious profession hindu, muslim, buddhist, christian or non-believers, use an electron microscope. They don't ask whether the microscope is British, French, Chinese or Soviet. It is a scientific tool, likewise marxism.

But if that is the case, asks Betto, why is the Cuban Communist Party closed to believers?

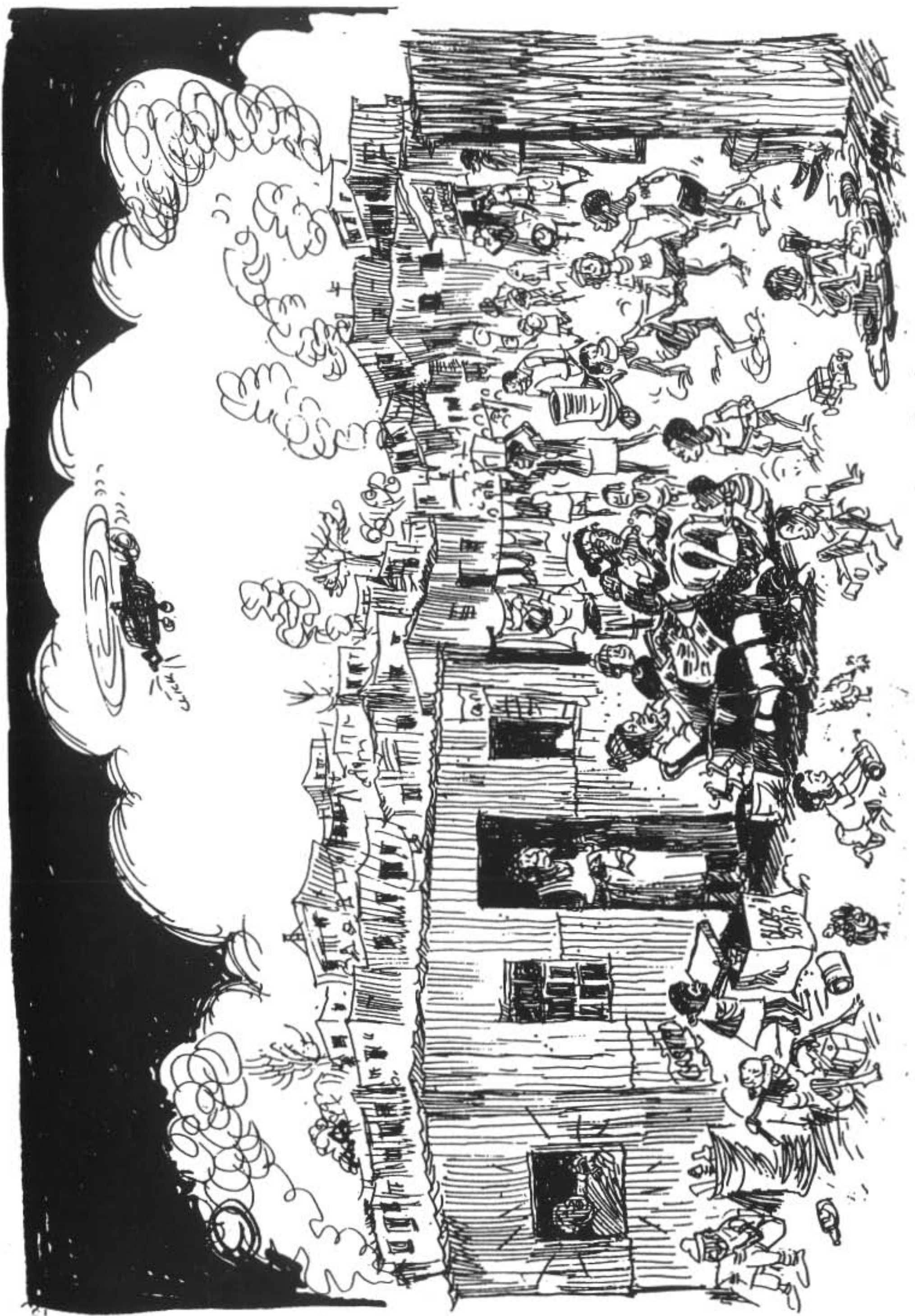
Fidel's reply is twofold. In the first place, he goes in some depth into the historical background. The Catholic church in Cuba was not profoundly rooted among the working masses, as it is in many other Latin American countries. According to Fidel, before the revolution there were virtually no churches in the countryside at all. Although religious sentiments were strong among the people, the church as an institution was physically and ideologically located among the small wealthy elite. The church sided with the counter-revolution.

The Cuban revolution was also made before the advent of liberation theology. Although there were christians, and at least one Catholic priest, serving actively in the guerrilla army, there was nothing to compare with the organised mass presence of believers in the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

This, says Fidel, is the historical background to the non-admittance of believers into the party. But it is also clear that he is more than open to changing this particular party regulation: 'It (the Party) can't be confessional, for it might tend to resemble or become, as you say, a sort of religion; we really don't think that people can practise non-belief as a philosophy, or atheism as a religion.' (p213)

But Fidel is quick to add that changing a party regulation is not a personal nor a leadership matter alone. It needs to be something understood and endorsed by the broad party membership.

The fact that this particular book under review was first published in Cuba and has now sold some 1,5 million copies there will surely go some way to ensuring that. •





Let all
know peace

