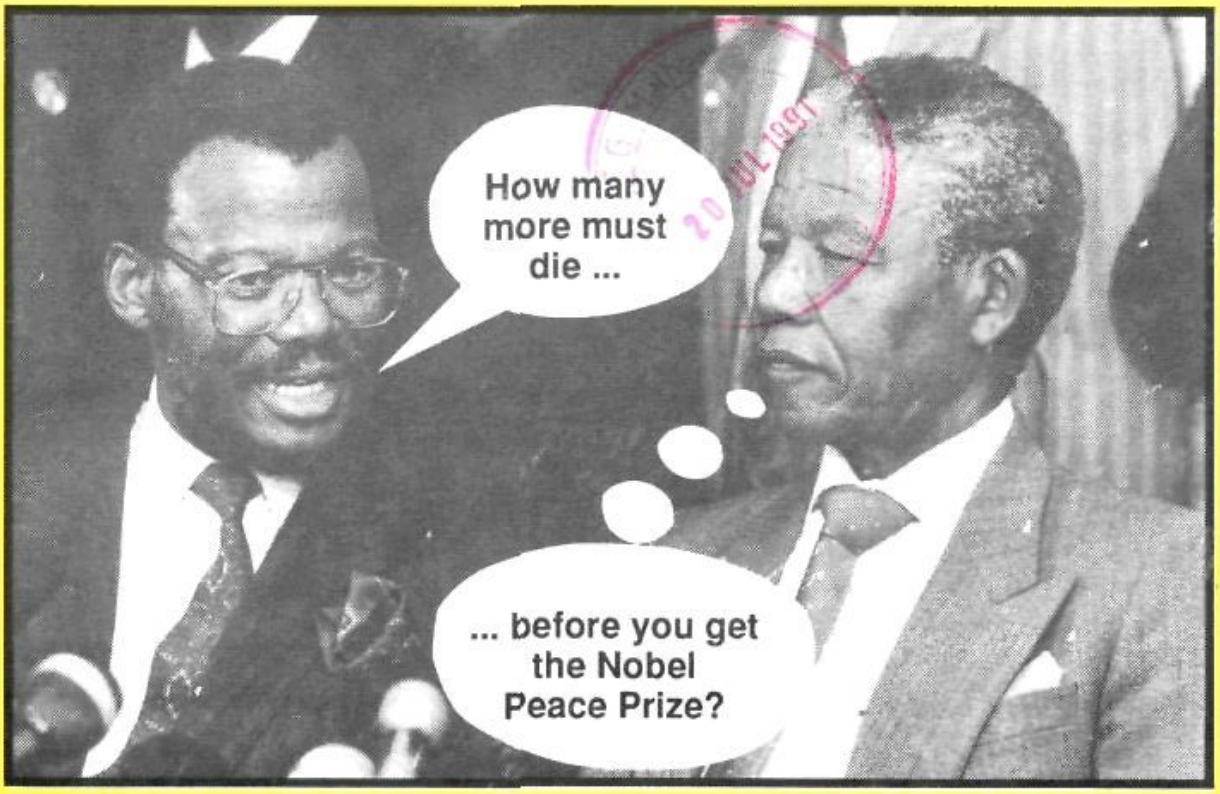
WORK IN PROGRESS
WIP 73 • March/April 1991

POLITICAL TOLERANCE



CAN WE MEET THE CHALLENGE?

ALSO INSIDE

★ Hospital Apartheid in Eastern Cape
★ Namibia — One Year On
★ Is the SACP still communist?

★ SPECIAL FOCUS ★ Women & Gender Struggles

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EDITORIAL

Political intolerance has reached alarming proportions in this country. While on the one hand the collapse of Stalinism and the opening up of political space following De Klerk's reforms have created a climate of relative openness and tolerance, this has largely been confined to the level of intellectual debate - primarily through sections of the media, and at higher levels of political leadership.

At the local level of leadership in the township, a culture of intolerance has deepened to the extent that many now seriously question whether a democratic election for a constituent assembly is in fact possible. Much has to be done first to combat the deep intolerance of opposing views, and the easy resort to violence to resolve differences. If we fail, the likelihood of an authoritarian solution to the current political impasse increases.

It seems clear that a Patriotic Front of all liberation organisations is a crucial first step along the road to combatting political intolerance, and creating a culture of debate and openness.

In this issue of *WIP* we look at some of these issues.

Healthy differences

The recent Women and Gender conference saw sharp differences emerging over a number of issues, but in the end these debates were seen as healthy and necessary. They threw further light on the complex inter-connections between race, class and gender in this country. This can only benefit the struggle for women's rights and gender equality.

In the same sense, sharply critical contributions to the discussion of the role of the SACP must be seen as a necessary part of an ongoing debate, which if encouraged can only result in a clearer understanding of the issues facing the party.

There is much to learn too from the Namibian experience - both positive and negative. Independent Namibia is in many ways a model of reconciliation and tolerance, in particular in the way the police and army are being transformed. But reconciliation without correcting past injustices, and gross socio-economic inequalities, is reconciliation of a new elite with the old. In Zimbabwe this has clearly been the case - only now, after 11 years of independence, is real land reform being considered - and there are dangers that Namibia may go the same way.

South Africa, the last country in Africa to attain its liberation, is lucky to be in the position to learn from other countries' mistakes. But we can only do this fully if we allow a culture of debate and criticism to spread to all corners of the country. Otherwise we are in danger of repeating the mistakes made by others, with disastrous consequences. •

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The Search for Sisterhood

How much progress has been made in uniting women around gender issues? *WIP* looks back on the recent conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa, as well as examining the experiences of women in other liberation struggles ***— Pages 13 to 21***

Peace, brother

Peace accords come and go, but the killing in South African townships *continues. What are* the prospects for a lasting peace, given the degree of intolerance which *seems to exist* within the political organisations which sign those accords? ***— Pages 5 - 12***

Red-faced

Has socialism failed — or has the South African Communist Party? Former political prisoner and SACP member DAVID KITSON asks whether the Party is, in fact, still communist ***— Page 27***

Facts about Azapo distorted

Dear editor
Patrick Laurence's treatment of Azapo in your last issue of *WIP* was short and dismissive and did not do justice to the organisation or give an evaluation of the year under discussion as the other articles did. There were distortions in his facts and logic.

Firstly, the article said two Natal officials resigned. This is not true. You resign from an organisation if you are a member of that organisation. You do not resign from an organisation you are not a member of. After restrictions were lifted last year, all Azapo members were asked to submit applications as new members because most of Azapo's records went missing during police raids on its offices during the state of emergency. The two people mentioned did not submit applications and neither did they take part in Azapo's activities **throughout** the year. Their announcement of 'resignation' on the eve of Azapo congress was to give their own formation publicity at the expense of Azapo.

Secondly, the illogical distortion that 'the influence of Azapo has been whittled down steadily in the last decade by the departure from its ranks of two waves of political emigrants', is rather far-fetched because Azapo, which is only 13 years old, has grown in membership and influence in this period. To say that it has shrunk, is an expression of personal wishful thinking rather than objective evaluation.

Thirdly, Laurence shows some of his own colours when he postulates that 'talking to the De Klerk government or bantustan leaders' is the correct thing to do in present circumstances and any organisation, such as Azapo, that rejects that 'may find itself fossilised in the past'. That is gross. It is also politically unacceptable to Azapo which is built on the principle of non-collaboration with the government and its organs of repression.
Yours sincerely — *Mike Tissong*

LETTERS

Write to: The Editor
Work In Progress
PO Box 32716
Braamfontein 2017

Wosa defends its Gulf War stance

Dear Editor
From an anti-imperialist standpoint, we were disturbed by the position adopted in the comment on the Gulf War (*WIP* 72). The article made a number of relevant points, but ended echoing the exact position of the world's major imperialist powers.

Most liberation organisations including the PAC and Call of Islam have added their voice to the demand for US and Allied troops out of the Gulf.

This is the rallying demand by all those internationally opposed to US intervention in the region.

The anti-war movement did not demand that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait for simple reasons:

Firstly, it is our belief that the resolution of the border conflict should have been resolved by the region.

Secondly, we will not be fooled into believing that this war was about Kuwait's sovereignty.

Finally, but no less important, a victory for Bush can only lead to a more aggressive world policeman that will strike at all those who challenge its economic, political and strategic interests.

We therefore, unlike the ANC-SACP-Cosatu triple alliance, opposed the UN resolution.

On the part of the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (Wosa), as I am sure with the rest of the left organisations you mention, we are clear about Saddam Hussein. He is not an anti-imperialist. He has always been a client of one or other superpower. Unlike Nasser, he never challenged Israel before the current hostilities, so we agree his current attempt to link Kuwaiti withdrawal with Israeli withdrawal is blatant opportunism.

A key lack of awareness of the facts surrounding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait leads you to attack us for 'pinning our colours to Saddam's scuds'. It is now common knowledge amongst the international left that America gave covert if not public approval for Iraq's invasion. An invasion which was

prompted by the calling in of $40 billion by Kuwait from Iraq, a move in turn prompted by the US which amounted to no less than economic warfare against Iraq.

Iraq was then lured into the war, which places the assertion that the war is about Kuwait into the dustbin of history.

Given the facts, and the US and British failure to accept the Soviet peace plan, exposes Bush. He is intent on destroying the military capacity of the Iraqi regime which was rapidly developing into a regional superpower that was not a dependable enough appendage to international capitalism.

The clear intention of the Allies is to topple the Iraqi dictatorship and replace it with a regime committed to the maintenance of US hegemony in the region.

In this context, as socialists, we perceive that a defeat of American objectives in the region goes a long way to restoring mass confidence in struggles that challenge imperialist domination.

But this should not be misread - as your editorial comment suggests - as unthinking support for Saddam.

While he is no champion of the oppressed, in the context of the war he was challenging imperialism.

We believe that he must be given political support in his attempt to defend Iraq from outside intervention. Our support goes no further than this, as we re-iterate that we have no illusions about his 'anti- imperialism'.

It is only Iraqi workers and the oppressed Kurdish minority who will consistently be anti-imperialist. The same is true for the Arab masses who demonstrated in their hundreds of thousands against their rulers' support for Bush.

Genuine anti-imperialist sentiments guides these same people to support Saddam against Bush.

It is so because they know whose defeat is more important. It's a pity that this same clarity is not shared by the SACP, whose opinions you adhere to so slavishly.
Yours in struggle — *R Desai*
(On behalf of Wosa (Tvl), Campaign co-ordinator (personal capacity) Committee Against Imperialist Wars) •

Media manipulation — the key to Gulf War support

In the US, why did the vast majority of people - including poor and working class people - support the Gulf War, which was waged for the benefit, largely, of big oil and the military-industrial complex?

Consider a few facts drawn from studies conducted by the University of Massachusetts and the media watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, which compared television news and newspaper coverage of the war, and dissected the TV coverage according to interview sources:

- if people got their information about the war from television news, they were more likely to support the war;
- to the degree television news was their main source of information, people surveyed knew less about the Middle East and the events leading up to the war.

For example, TV viewers were asked about the US State Department's July 1990 response to Iraq's threats against Kuwait (the invasion occurred on 2 August). Just 13% knew that the US had informed Hussein that **no action would be taken**, while 65% claimed incorrectly that the US had pledged to support Kuwait with the use of force and 74% also mistakenly thought the US had threatened sanctions would be used.

Television news coverage in the crucial first two weeks of fighting included virtually no coverage of anti-war activities involving hundreds of thousands of protesters. Of the main TV networks' sources, just 1,5% were anti-war demonstrators - about the same level of attention given to asking people about the way the war was affecting their travel and tourism plans.

Of nearly 1 000 people interviewed by the big TV news networks about the war, there was just one leader of an anti-war organisation; by contrast seven professional football players were asked for their opinions about the war.

South African viewers of CNN's coverage may have had a hint about the impact of commercial news on people's perceptions of the war. The attention to weapon technics and electronic wizardry, downplaying of massive Iraqi civilian casualties, anti-Arab bias, and unreserved, celebratory jingoism are not aberrations.

They reflect the daily pounding that US brains are subject to by a lap-dog monopoly media which has no interest in an anti-establishment perspective.

Media manipulation of public consciousness is not wholly due to the fact that news has become a commodity, to be sold and marketed like underarm deodorants. Certainly, however, aside from obscure progressive papers and magazines, US public radio's more sceptical broadcasting offered the sole balance to the commercial media.

This should signal to South Africans that as SABC veers in the direction of privatisation, state propaganda may be replaced by a capitalist onslaught that differs very little at crucial moments. — *Patrick Bond*

Wits students win partial victory

In March University of Witwatersrand (Wits) students staged a five-day lecture boycott and sit-in at the administration offices to protest the high exclusion rates, lack of student accommodation and the introduction of a new policy enforcing the full payment of fees by March, instead of August.

The boycott, which began on 7 March, is reported to have caused much friction among certain student groups and between students and the administration. Divisions have largely fallen along racial lines, with most black students apparantly supporting the boycott, and most white students against (although many of these expressed sympathy for the students' demands).

The boycotting students accused the administration, especially the vice-chancellor, Professor Robert Charlton, of being racist and unable to deal with student needs and crises under apartheid education.

Charlton, on the other hand, said the administration and other students were dismayed at the action and did not think that the demands warranted a boycott.

Following the exclusion of about 1 000 students last year, most of whom were black, representations were made to the administration to readmit them and institute supplementary examinations in every faculty.

The fee increases, which were announced last year, due to the state subsidy cuts, were opposed by the Black Students Transitional Committee (BSTC) and the National Union of South African Students (Nusas)-SRC. So was the announcement that fees would have to be paid fully by March.

The other issue was the serious lack of accomodation for students admitted to the university. Most students were squatting in the residences or living off campus without access to residence meals.

Boycott-only option

Subsequent to the subsidy cuts the university received a R5-million rebate, and students added to their demands a 'real' say in how the money was spent.

While the majority of students seem to have supported the demands by signing the SRC-BSTC petitions, many saw the boycott as too drastic. Other students believed that it was the only avenue of protest left open to them.

SRC president, David Jammy said: 'The SRC completely endorses the demands made by the students and recognises the legitimacy of the boycott. At the same time it recognises that other students which it represents do not support the action. We believe that students saw it as the only channel as all administrative channels were closed to us.'

He added that the decision to boycott was taken democratically by the student body at a mass meeting.

The BSTC chairperson, Khaya Ngema, explained that the action was to be seen as part of the Right To Learn campaign, jointly launched by Nusas and the South African National Student Congress (Sansco) as a response to the crisis in South African education.

He said that all negotiations with the Wits administration had failed, making the boycott inevitable.

In essence, he said, students were 'calling on the university to transform from a white university to a South African university'.

Ngema and Jammy denied allegations that students were intimidated into joining the boycott. Support for the demands and the boycott action was canvassed throughout the campus, even in lecture halls, but to their knowledge nobody was forced to participate.

Concessions

The boycott was suspended after certain concessions had been made by Charlton and the Wits administration. According to a BSTC-SRC press release the administration had:

- ageeed to provide emergency accomodation with residence meals for students and to negotiate with local landlords to lease flats to them;
- decided to establish an 'interest-free bursary fund' to assist students who were unable to pay the new interest charges, and to look into reversing the payment policy next year; and
- agreed to consider readmitting students excluded from one faculty to another.

Charlton agreed to recommend supplementaary exams to all faculties and significantly committed the administration to be 'open to student initiatives to restructure teaching and learning and exclusions and admissions processes', in an attempt to avoid similar problems in the future.

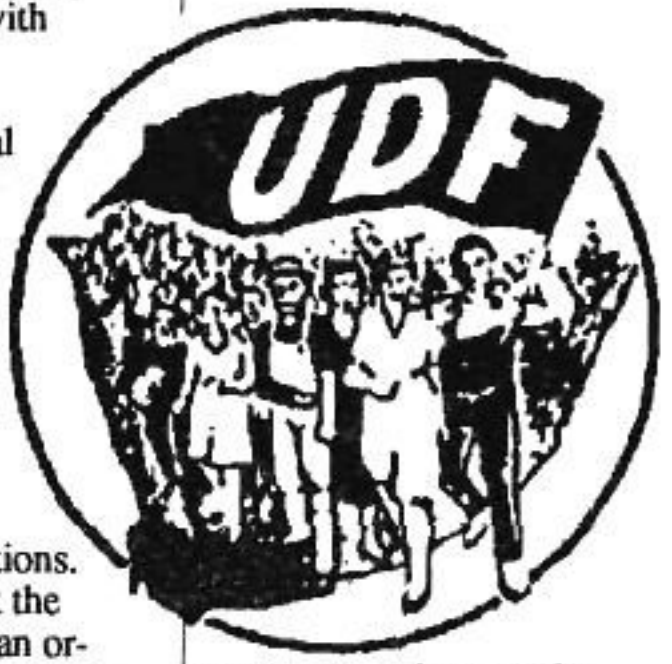
While the students seem satisfied that at least they won some concessions, it is clearly at the very most a partial victory. The boycott action has clearly further divided the campus along racial lines, which many see as a step backwards in the drive to create one non-racial student body. In addition, about 80 students face disciplinary action following their disruption of the administration block, although there are indications that the charges will probably be dropped. — *Charmeela Bhagowat*

The transformation of the UDF

AFTER eight years of relentless struggle against apartheid the United Democratic Front (UDF) is to disband on August 20, its eighth anniversary. The resolution was taken at its March National Conference in KwaNdebele.

The decision was unanimous, with the 400 delegates choosing to bring a revitalising era of co-ordinated anti-apartheid activities and mass action to a close.

A new organisation, similar to the UDF, minus the close political ties with Cosatu and the ANC, is likely to emerge, with delegates recommending the need for another national organisation to co-ordinate civic structures.



The new mass organisation is envisaged to be non-partisan and will co- ordinate civic, youth and womens' organisations. It was stressed that the feasibility of such an organisation is still being debated.

A major motivation for the disbanding was the unbanning of the ANC, with the subsequent recognition of the changing role of the UDF in the political arena.

Delegates at the conference said that the new movement would have to be non-political if it wants to unite and win the support of people with deep ideological differences.

One of the new organisation's priorities would be community and developmental issues like basic services and housing. It was hoped that organising people around community or developmental issues would unite the politically opposed activists at grassroot levels and help the present peace initiatives.

The success/failure of such an organisation cannot be speculated about but clear vision and planning is needed to ensure that other civic structures are not duplicated, as may well be the case with a national civic association being launched later this year.

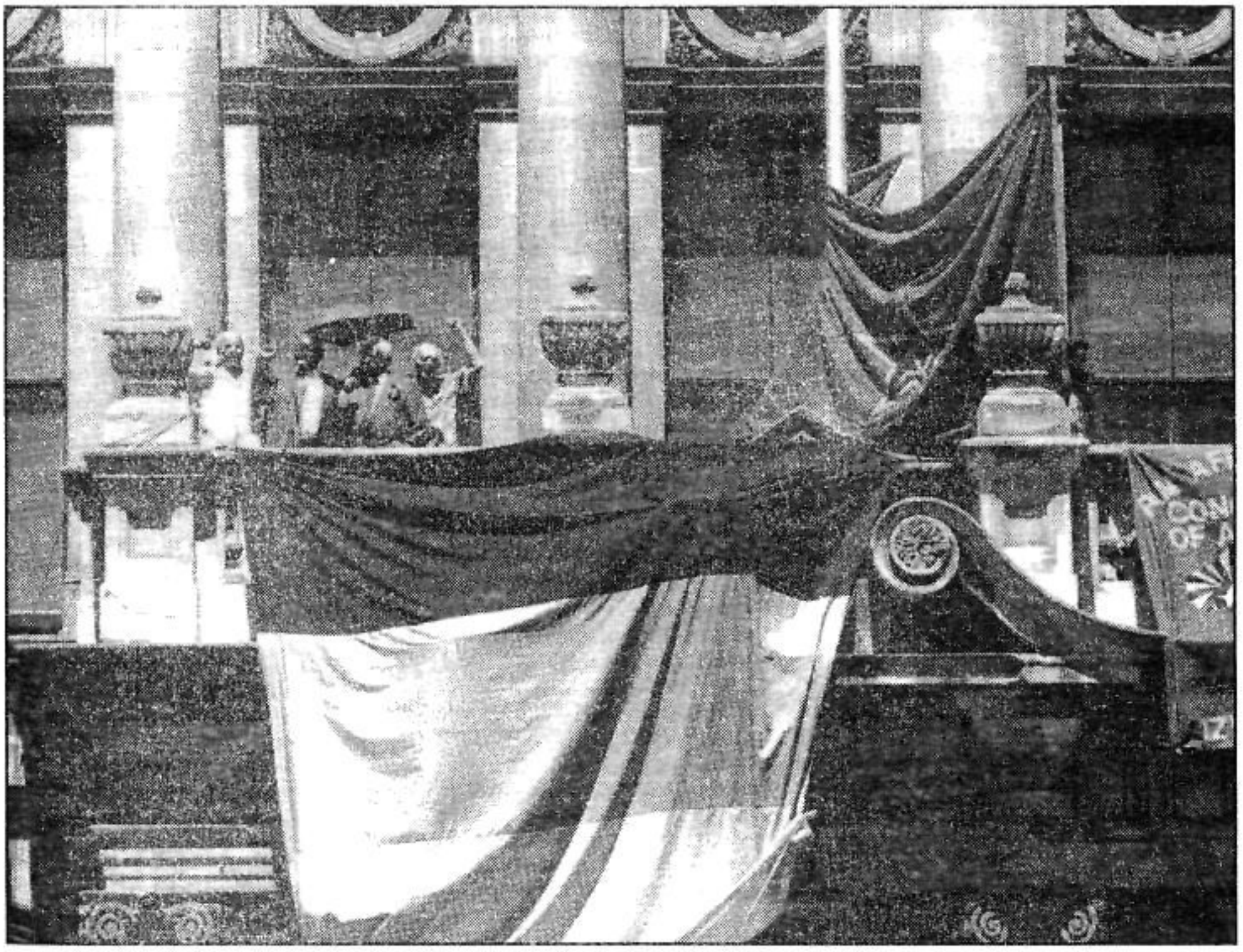
However, there could be a real need for such an organisation to differentiate betweeen between civic and political structures and highlight community and socio-economic issues.

In an interview with the *New Nation* UDF secretary-general, Popo Molefe, said the recommendation for a new mass organisation, not aligned to the ANC or any other political organisation, was made 'in the context of recognising the need for further co-ordination among those affiliates of the UDF which have not become part of the ANC'.

He said that although the policies of the new organisation would depend on organisations affiliated to it, the movement would definitely not be Charterist because it had to be a broad social movement with principles which could unite a wide range of people.

The UDF will not engage in any activities until June, when its regional committees begin to dissolve leading to the national dissolution in August, after all its financial commitments have been dealt with. — *Charmeela Bhagowat*

While at certain levels a climate of *glasnost* and tolerance has taken root within the liberation movement, at other levels the opposite is happening. JENNY CARGILL reports on the alarming degree of political intolerance - cutting across the entire political spectrum - which seems to have gripped many townships



Reggie September, Christmas Tinto, Walter Sisulu and Jack Simons at the ANC/PAC protest march in Cape Town

Creating a culture of debate

As the ANC's campaign for an elected constituent assembly firms up, worries about the demand persist.

A question that is increasingly intruding into the debate relates to the practicality of an election when political intolerance rules in so many townships and settlements - and appears likely to do so for some time.

The 1989 Harare Declaration links the demand for an elected constituent assembly with the creation of a free political climate. Then, FW de Klerk's government was held responsible for clearing the way. Legislation like the Internal Security Act had to be repealed and repressive security activity brought under control.

Today, these demands still stand - and with justification - but the responsible parties has undoubtedly broadened as black communities experience an intolerance and violence that was not anticipated in the Harare Declaration.

No culture of debate

In interviews and discussions, ANC organisers and activists working at branch and community level now invariably voice their concern about the lack of what they call a 'culture of debate'. No longer can they readily apportion blame to the 'other side'. 'The intolerance we are now seeing is cutting right across the political spectrum,' argues one.

There are a number of turns to intolerance, which add to the complexity of the

problem:

• Communities find it difficult to accept the *right of the existence of other political parties*. Not unexpectedly, says one ANC organiser, the Inkatha Freedom Party is not accepted in the Transvaal as a political organisation given the legacy of violence. But he also doubted whether strongly ANC-supporting townships would allow the PAC or Azapo to campaign on their own platforms.

Of course, this form of intolerance is both a black and a white affair. Despite the February 2 unbannings, the De Klerk government has failed to convince black communities that it has turned its back on its previous intolerance. Signs of state meddling in the relationship between the ANC and the SACP persist.

• Intolerance is being used as an effective weapon for *building power bases* and weakening others. Inkatha has been found particularly blameworthy here, as bloodied assegais and axes established its presence in the Reef townships.

The flip side of this coin was the weakening of the ANC. Its credibility undoubtedly suffered as it failed to meet community demands for defence. In addition, political affiliation started carrying an extra-ordinarily high price. Katlehong is a good example of just how damaging the violence was to the ANC's recruitment drive. At the height of the East Rand violence last year membership figures stood at around 7 000. After the hostels emptied for Christmas and peace returned, the numbers almost doubled to more than 12 000.

• Another source of intolerance is 'the *third force*' or 'hidden hand', drawing support from the white rightwing and elements within the security forces.

* Intolerance also contains an assertive *criminal element*. For some time, 'Comtsotsis' have been abusing the very communities they say they serve and brought into disrepute the people courts. Once regarded as an instrument of liberation, people's courts are, in some cases, being disbanded by the ANC.

But the criminal element in politics is increasingly taking on a Mafia-style character. Protection money is now being extracted from residents made particularly vulnerable during violent confrontations. In addition, there are strong suggestions that the March killings in Alexandra can be sourced to councillors angered at losing access to kickbacks and patronage.

• Another source of intolerance is community impatience and anger with activists who *disregard democratic processes*, say ANC organisers.

• *Tribalism and ethnicity* are entrenching themselves as a particularly worrying source of intolerance.

• The *squatter settlements* are becoming increasingly assertive politically. The social instability and limited political development of these communities is stamping its own particular mark of intolerance .

There are no easy answers. But there are a number of demands and actions occupying the political agenda which point to a seriousness at tackling the intolerance, and the too often violent consequences.

The government, of course, is still being targetted. For instance, the ANC wants an independent commission of inquiry which would 'investigate and recommend appropriate measures against those responsible for the violence'.

But political organisations are carrying some responsibility themselves. Examples of this are the January 29 peace pact between the ANC and Inkatha, joint action around common demands which have seen the ANC, PAC and Azapo share platforms, and the planned Patriotic Front which has been postponed to April or May.

Nevertheless, the intolerance and the killings continue. While comprehensive statistics are lacking, there have probably been upwards of 250 deaths subsequent to this year's high-profile political bridge-building efforts.

Activists point to the problem of getting leadership accords accepted by the rank and file. Local agreements are being pursued and there are tentative signs of success. In Vosloorus, for example, talks have resulted in an Inkatha-supporting residents committee agreeing to the ANC-aligned civic leading negotiations with the Tranvaal Provincial Authority. Implicit in these local level talks is some acceptance of the notion that political legitimacy is not the exclusive property of one party.

But efforts so far at freeing the political climate have not allayed activists' concerns that the causes and consequences are still not being adequately addressed.

The legacy of ungovernability

These concerns have triggered some soul-searching about past liberation tactics. Said a long-standing SACP member: 'When we captured townships, we didn't only capture territory. We also unwittingly established the political hegemony of the ANC and aligned organisations.'

He also argues that the ANC is suffering the legacy of its policy of ungovernability adopted at the start of the 1984 township uprisings. It was highly popular with the youth, in particular, but there was far less success in implementing the rider to that concept - namely, replacing government structures with what the ANC called 'organs of people's power'.

None of this, of course, acquits the state of blame. Argues the SACP's Cheryl Carolus: 'You must remember that we have had a state which legalised the suppression of dissenting voices. The lesson to people has been that scores are settled in a violent way.'

But the ANC is likely to pay the highest price for this intolerance. Communities expect it to be the most morally correct. Therefore, invariably it falls harder than any other party when it fails.

Some ANC organisers are worried that the intolerance will, as one put it, 'drive people to become apolitical'. There are already signs of this as recruitment figures still fall far short of expectations.

'We have to think about the kind of scars that are being left. I don't think we are addressing that fully,' says another.

'And we have to constantly ask ourselves whether our political activity is reinforcing intolerance or undermining it.' •

Bekkersdal: From turmoil to tolerance

By Mbulelo Sompetha

The formation of monitoring committees in strife-torn areas to oversee peace pacts between warring factions is not enough. Tackling the underlying causes of violence - political intolerance as well as socio-economic deprivation - is of paramount importance. This is what the Bekkersdal Monitoring Committee, consisting of representatives of all liberation organisations in the West Rand township, has emphasised.

The committee's main task is to oversee democratic processes, discipline, day to day problems, and the use of public utilities. It is also a discussion forum to tackle issues of concern in the community. Headed by priests of local congregations, it has to an extent succeeded in bringing calm to the township, which, at the beginning of the year, saw the worst violence on the West Rand.

The violence started immediately after the unbanning of organisations in 1990, first between the Azapo-aligned Azanian Students' Movement (Azasm) and the ANC-oriented Bekkersdal Youth Congress (Beyco). It was later transferred to the wider community by groups claiming allegiance to the ANC, Azapo, PAC, and later Inkatha. It is alleged that fighting started when squatters at a settlement known as Mandela Park claimed that the whole settlement belonged to the ANC, although no formal visible structure had been lauched there. This led to a drawing of artificial boundaries, with AZAPO and PAC supporters creating their own bases on the other side of the township.

Schools were not left unaffected,and pupils from an 'enemy' section were not allowed to attend a school in another section. In a small township like Bekkersdal this meant that brother would fight cousin.

The Peace Monitoring Committee was formed on 15 November 1990, but could not get off the ground because of mistrust between the fighting groups. It was not until February 1991 that local priests and concerned residents, instilled a spirit of reconciliation. Says the committee's chairperson: 'We worked very hard to try and bring the fighting groups together. Even the peace rally of 3 February was a 'miracle' on its own'. On 2 February a stayaway from work was organised, while consultation with the regional leaders of all organisations was held for the joint rally.

The Bekkersdal township was established in the early 1940's and has always suffered from a lack of housing and facilities. There has been very little or no development in the township. The toilet bucket system is still largely used, as very few houses use the sewarage system. In Mandela Park the open veld is used. This is one area of concern for the Monitoring Committee. Says Rev. Vilakazi: 'We as a committee have thought of establishing a Trust Fund with the help of credible patrons to assist in the restructuring. We are thinking of proposing fundraising projects that are going to help alleviate joblessness in the area'.

The first step in the building of reconciliation was a joint burial of two unidentified bodies. Many bodies have been given a pauper's funeral by the government after they could not be identified.

They also hope to establish an Inter-Organisational Forum which will invite personalities from different political persuasions to address students on different issues. The Monitoring Committee, together with political organisations, have committed themselves to a programme of reconstruction which will not only bring peace but will sustain it. They hope to achieve this by extending representation to non-political organisations, and to work as a watchdog to the conflict.

Also evident as a cause of the strife was a failure by organisations to understand the right of other organisations to campaign freely without any fear. This the Committee says will not be achieved unless massive education is filtered down to grassroots level. As the ANC's Chris Hani told the joint peace rally, the need to understand that political tolerance as the essence of democracy is essential. Democracy thrives on the dialectic of differing points of view leading to a single conclusion. To solve this, the committee and the organisations involved are to conduct workshops for their members.

For peace to survive in Bekkersdal, organisations need to concentrate on building solid, visible organisational structures. The violence in Bekkersdal has always been referred to as a fight between the ANC on one hand, and at various times AZAPO, PAC, and later Inkatha on the other. It is ironic that there was and still is no ANC structure in the area.

The euphoria of 2 February 1990 has led many to associate themselves with the ANC without setting up a branch or a structure, and this has led to malpractices in the name of the organisation. There is an urgent need on the part of organisations to translate emotional support into active organisational support. It is only through organisation that the peace terms being worked out by the peace committee in Bekkersdal will be realised.

After the Peace Accord:

Conflict continues in Kwa-Makutha

CHARMEELA BHAGOWAT visited the depressed township of Kwa-Makutha outside Durban soon after the historic Mandela-Buthelezi peace meeting, and witnessed an unprovoked attack on ANC mourners by Inkatha supporters

When, on 29 January, Nelson Mandela and Gatsha Buthelezi met for the first time in three decades, to discuss an effective peace process in the war-torn areas of Natal, they generated massive national and international publicity.

Both leaders and their respective delegations committed their organisations to working together to end the incessant violence, which had spread from Natal to other parts of the country. They displayed a spirit of goodwill throughout the meeting, and were seen shaking hands and hugging each other.

Together, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) undertook to prevent more violence and destruction, promote political tolerance and freedom of political association and expression, cease forced recruitment and avoid smearing campaigns against each other. They also agreed to open schools and meeting venues to all, and to embark on reconstruction programmes in the devastated areas.

Joint tours of the affected areas by Mandela and Buthelezi and meetings between other structures of both organisations, which were to follow, were seen as essential to inform members of the peace agreement, in the hope that it would be more effective.

Most if not all Western leaders were impressed. The ANC leadership was determined that the initiative succeeded, and the IFP was elated that the meeting they had been angling for had finally come to pass. Peace, it seemed, was looming on the horizon.

However, there were many who were sceptical. Every peace initiative since 1986 had failed. Signed documents had proven to be ineffective. There was nothing to ensure the success of this one. Sceptics felt that even if the leaders spoke to each other, it would prove difficult to influence those who had lost their homes and families and were bent only on revenge. More importantly, they argued, the powers of the KwaZulu police (ZP) and SA security force would have to be curbed dramatically.

For the most part many people in the ravaged areas, especially the elderly community members, local business and certain foreign leaders, were of the opinion that the Mandela/Buthelezi meeting would be an overnight solution to an old, tormenting problem.

Long-standing police provocation

But while the proverbial winds of change blow rapidly over South Africa, history is repeating itself for many South Africans - like those in KwaMakutha, a township just south of central Durban. Only three days after the historic meeting a youth was killed by the ZP in KwaMakutha. A week later about 14 Inkatha supporters were reported killed in Sweetwaters, a rural district near Pietermaritzburg.

KwaMakutha falls under the self-governing territory of KwaZulu and is perhaps one of the most debilitated areas in Natal, with a shared history of four states of emergengy, SADF and ZP brutality. Residents say that tension had been mounting in KwaMakutha **before** the UDF was formed in 1983. The ZP allegedly did not tolerate non-Inkatha members, and harassed ANC supporters and other residents who refused to join Inkatha. The situation only worsened when the UDF was formed. What followed was the consistent confrontation between the UDF on the one hand and Inkatha and the state on the other, as the UDF grew in numbers and strength.

In March last year KwaMakutha exploded. The violence in the district was intolerable and residents were forced to flee to central Durban. At one stage there were more than 300 ANC refugees housed at the EXPO Exhibition Centre. About 100 Inkatha refugees were housed at the Siphumelele Community Hall in KwaMakutha.

Signing the peace accord: But

Martial law was imposed in KwaMakutha. Buthelezi ordered the SADF out of the area, saying that black soldiers who were UDF supporters were partial in the conflict.

According to the spokesperson for the refugees at the EXPO Centre 'the Zulu Police were not accountable, they shot ANC supporters on sight and were more brutal than the SADF.' On the Sunday morning that the refugees fled KwaMakutha, they were attacked by people whom they recognised as policemen. Mrs Elizabeth Mkhize said that the ZP, in full uniform and fully armed, attacked their homes, shouting: 'Where are your sons? We want your sons!' in Zulu.

As a result, many of the young boys went into hiding - some never returned. After two days at the centre Mrs Mkhize was informed that her son, who was shot in the shoulder, was recovering in Durban's King Edward Hospital. Other women were being escorted by the SAP to identify their dead sons and husbands. Most striking at the centre was the presence of only women and very young children. Conditions in KwaMakutha at the time were described as 'horrific'.

A ravaged township

WIP visited KwaMakutha a year later, one week after the Mandela/Buthelezi meeting, to find out how supporters and activists on both sides intended to implement the peace accord.

KWA-MAKUTHA

where's the peace?

Conditions in the township today bear testimony to the increased and intense violence of the past year. Certain areas did not have electricity for months. Today residents say that there are regular supply blackouts.

Most of the shops in the 23 sections of KwaMakutha are burnt to the ground. People depend on hawkers and 'tuckshops' run from home for most of their daily requirements. Many residents shop at the neighbouring Isipingo and Amanzimtoti business centres because they are close and safe.

There are virtually no recreational facilities left intact. The only visible 'soccer field' grew grass which was knee-high, surrounded by a low wall with 'Moscow Country' and other slogans emblazoned on it. The community centre nearby was converted to an Inkatha refugee camp last year. Before that it was used by the ZP.

On the day that *WIP* visited KwaMakutha ANC youth were burying young activist Mkhe Mkhize (17), who was reportedly shot by the ZP three days after the talks. The funeral was held in a delapidated Sesifikile Higher Primary School in Section One.

According to ANC Youth League member Siphiwe Mzobe, the ZP still hunts down and harasses ANC supporters. At 8.30am on 1 February police raided Section One, allegedly in search of Youth League members. Mkhize was chased. He sought protection in a nearby house but was found, hauled out, placed face down on the road and shot in the head while his comrades watched.

During the service some of the boys were stationed at the gate, ready to defend the mourners against possible attackers. Although the ZP were notifed of the service by prominent Durban attorney, Linda Zama, and asked to 'keep a low profiie during the funeral', the atmosphere was tense.

The mourners were forced to march five kilometres with the coffin held aloft, draped in the ANC flag, because the undertakers failed to arrive. They had to pass a police station and the Siphumelele Community Hall, where about 50 of last year's refugees are still housed.

The police station is small and has many armed guards, surrounded by a barricade of sand sacks. The hall is guarded by armed civilians and policemen all day.

Armed Inkatha youth

The mourners passed the station without incident. They passed the hall while *WIP* was talking to Inkatha refugees living there. The mourners' earlier fears were realized. The armed guards (primarily youth) shot at the toyi-toyiing group, wounding three people. They were rushed to Durban's King Edward Hospital because, according to one mourner, the local one would not treat them.

It was clear that there was no provocation. The guards claimed that the mourners insulted them and threw stones at a mini bus belonging to an Inkatha member. *WIP* witnessed no such incident.

The SADF and the SAP were called in by the mourners for protection on their return journey. They were, however, already swearing revenge.

According to Mzobe, the ANC has majority support in KwaMakutha, as Inkatha only controlled one of the 23 sections. 'The Zulu Police refuse to acknowledge or accept this and intimidate people into supporting the ANC .' This, he said, they refused to do.

Mzobe claims that Inkatha members were given weapons by the ZP, access to their facilities and other support whenever they needed it. They were indiscriminate in the manner in which they distributed weapons - many of the rifle-wielding Inkatha youth encountered were very young. For example, some of the youth who were 'guarding' Siphumelele Hall were as young as 15 years, had no uniforms and had apparently very little training.

One such youth, who refused to be named, does not attend school and said:'I feel I must defend my people against the ANC - they are killing us.' He claimed that the pistols and rifles they had were legal, and necessary to defend themselves. He admitted that the guns were from the ZP, but said that they only received backup from the ZP when they asked for it.

Of the peace talks, he said that it 'would only succeed if ANC members stop harassing us. They are violent and undisciplined'. He confessed to shooting 'some ANC boys' but could not tell if they were killed or not. He claimed that they were trying to attack the hall.

Mrs Success Hill (54) is one of the refugees still at the hall from last year. According to her older members of the ANC gave the youth ammunition and asked them to attack the elderly people from the hall. Last year her home was gutted and she lost a son to the violence. She said that they were constantly surrounded by armed guards because of the threat of ANC attacks.

A long road to peace

Over the past few years the UDF/Cosatu alliance, in seeking a way to curb the violence in Natal, changed its strategy a number of times (see *SA Labour Bulletin* 15.4 and 15.6). Eventually a strategy of creating political space and tolerance emerged. Meetings were held between the top leadership of both sides of the conflict, to try and hammer out differences and discuss a new peace initiative.

Mutual antagonism had served to only increase the violence. There had to be open, sincere dialogue and communication, both between leaders **and** between members/supporters on the ground. Clearly one could not succeed without the other. The new strategy is an all-encompassing one, aimed at creating a political climate conducive to peace, rebuilding peoples' organisations, and encouraging social growth and political tolerance. It has been emphasised that this is going to be a long, difficult task.

Mzobe said nothing had changed in KwaMakutha after the peace talks, because their enemy, Inkatha and the apartheid state, was still the same. For ANC activists in KwaMakutha, the area will be peaceful when they feel free to participate in and rebuild their organisations. Many say that the differences between them and Inkatha could be solved if the ZP did not intervene.

Inkatha youth insist that the ANC must be more disciplined before they discuss peace.

For Mrs Success Hill the answer is simple: 'Mandela and Buthelezi must come here and see for themselves. If they speak to the children they will listen. There will be peace'. •

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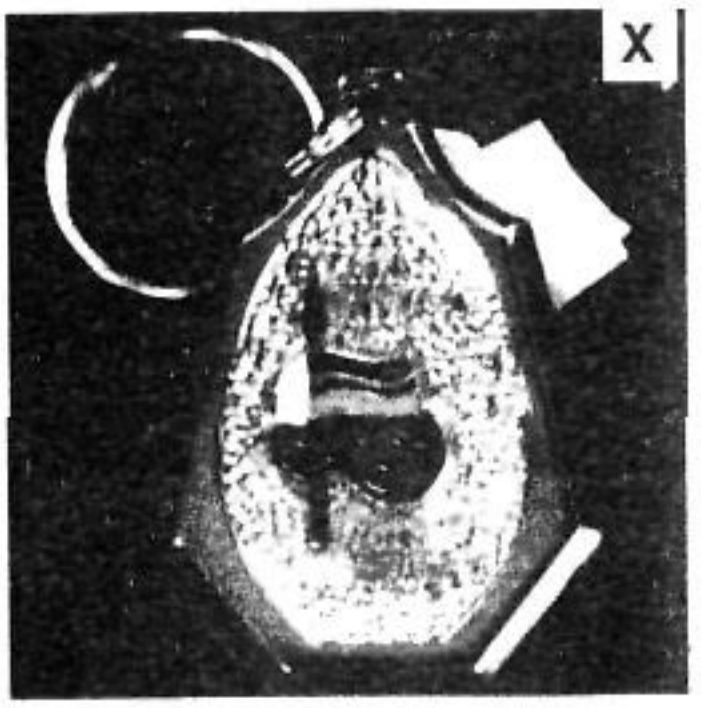

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ITEM	PRICE	Q'TITY	TOTAL
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SIZE: S: M: L: XL:			
B. ANC T-shirt	R16.50		
SIZE: S: M: L: XL:			
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AZAPO: fighting on two fronts

In the last issue of *WIP* we published a short critical assesment of Azapo's performance since 2 February 1990, which argued that Azapo was likely to marginalise itself if it continued to insist on a 'purist' political stance. What follows is a more sympathetic look at Azapo by *Sowetan* journalist MIKE TISSONG

Since the State lifted the severe restrictions it had placed on the Azanian People's Organisation and other organisations last year, Azapo is finding itself having to fight the liberation struggle on two fronts.

The first front is the armed overthrow of the State, which the two other major strands of the liberation movement, the PAC and ANC, have been committed to for decades. The second front has been created by the shrewd manoeuvring of State President FW de Klerk, whose reform initiatives have steadily broken down sanctions and given De Klerk credibility he does not deserve.

The armed struggle

Azapo, and the black consciousness movement as a whole, is committed to armed struggle as one of the principal means of achieving the liberation of Azania (the black consciousness and africanist name for South Africa). This struggle is waged through the Azanian National Liberation Army (Azanla), which operates under the tutelage of the exiled Black Consciousness Movement of Azania.

Azanla is reported to have carried out many attacks against the State. One of the latest was on the morning of Sunday February 10 1991, when an Azanla unit targetted a Transvaal Provincial Administration road maintenance complex about 5km north of Potgietersrus.

Several trucks, tractors, caterpillars, tar-laying trucks, a large quantity of tractor and truck tyres, diesel tanks and other equipment were either destroyed or severely damaged. The equipment destroyed was worth several millions of rands. The TPA, in what must rank as the understatement of the year, acknowledged damage at R5 000.

The men guarding the complex were bound during the operation and escorted to safety afterwards. It was apparantly the desire of Azanla not to hurt the guards, who were members of the oppressed community. The Azanla unit withdrew safely to their base. The operation was carried out less than 24 hours after the so-called Operation Thunderbolt by the police and the SADF.

Another operation took place on March 5 when an Azanla unit engaged the SADF and the police in a fierce battle which raged from about 6am to 1pm in Mahwelereng township near Potgietersrus. Two Azanla guerillas, who were trapped, were killed, but they took one of 'the enemy' with them. The SADF used armoured vehicles and helicopters in the battle. Other guerillas escaped before the regime's forces sealed off the township. A Lebowa police officer confirmed the skirmish, but declined to comment further.

The operations can be seen in the context of Azapo president Pandelani Nefolovhodwe's New Year declaration of 1991 as 'a year of struggle on all fronts including military'.

Consultative conference of the oppressed

The second front has called for creative intellectual and organisational responses from the liberation movement as a whole.

In March last year, Azapo planned for a consultative conference of organisations of the oppressed which took place in Soweto in June without the ANC and Inkatha. The ANC declined an invitation to attend and Inkatha was not invited. It was decided to invite Inkatha to subsequent meetings. Part of the agenda in getting the organisations together, was an attempt to stop inter-organisational violence in the townships.

In May and August, then Azapo president Dr Itumeleng Mosala made an impassioned call on the ANC to stop talks with the government and instead give priority to a consultative conference of all liberation movements.

The ANC said it could not attend to such a conference because it was putting all its efforts into planning for its December 16 gathering.

Current Azapo president Nefolovhodwe said Azapo would continue working towards the conference because 'liberation movements should first establish common ground before attempting to establish any relationship with any party or organisation within the ruling class.' Nefolovhodwe rejected an interim government, as proposed by the ANC, because it 'sustains the present power relations, even if it is for a limited period.'

In January this year, Nefolovhodwe also rejected the ANC's call for a multiparty congress, before meeting with other organisations of the oppressed. He said the ANC's proposal was no different from that of the government and did not fulfill the demands of the liberation movement for a constituent assembly.

Azapo first called for a constituent assembly in 1985 as an alternative to a 'national convention', involving organisations of the oppressed and oppressors, which was being mooted by a large number of organisations at the time, but has since been dropped. Support for the constituent assembly was given impetus by the PAC's endorsement in February last year and by the ANC at its consultative conference last December.

Another part of the creative response has been to carry the message abroad that the lives of ordinary people have not been changed by De Klerk's cosmetic changes - the majority of people still remain oppressed by unchanged security laws, without a vote and exploited in the work place. Former president Nkosi Molala and his former deputy Lybon Mabasa visited

Libya and four other countries in February last year to discuss developments in 'occupied Azania', and seek further support from Libya for the black consciousness movement.

Other executives complemented that visit with visits to African countries, India, North and South America, Britain and Europe.

The fruits have not been sweet because in the past year, Europe, Britain and America have indicated that economic sanctions will soon be lifted, and De Klerk's regime will get the economic foundation and growth it needs to satisfy some of the social upliftment demands made by some representatives of the oppressed community.

There is no doubt that, over the past decade and particularly over the past year, all liberation organisations have grown in membership and general support.

In February, the New Brighton branch of Azapo held its annual general meeting and 1 200 turned up. Earlier, for congress in December, the central committee issued a directive to branches and other formations to send only two delegates each because Azapo did not have the funds to cater for more than 1 500 people at congress.

Congress registration closed two weeks before the meeting and only those who had paid were to be allowed to attend. Despite the restriction on attendance, many more turned up, citing the crucial importance of the meeting. They refused attempts to turn them back.

Vanguard of socialist struggle

Many members see Azapo, and not the South African Communist Party, as the vanguard of the struggle for socialism because of Azapo's stated commitment to direct socialist transformation of 'occupied Azania'. Most of Azapo's political education literature is guided by the theory and practice of 'scientific socialism'.

The SACP is viewed as an organisation which has 'betrayed' the struggle for socialism by riding the ANC towards a negotiated settlement of compromise with the De Klerk regime, which has the potential to set back socialist transformation by many decades.

Molala said recently that Azapo put socialism on the **immediate** agenda of struggle in this country, and any attack on Azapo and its members is viewed as an attack on socialism, because ideologies and political theories are driven by economic perspectives.

He argued that those who disagree with Azapo's economic perspective of socialism as the answer to the mess the capitalists and racists have plunged 'occupied Azania' into, are the first to see it as an adversary.

In this context, Azapo regards it as significant that De Klerk's regime has postponed and not dropped the trial involving seven Azanla guerillas at a Klerksdorp court. This is in contrast to its intention to release ANC political prisoners, and allow back into the country ANC exiles.

For Azapo, the struggle continues on the principle of non-collaboration with the De Klerk regime and a focus on the socialist transformation of 'occupied Azania'. This runs against the grain of what other significant groups in the liberation movement are doing, but it is a path Azapo is convinced is the correct one. •

The **WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT** is developing a network of researchers, health workers and organisations interested in women's health issues. With their help it aims to develop policy proposals on contraception, AIDS, abortion, violence against women, mental health, disability, childbirth etc. etc.....

If you are interested in this project, phone Barbara at (011) 647-2635 or write to the Women's Health Project, CHP, Community Health, Wits Medical School, 7 York Road, Parktown 2193.

FOCUS ON WOMEN

March 8: International Women's Day

In the Spring of 1908, garment workers in New York declared 8 March to be women's day. The following year 20 000 women demonstrated in support of workers locked-out at the Trinagle corset manufacturing plant. This mass outpouring became known as the uprising of the 20 000. It inspired German socialist and feminist Clara Zeptkin to call on the Second International socialist congress in 1910 to set aside 8 March each year as international working women's day.

The February 1917 revolution in Russia was sparked off when thousands of women textile workers of Petrograd went on strike on International Women's Day. They were joined by metal workers and, acting on the advice of their male comrades, the women marched against the Czar as well as against their working conditions. This led to massive, spontaneous support from working women, housewives and women in the streets. Their male comrades also joined them as the revolution unfolded.

In 1979 women in Iran took to the streets during the first week of March, and protested for five days against Ayatolla Khomeini. Their banners read: We made the revolution for freedom and got slavery!

This year in South Africa women belonging to the ANC Women's League and People Opposed to Women's Abuse (Powa) organised a march through the streets of Hillbrow to 'reclaim the night' from men who continually harrass women in the area. A thousand women and men braved the pouring rain in what was the first mass commemoration of International Women's Day in recent years in this country. •

The search for sisterhood

The struggle for gender equality was given a further boost when the historic Women and Gender in Southern Africa conference was held recently. Amidst a wealth of research on a wide range of gender issues, participants were reminded of the long road towards unity between women that still lies ahead. TAMMY SHEFER (Lacom) and SIBYLLE MATHIS report

Gender is firmly on the agenda. The words are being mouthed - gender equality must be a part of the 'new South Africa'. Political parties, community organisations and the trade union movement are increasingly vocal in their commitment to the struggle against gender inequality. The mistakes of other liberation movements are evident. If gender equality is not addressed within the context of change, women's oppression and power relations between men and women will be entrenched in post-apartheid South Africa.

1990 saw a significant rise in debate about women and gender in South Africa, beginning with the January Malibongwe Conference in Amsterdam. In November Lawyers for Human Rights hosted a conference on 'Women and the Law', which addressed legal issues in relation to gender equality. In December the ANC Constitutional Committee held a workshop entitled 'Gender Today, Gender Tomorrow' which made a serious contribution to putting women and gender issues on the political agenda. A conference on 'Women and Gender in Southern Africa' followed on its heels in the early weeks of the new year.

Over 300 people gathered together in a University of Natal- Durban lecture theatre on the evening of 30 January. After nearly two years of planning by the Gender Research Group in Natal, the Women and Gender Conference began with a keynote address by Dr Naila Kabeer from the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University.

The first of its kind in this country, the academic conference hoped to bring together feminist academics, researchers, women's organisations, and activists concerned about gender issues in political, community and labour organisations. Over three packed days, a wealth of research on gender and women's issues in South Africa was presented to the conference.

The conference was organised around four broad themes: race, class and gender in Southern Africa; organising women; culture and ideology; and everyday life/ women's experiences. Days were filled with presentations and debate, and evenings were filled with entertainment, most inspiring being Gcina Mhlope's poetry and story-telling.

One of the highlights of the conference was a panel on organising women, in which the struggles and organisation of women in other Southern African countries was shared. Co-operation between women in Southern African countries felt like an exciting possibility.

Bringing together feminist thinkers in a forum of this nature is an important milestone. The forum gave women and the handful of men that attended an important opportunity to collectively think about gender issues in the South Africa context. It gave people who are struggling against gender inequality, whether on the ground or in the university, an opportunity to share the resources and knowledge of others working in this area. 'Feminism' appears to be out of the closet and no longer a dirty word in the context of the South African struggle, although the word itself still creates unease in some quarters.

The conference was not however a mere presentation of research. There was a subtext in some ways more rich and more dominant than any of the contents of the conference papers. The legacy of apartheid South Africa was brutally evident throughout the proceedings. The inequalities and differences between women was an undercurrent of tension. Deep-rooted emotions were ever-present and could not be contained. Conflict had to, and did, emerge.

Divisions on the Agenda

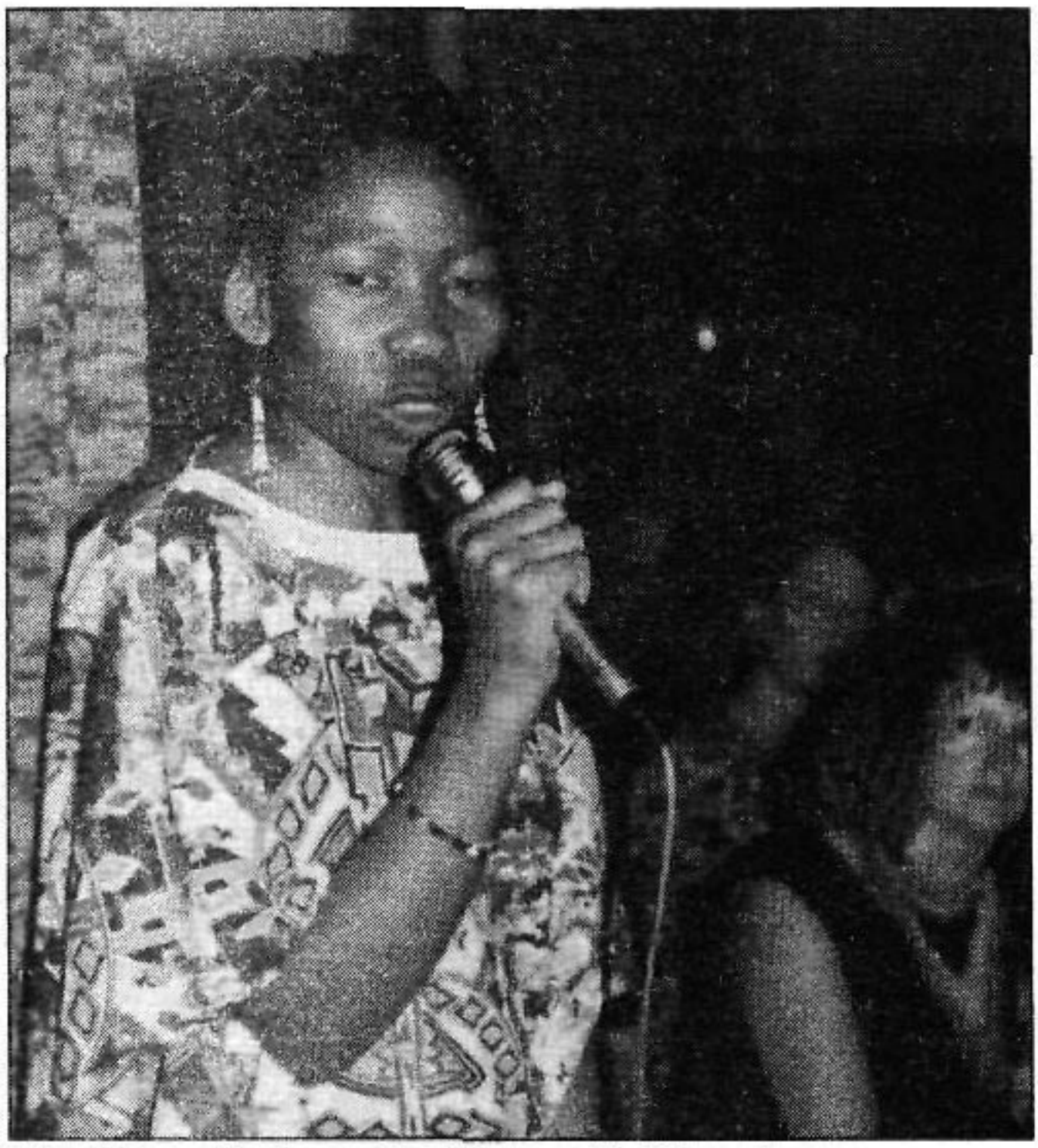
'What has been born here is something new and fragile. Like all births it's been bloody and full of pain ... We should nurture this small child that's been born and try to overcome its appaling heredity.' (Shula Marks, Evaluation Session of the Conference)

Walking into the lecture theatre at the start of the conference, the predominance of white women was striking. As voices were heard many were surprised by the language spoken. It soon became evident that the lack of representation of certain groups was broader than the inadequacies which were visible. The conference was about giving women a voice. Very quickly it became clear that the conference itself was haunted by the silenced voices of major groupings of women in South Africa. This reflected the legacy left by the forces outside which have divided women, and marginalized large groups of women and men in this country. Through its process, the conference exposed the voices that speak and the voices that were silent or absent.

On the first day of the conference, during a session on 'conceptualizing gender', the hall crackled with heated emotions. The domination by white women and academics, the academic jargon spoken, and the lack of activists, was challenged. As Gcina Mhlope remarked: 'Can't we add another word to this conference - accessibility. I'm having to decode big words all the time.'

An 'activists' meeting was held after the second day of the conference. The following day Pregs Govender of the SA Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu), reported back to the conference, and suggested some changes to the proceedings, some of which could be instituted immediately. For example, one suggestion was that speakers should leave out academic jargon and shorten their inputs to allow more time for debate. This was accepted by the house.

Within the activists' meetings, while everyone felt marginalized, this was understood in different ways. Some women, especially black academics, felt that black women were not being represented adequately, especially as speakers. Others felt that activists, women involved in grassroots organisations like the trade union movement and community/political organisations, were not adequately represented. Both groups felt that they were the *object* of the discussions, being represented by white, academic women, rather than speaking from



Gcina Mhlope: 'Can't we add another word to this conference - accessibility. I'm having to decode big words all the time.'

their own subjective experience.

Academics vs Activists

A major separation between the world of the academic and the activist was frequently expressed. Many of the papers were presented in academic language and were based on research which excluded the participation of the 'subjects' of research. Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert, who presented a paper, said: 'For me there was a distinct dichotomy between activists and academics. Black women were commodified and objectified. They sure as hell were not empowered.'

Mavivi Manzini of the ANC Women's League was particularly concerned about the gap between academic research and activism. She said: 'Most activists see the need for research but feel that this research must be done in another way to empower women. We must move away from research being done only by academics in universities, but to try and impart skills to the women ...let research be done with the women, by the women and not for the women and on the women. Also our research must be policy orientated and not only research for the sake of researching...Otherwise they're working in a vacuum.'

The conference was trying to straddle *the two worlds of academia and activism.* Clearly it was dominated by academics and academic papers, but there was an attempt to draw in grassroots organisations. In the evaluation session, the conference organisers described how they tried to draw in as many women as possible from the trade union movement and community/political organisations, to give papers and to attend the conference.

Some women defended the value of academic work outside of the political struggle. Shireen Hassim, one of the conference organisers, argues that 'there was a struggle between intellectuals and activists ... Activists wanted a much more subordinate intelligentsia within the women's movement; subordinated to the need to build a political base and accountable to that in their research. I think that is potentially dangerous to the women's movement. Some of the best ideas have been developed precisely because people have the space to consider, read, reflect and debate. And you can't do that if you are subordinated to immediate political imperatives.'

Naila Kabeer, reinforced this sentiment: 'I'm very against the idea of linking research too closely to political parties, organisations or even trade unions. Because research throws up unpopular findings and academics should be free to pursue those and disseminate them.'

Other women expressed disquiet that the issues were being defined in an 'either/or' way. Barbara Klugman, a discussant at the conference, said that 'many of the academic women at the conference are themselves struggling against the elitism of academia. Many have engaged in participatory research at the request of grassroots organisations. Many of these academics are also activists themselves, both in universities and mass-based organisations.'

Another criticism about the academic nature of the conference was that it clearly followed a traditional format - which is a 'male model'. Feminism has always attempted to challenge this form of sharing knowledge by using participatory methods like workshops instead. There were few women who did not feel intimidated to speak in the big lecture theatres, especially where they lacked the academic language. One of the participants, Teresa Angless said: 'Women, no matter their class, cultural, racial background have experienced problems with speaking out. If we cannot feel safe in a feminist conference on women and gender to express our opinion, then there is a serious problem.' At *the same time, it was argued that a* major reason why the conflicts emerged was because of the safety of a space dominated by women.

Racial divisions

'One helpful insight I gained from the conference is that the whole concept of nonracial struggle allows us to ignore the differences between us. We all seem to have our own ideas about what it means and how it feels to be white, or what it means and how it feels to be black. But our assumptions aren't necessarily correct and we tend not to check them out with each other because we are working as comrades together' (Barbara Klugman).

Some black women experienced the predominance of white women and white speakers as oppressive. They felt objectified by the way in which the majority of the research was carried out.

Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert, a clinical

psychologist, spoke of how there can be no alliance between white and black women if white women are speaking for black women: 'The alliance between black and white women at present is characterized by silence and dependency on the part of black women on white women...Given the history of feminism and given the need that women in the West had to gain their autonomy from men and to be perceived as equal in the eye of society, how is it then that white academics don't appreciate more the need for black academics and black people in general to express themselves? What they should be doing if they want to be of assistance is help others to speak for themselves. And that is what I call empowering women.'

Women will only gain true equality and empowerment once they break that silence and represent themselves. Says Kedibone, 'If you continue in the long term to speak on the part of black women, you perpetuate, prolong and protract their silence.' She goes on to say that 'the effect of their (white women) work is important in terms of documentation but it's limited in terms of advancing the struggle, and more specifically advancing the emancipation of the oppressed.'

Black academics and black activists also criticised the lack of research on white women: 'I want to know about white women because they have an impact on my oppression as a black woman and yet they aren't written about.' (Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert).

Mavivi Manzini pointed out that focussing only on black women's oppression facilitated the belief that only black women are oppressed and allowed one to ignore the way in which gender oppression goes across race and class lines. She felt: 'We say that patriarchy in our country affects both black and white women. But very little research is being done on white women and how patriarchy affects them... White women are not sensitive on that issue. Our society is so divided on a racial basis. In order to bridge this gap we should learn to be sensitive to each other.'

Some participants felt that the way arguments were presented gave the impression that all academics were white and all activists were black. Shireen Hassim pointed out that 'the fact that one is black does not imply that one is an activist. The fact that you are an academic does not imply that you are white... What wasn't reflected was the diversity of positions and contradictions and tensions that people were feeling'. But, as Beatie Hofmeyr, one of the panelists, said: 'In all the emotion people tend to take up

positions and then they no longer hear each other.'

Lesbian and religious women

In the course of the conference other differences emerged. Lesbian women criticised the absence of papers articulating their particular oppression. They felt that the papers presented reflected the 'heterosexist' bias which prevails throughout society. Religious women were dissatisfied about the lack of attention given to religious issues at the conference. Given the vast numbers of women who observe a religion in this country, they felt that only one session was inadequate. Finally, women from other parts of Southern African felt that they were under-represented at a conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa.

Feminism is about anger

In spite of the emotion and discomfort generated by the conflicts at the conference, many women felt it was important that they happened. They felt that it was inherent in the nature of the conference that these issues would emerge. A conference on women and dominated by women allowed women to feel safe enough to express the underlying differences between them. Said Shireen Hassim: 'There was an incredible anger building up, not at the conference but historically. The conference only provided the forum for this to emerge.' The expression of these emotions is valuable. As Pat Horn put it: 'Feminism is about a lot of anger and the expression of anger is a very important part of people beginning to transcend their passive position.'

Unfortunately the expressions of alienation were experienced as personal attacks by some of the conference participants. In addition, the conference organisers were at times blamed for the problems that emerged. Shula Marks remarked: 'We should not blame the midwives for the hereditary defects of the baby.' In the end, there were few participants who did not appreciate the efforts of the organising team.

Uniting theory and praxis

It was important that criticisms about the way in which academics carry out and present their research emerged at the conference. Clearly black women, working class women and activists felt uncomfortable about being the object of research. It was also constantly pointed out that the predominance of white academics is a product of apartheid. But if one accepts the argument that white feminists should not speak on behalf of black women, then the question arises: what should academic white middle class women do with the skills and resources that they have?

Clearly, the imbalance within academia must be addressed through affirmative action within the context of a restructured education system. But those women who have academic skills in the present context still have a right, and, it may be argued, a duty to use their skills in a progressive manner.

One way of addressing this problem is the method of participatory research and education, which feminists have always preferred. In participatory research (which can lead to participatory writing) women can express themselves, and the skills that are in the hands of the researchers can be shared with the participants. In this way the control of the research process and its results are put into the hands of the people who are 'being researched' so that they become active 'subjects' rather than passive 'objects' of research.

It is important to think about how academic knowledge can be used as part and parcel of struggles. Because our society has divided up 'doing' and 'thinking' a distinction between academia and activism has occurred. A conference on women and gender should try to bridge that gap, but clearly it is a long road. As feminists who have suffered the social separation between the public and private worlds, who have challenged the alienation between the personal and the political, we should also be challenging the divisions between theory and praxis.•

Tammy Shefer works for the Labour and Community Education Project (LACOM) of Sached, and Sibylle Mathis is a Swiss researcher doing research on women in South Africa.

The quotes in this article are unless otherwise stated based on interviews conducted with participants after the conference. Thanks to Linda Chisholm for doing some interviews and to the women who shared their experiences with us.

Asserting women's emancipation:

The lessons of Mozambique, Nicaragua and India

All liberation movements have required the participation of women in the struggle for national liberation, but very few have gone beyond that. PAT HORN looks at the experiences of Mozambique, Nicaragua and India, and argues that South African women need to be much more assertive about challenging male domination

As we enter the 1990s, we are faced with the real possibility of achieving a new democratic South Africa during this decade.

After resisting the tyranny of apartheid for years, many organisations now find themselves working towards the construction of the post-apartheid regime of their dreams.

In May 1990, the ANC issued a statement committing itself to strive for the emancipation of women.

But will this good intention really result in women's emancipation in post-apartheid South Africa? What lessons can we learn from Mocambique and Nicaragua during their period of revolutionary change, and from the way women have organised themselves in post-colonial India?

• MOCAMBIQUE

During the 10-year guerrilla war waged by Frelimo against colonialism, a women's detachment was set up in 1967 to train and organise women for military participation in the struggle.

In 1972 the Organisation of Mocambican Women (OMM) was set up, as a result of pressure from women on the central committee of Frelimo.

It was a mass-based organisation, not directly part of Frelimo, but most OMM initiatives were derived from Frelimo directives.

The main task of the OMM was to integrate women into social production, through production cooperatives.

Other areas of OMM activity were health, health education, literacy, urban housekeeping, mobilising and recruiting women into collective activity and politicisation of husbands and men at home.

At the 1973 Conference of the OMM, Samora Machel, the keynote speaker, said that 'the objective of the revolution is to destroy the system of exploitation and build a new society which releases the potential of human beings.

'The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the revolution, a guarantee of its continuity and a condition for its success'.

According to him, for a total revolutionary process, four objectives had to be fulfilled:

(a) Women must be politically conscious;
(b) Women must be engaged in production;
(c) Women must be able to benefit from scientific and cultural education, and understand the myths that oppress them;
(d) There must be a revolutionary new concept of the couple and the home.

So Frelimo's support for the emancipation of women was clearly there.

The question is, how far did this succeed?

Limited and uneven progress

After the collapse of colonial rule, in order to ensure popular participation in building the new Mocambique, each residential area and work place was represented by 'grupos dinamazidores'.

At least one out of seven members had to be the OMM area representative.

But by Frelimo's 3rd Congress in 1977, only 48 out of 249 delegates were women, and there was only one woman minister in government.

At this Congress, it was decided to integrate OMM members more into party tasks and national and provincial planning committees.

At the level of production, progress in changing the status of women was achieved, but it was uneven.

In some areas, production co-operatives were built by the active participation of women in all areas of work, including skilled traditionally male areas like tractor-driving.

In others, women's involvement was more limited and confined to traditionally female tasks.

As far as political involvement was concerned, the level of women's participation, although remaining lower than men's, did increase compared with the rest of Africa.

But women were still encountering difficulties from their husbands, who objected to them attending OMM meetings.

OMM officials used to go to talk to husbands to persuade them of the importance of women's involvement in the revolution.

But even for women who were 'allowed' to go to work and to meetings, they still suffered from the pressure of a *double workload*, as they remained solely responsible for domestic work and reproduction.

The OMM and Frelimo discouraged conflicts in the home over the unequal division of domestic labour.

The Frelimo government decreed the abolition of the traditional practices of lobolo and polygamy, which were considered to be important patriarchal features in the oppression of women.

At the same time, the family was held to be of utmost importance, and both Frelimo and the OMM were opposed to divorce.

The fact that even a monogamous patriarchal family is oppressive to women was not really recognised.

This caused a problem for women, particularly in the north, where their earlier ability to use divorce to escape their husbands' polygamous marriages was taken away, while Frelimo often turned a blind eye to polygamous practices.

In the mid-1980s, the counter-revolutionary war waged by Renamo against the Frelimo government in Mocambique began to brutally affect people's lives in many areas of the country.

Clearly this war has seriously set back the socialist programme of the Frelimo government.

Now, with a ravaged country and a starving population, the government has had to accept vast amounts of aid from organisations, with strings attached.

These require the adoption of conservative non-socialist economic and social programmes, cutbacks to services and

social welfare features, the dreaded 'structural adjustment programmes' which further marginalise the already marginalised people in developing countries, etc.

In this situation, there is little to give women hope that what has not been achieved yet in terms of their emancipation is now about to be corrected - or even that what they have gained is still secure.

Too little grassroots participation

However, it does seem clear that, even before this devastating war took its toll, Frelimo's programme for the emancipation of women, while showing some positive results, was not changing women's subjugation.

It therefore stopped short of the revolutionary emancipation of women to which its early statements were committed.

The OMM has been criticised for being too little of a democratic grassroots organisation and too much of a conveyor of the party line (from a male-dominated party to the women of Mocambique).

This did not allow for any grassroots challenge to patriarchal power, ie the domination by men in all important spheres of life in the society.

At a recent conference of women from the OMM and other women's organisations at the end of 1990, it was agreed that the OMM will become a completely autonomous, democratic women's organisation.

This decision has been made in an attempt to rectify the past mistakes made by the OMM.

• NICARAGUA

In July 1979, the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somosa was finally overthrown after mass urban insurrections by a growing popular opposition, led by the Sandinista Front for the Liberation of Nicaragua (FSLN).

People who had never participated in politics before, like youth, women and the unwaged poor, played a central role in the Nicaraguan revolution.

Despite the 'machismo' of Nicaraguan society, women were able to play a crucial role, not merely in support (such as tending to the wounded, and helping to hide guerrillas, etc).

They also made up almost a third of the FSLN's combat forces.

The FSLN has always recognised women's oppression and the need to overcome it in creating a new society.

Its 1969 programme already promised that 'the Sandinista people's revolution will abolish the odious discrimination that women have been subjected to compared with men'.

Dona Adelia, chairperson of the La Virgen Morena women's vegetable co-operative

But the changing of attitudes proved to be more difficult to achieve, even within the FSLN.

In 1977 the Association of Nicaraguan Women Confronting the Nation's Problems (AMPRONAC) was formed, consisting mainly of bourgeois women.

But after the national strike and occupation of the National Palace, and subsequent partial insurrection, of August/September 1978, the organisation changed its name and its priorities.

It was now called the Luisa Amanda Espinosa Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE) after a young girl who was killed by Somoza's forces.

AMNLAE was a women's organisation which now concentrated on mobilising everybody (not only women) against Somoza.

Women's equality made law

After the Sandinista government was established, the FSLN commitment to women's equality and to removing all obstacles to achieving it, was written into the new Nicaraguan constitution.

This 'provided the juridical context for future legislative and policy measures aimed at securing some of the conditions enabling this equality to be achieved'.

Women were massively involved in education, health programmes, community organisations, defence and politics.

Participation by women in literacy and then higher education programmes slashed the illiteracy rate among women.

This increased participation by women, not only in the armed struggle, but in the Sandinista state, had an impact on social roles.

This caused great concern amongst men, and within the Catholic Church (the majority religion) which did not favour this deviation from traditional roles.

The concern arose out of the fact that women's participation in public and political life meant that they were not tied to the home.

Men (even those committed to the revolution) still had the idea that they had

the right to allow or not allow their women to participate in activities outside of the house.

And they still could not see themselves sharing the responsibility for child care and domestic duties.

The official FSLN view stressed the following goals:

- to encourage the entry of women into wage labour;
- to socialise domestic labour and child care;
- to provide juridical equality;
- greater protection for mothers and the family;
- mobilisation of women into political activity and public administration;
- eliminating prostitution and other 'social vices', helping abandoned working mothers, and protecting illegitimate children.

... but women remain at the bottom

However, under the FSLN government only some of these aims were achieved.

Employment opportunities in the formal economy expanded, but within limits.

Therefore most women remain at the bottom of the income structure, as petty commodity producers, small traders or house servants.

The socialisation of child care and domestic labour has only affected a minority of women.

In 1982, a Family Law was established with the aim of creating a more democratic, egalitarian and mutually responsible family.

But implementation of this has not been effective, and even the public discussions of the issues around this only lasted for about a year.

The main benefits of the revolution for women were the welfare programmes, involvement in political life, and certain areas of legal reform.

Now that the FSLN government has been ousted by a US-backed coalition, the situation is even more bleak.

One of the main concerns of the Nicaraguan people now is how to prevent the reversal of even those gains that were achieved.

The new government is heavily influenced by US economic policy directives These involve privatisation, cutting services and welfare programmes, and other anti-socialist measures which inevitably hit the marginalised and lower-income sections of the population the hardest - most of whom are women.

FSLN failings

But, when trying to understand the reasons for the continuation of women's oppression in Nicaragua, it is not good enough to focus on the offensive of the 'contras' and the US-backed government presently in power.

It is vitally important to understand where the FSLN government itself failed to complete the process of women's emancipation.

(a) The problems of **material scarcity** in an underdeveloped economy, made worse by the continuing war against the US-backed 'contras', limited the carrying out of existing socialist programmes, including the programme for the emancipation of women.

(b) The FSLN attempted to maintain a broad **multi-class support base.**

This was its strength, but it also slowed down the implementation of socialist programmes which were not always supported by opposition parties or groups.

This did impose some limits on the 'transformative capacity' of the state in some areas of policy - in particular contentious areas like changing the status of women.

(c) The **contentious goals** which relate to changing attitudes towards women and the family, liberating women on the domestic front (ie challenging patriarchy) and transforming the state into one where women's status is truly equal, are not given priority in a broad national revolution.

Policies for the emancipation of women were only really a priority, even for the FSLN, insofar as they also contributed to wider revolutionary goals.

When there is a unity of purpose between the goals of women's emancipation and the developmental, economic and social goals, these would receive priority.

The FSLN did not ignore or turn a blind eye to the domestic factors oppressing women.

For example, the law was changed to addressed the 'widespread social problem of male irresponsibility'.

Most mothers in Nicaragua were found to have been deserted, without means, at least once if not more times.

In 1983, laws were passed proclaiming equal responsibility for the upkeep of children by mother and father.

Measures were enforced for taking men to courts which could order the deduction of payment from men's incomes for the support of their deserted families.

Women were widely encouraged to use these courts, which they did.

But, while these reforms made some measure of relief available to poverty-stricken deserted mothers, the patriarchal family structure and the patriarchal society which uphold the oppression of women, still continue to flourish in Nicaragua.

• INDIA

At the time of the national struggle against British colonialism, the participation of women was crucial.

But freedom from colonial rule in 1948 did not result in a new India which satisfied the hopes of all those who struggled for the nationalist cause.

India's complex pattern of sex, class and caste oppression, which continues in the national post-colonial state, has given rise to the growth of an anti-capitalist, anti- patriarchal women's movement.

The official ideology of the State includes a commitment to women's equality and development.

But in a political economy which emphasises growth and modernisation, the opposite is achieved in practice.

The State has attempted to address the widespread poverty among women, by initiating and maintaining a network of grassroots organisations of urban and rural poor women.

But there has been no official challenge to patriarchal domination.

The State has not addressed most forms of violence against women, except where massive political campaigns have forced them to do so.

In 1984, a Family Court was established to deal with matrimonial offences.

But because the emphasis is on reconciliation, the Court usually puts women back into unwanted marriages, which in turn leads to more domestic violence.

The development of religious fundamentalism has further set back the emancipation of women in India.

The demands of fundamentalist groups for the right to operate in terms of religious orthodox codes of law, have resulted in the State being unwilling to develop a stronger Uniform Civil Code, which was the main demand of the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1975.

In response to this situation, a wide-ranging and varied women's movement has developed.

(a) There is a range of **activist feminist organisations** campaigning against various forms of sexual oppression, particularly of lower caste and lower class women.

This fight has united women of different backgrounds and ideologies.

They have been able to form alliances and mount national campaigns, mainly for legal changes.

(b) There is a growing body of **women's**

studies which aims to transform the available knowledge which excludes the perspectives of marginalised groups, particularly women and lower caste people.
(c) There are also the government-sponsored **grassroots poor women's organisations.**

While many activists are not keen on working with organisations that may tie them to State policies, many have realised the importance of dealing with all organisations with mass membership among the most exploited sections of society.
(d) Out of the Textile Labour Association, *the* ***Self-Employed Women's Association*** (SEWA) broke off because male activists found it too assertive about the rights of poor women.

SEWA branched out from dealing with women in the home-working industry, to organising women in a wide range of informal sector activities.

This greatly empowered a large sector of women who would otherwise be completely marginalised, both economically and politically.

It is probably a world pioneer in the organisation of marginalised people into a collective force.

(e) Other women's organisations are situated within broader political movements, eg *Chipko Andolan* (a grassroots environmental movement devoted to protecting forests and preventing large-scale tree-felling), *Chatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini in Bodh Gaya* (a movement of agricultural labourers against large property owners, who have included specific demands for land ownership by women in their own name), and others.

This broad women's movement tries to combine poverty, illiteracy and survival issues which affect both men and women, with the specificity of women's *oppression and the need to mobilise* women separately.

It has also formed effective alliances which try to break through the male domination of trade unions and institutionalised left politics, and aim to transform the patriarchal society.

• LESSONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

1. National liberation movements always call on the participation of women.
But this does not necessarily mean a commitment to women's emancipation in the new society.
2. The lesson we have to learn is that there must be **no halfway measures** if we aim to completely eliminate patriarchal domination.

The key factor in women's emancipation is the transformation of patriarchy.

This means that all structures, institutions and established practices at all levels of society where male domination is upheld, must be eliminated or transformed.

In Mocambique and Nicaragua, this was done halfway, and in the end did not succeed.
3. It is relatively easier for governments to attend to the **economic issues** affecting women (ie. practical gender interests).

These issues must form part of the economic policy, and women can easily be mobilised around them.

But it is not good enough to stop there.

If women continue to be subjugated in a still-patriarchal society, these economic gains can easily be reversed during hard times.
4. But even in the area of practical gender interests, it is expensive to achieve substantial material progress.

Conservative governments will avoid dealing even with these gender interests where possible.

Women therefore have to struggle on two fronts:

(a) **Practical gender issues,** ie winning and maintaining economic measures specifically affecting women, such as child care facilities, maternity and parental benefits, social services for sick and old people, shelters for battered women, etc.

(b) **Strategic gender issues**, ie challenging all aspects of patriarchal domination, including - abolition of the sexual division of labour; - alleviation of the burdens of domestic labour and child care; - removal of institutionalised discrimination; - establishment of political equality; - freedom of choice over childbearing; - adoption of adequate measures *against male violence and control* over women and their sexuality.
5. In both Mocambique and Nicaragua it was regarded as important to bring women more centrally into the economy. This was largely successful.

But in both cases, the problem of **women's double load** still caused major difficulties for their participation.

In South Africa, it is essential to transform women's position in the occupational division of labour by bringing women into a more central role in the economy.

Women also have to play a much more central role in political life.

But this will not work without the implementation of effective policy measures for removing women's double load.

The state is unlikely to be able to do this by socialising all domestic work and child care, although it can certainly lighten the load.

But there always remain domestic tasks which have to be done, and these have to be shared equally by men and women.

There is no way to avoid this, as Frelimo and the OMM tried to do in Mocambique.
6. The **militance of mass-based feminist organisation** is an essential requirement for both challenging patriarchy and achieving and maintaining government expenditure in the area of practical gender interests, whether there is a progressive government or a conservative government in place.

Feminism need not be divisive

We need to stop worrying about being labelled feminists ('the new F-word') but instead, work out what progressive feminism means in the present-day South African context.

Our fear of creating divisions in the national liberation struggle has led to the development of a women's movement which is afraid of seriously challenging patriarchal domination.

This timidity has been shown by the

general avoidance within the mass women's movement of strategic gender interests.

The political situation today requires a more assertive level of women's organisation, to guide the ANC and other progressive organisations in a more gender-conscious struggle for a new democratic South Africa.

A strong, assertive women's movement fighting aggressively and unashamedly for an end to patriarchal oppression of its members and all women in society, is not a divisive force, but an essential asset to the liberation struggle.

In the South African situation, I believe it is appropriate to have a **network** of organisations (as for example in India) rather than a single politically credible designated organisation, dealing with all the various tasks which have to be tackled.

The May 1990 statement of the ANC on the emancipation of women gives us the political space to start seriously tackling the problems of women's emancipation in South Africa.

But despite the space which exists, this does not mean that we will not stumble upon plenty of difficulties along the way - eg different types of backlash, the ease with which gains can be rolled back, the seeming immovability of patriarchal attitudes on the part of both women and men, etc.

But none of these are good reasons for failing or delaying to take up the political task.

Now is the time to move.•

• *Pat Horn works for the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (Cwiu).*

This article is based on part of her paper entitled 'Towards the Emancipation of Women in a Post-Apartheid South Africa' which was delivered at the Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa, Durban on 1 February 1991.

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The Winnie Mandela Trial:

Open letter to the ANC NEC from the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW).

Dear Comrades

GLOW has always aligned itself with the mass democratic movement and has many ANC members in its ranks. We are writing to you to voice our protest over the way in which some of the issues relating to the trial of comrade Winnie Mandela and others have been handled by the defence.

We wish to stress at the outset that GLOW has no comment to make on the defendants' guilt or innocence.

The ANC's draft Bill of Rights states in Article 7, paragraph 2, that:

'Discrimination on the grounds of gender, single parenthood, legitimacy of birth or sexual orientation shall be unlawful.'

In light of this, it is alarming that the NEC has failed to respond to the homophobia that has arisen both within and outside this court as a result of the trial.

We would like to highlight the following points as the most glaring examples of this homophobia:

(a) Supporters of the ANC have picketed the court with placards carrying anti-homosexual slogans.

(b) The defence has failed to distinguish between homosexuality and sexual abuse and suggests that they are one and the same thing. Linking homosexuality to sexual abuse is as ludicrous as equating heterosexuality to rape.

(c) The defence is using allegations of homosexual activity in an attempt to detract from the real issues in the trial, namely the alleged kidnapping of, and assault on, four young men. We are outraged that the accused believe that allegations of homosexuality can be used in an attempt to justify the removal of the complainants from the manse.

In short we feel that the defence is attempting to capitalise on conventional and reactionary prejudices against homosexuals. This is particularly disturbing as this defence is being raised by the head of the ANC's Department of Social Welfare. The line of defence is irreconcilable with basic principles of human rights outlined in the ANC's proposed Bill of Rights.

The ANC's failure to respond to the above, raises doubts regarding its stated commitment to the recognition of Lesbian and Gay rights. We therefore demand that the NEC states clearly and unequivocally its position on the rights of lesbians and gay men.

We would also like to inform you that the actions of the ANC around this trial have made it necessary for GLOW to launch a campaign that requests progressive organisations, locally and internationally, to re-affirm their commitment to the protection of lesbian and gay rights in a future democratic South Africa.

GLOW calls on all progressive organisations to publicly support this letter. All responses will be published by GLOW.

Yours in struggle

GLOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. BOX 23297

JOUBERT PARK

2044

(13 March 1991)

Hospital apartheid

Last year Health Minister Rina Venter said every hospital bed under the state's jurisdiction would be open to all South Africans regardless of race, and that a national health policy was being formulated that would ensure hospitals were used in the most efficient and economical way. ASHWIN DESAI argues that the severe crisis at Port Elizabeth's Livingstone Hospital makes a mockery of these claims

A recent announcement by the administration of Livingstone Hospital of its intent to **reduce** the number of beds so as to alleviate chronic overcrowding has set the stage for a major battle between progressive health organisations and the hospital administration. The announcement comes in the wake of on-going critical strife between staff members and the administration during 1990.

The administration's response to the serious crisis at Livingstone reinforces racially-discriminatory provisions in health care.

Doctors that *WIP* spoke to painted a very grim picture of conditions at the hospital. According to these doctors outpatients sometimes arrive at 5 am and are turned away at 4.30 pm without being attended to. In his 89/90 annual report, head of medicine Dr PM Naidoo pointed out that 119 663 general outpatients were attended to by three doctors and seven primary care trained sisters.

In a letter to medical superintendent Graham White, a senior matron pointed to the fact that sick children 'have to be doubled and tripled in cots'. In the labour ward 'where an average of 20 to 25 deliveries, plus an average of four to five cesarian sections are done a day' there is such a bed shortage that patients 'might even deliver babies on trolleys'.

A confidential memorandum by the same matron in November 1990 exposes the almost total breakdown in health services at Livingstone.

The memorandum points to nurses having become 'irritable, highly sensitive, stressful, hopelessly burnt out and very often sick as a result of the environment in which she is expected to function'. Opportunities to attend staff development programmes have evaporated because whilst 'many programmes in the form of seminars, symposia and workshops are offered... due to staff shortages many of our staff are unable to attend'.

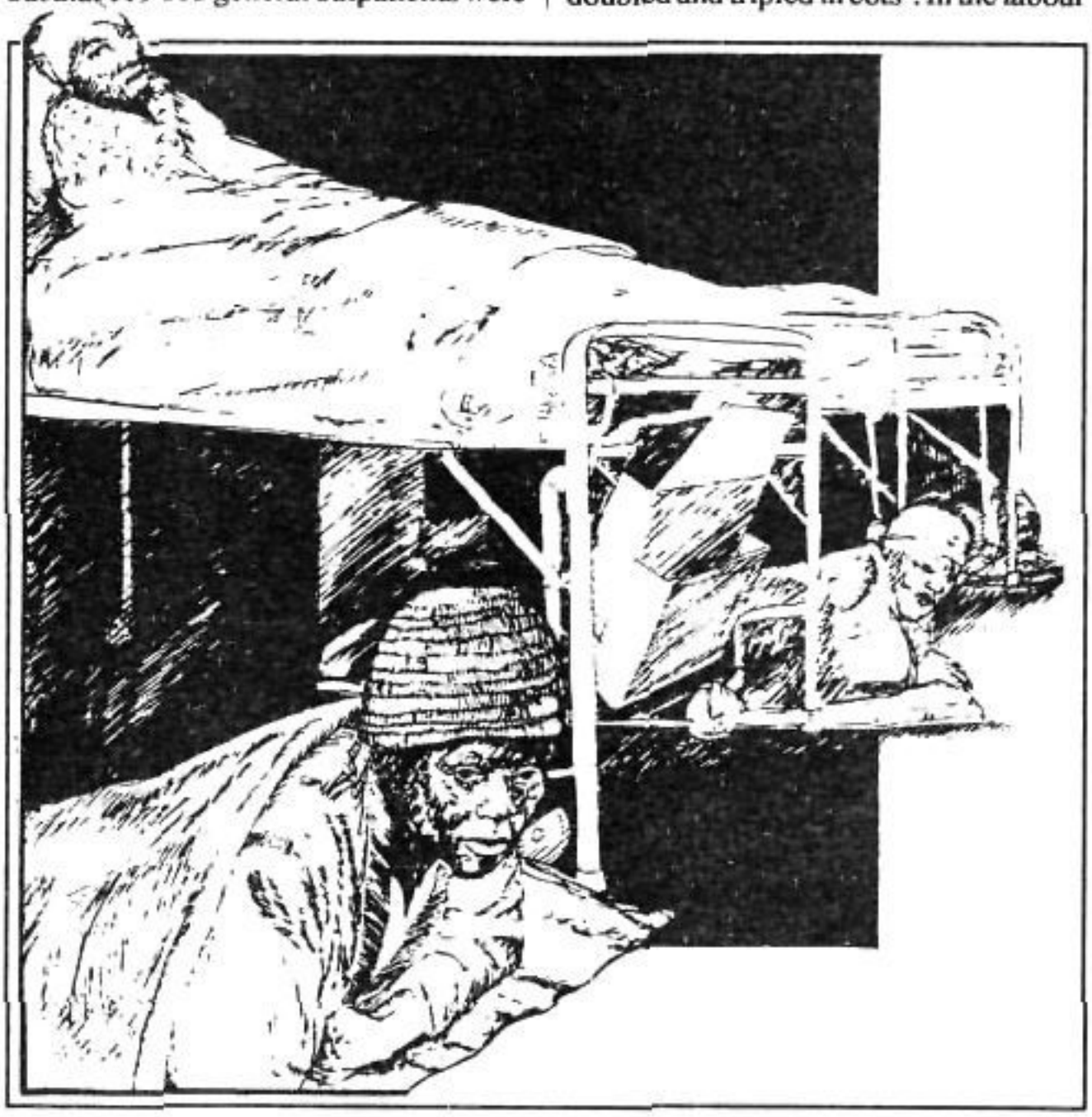
The memorandum points to the almost total collapse of security measures. The memorandum referred to the following 'unpleasant incidents':

- Patients abscond from hospital.
- Patients are threatened with their lives by gangsters from outside.
- The safety of staff is threatened in areas like Casualty and the hospital's male wards.
- The incidence of theft is on the increase.
- The enforcement or execution of disciplinary measures becomes a major problem for staff, who have to function in a supervisory capacity. They are threatened with either having their families interfered with or their homes burnt down.

The memorandum noted the following medico-legal risks:

- Patients falling out of beds.
- Injuries to patients.
- The spread of infection.
- Incorrect observations and documentation.
- Incorrect identification, especially of children.
- Patient neglect.
- Dangers associated with blood transfusion.

The memorandum suggests that the situation at Livingstone 'has now reached crisis proprtions' and that if 'immediate steps to correct and resolve the problems that have manifested' are not taken, the



The crisis at Livingstone Hospital

damage will become irreversible.

Whilst the problems are not unique to Livingstone, the senior matron argues that 'these same problems are ten times worse at Livingstone, and the situation is not getting any better, it is only getting worse'.

Whilst the memorandum provides an in-depth look at the problems at Livingstone, the reasons for the problems and the possible solutions outlined have been severely criticised by progressive health organisations.

Blaming the unions

The memorandum argues that 'although job descriptions and work schedules are available' for general assistants, 'many problems have arisen since the introduction of trade unions in the public sector and the hospital in particular'. Workers representatives roam around the hospital complex during duty hours and 'there is evidence of intimidation, victimisation and defiance amongst all categories of staff, for example forcing staff to attend meetings, and carrying on longer with meetings than the arranged times.'

The memorandum points to the experiences of March 1990, which witnessed 'stayaways and strike action at the hospital' as a source of increased absenteeism and negative attitudes. These negative attitudes, the matron points out, are reflected in the following slogans: 'An Injury to One is an Injury to All!', 'Viva ANC!' and 'We are All Health Workers!'.

The lower echelons of staff bear the brunt of criticism. The memorandum identifies the following problems:

- Dramatic increase in absenteeism.
- Low productivity in the workplace.
- Insubordination, insolence and rudeness.
- Gross resistance to disciplinary measures from supervisors and housekeepers.
- Increase in the theft of hospital property.
- Euphoric obsession with the trade union movement and the ANC.

Significantly, the matron does not criticise the performance of top administrators, the Cape Hospital Services Department and the central state.

In somewhat bizarre fashion, as a solution the major recommendation is 'the reduction of hospital beds'. The memorandum envisages Livingstone as a self-contained unit abstracted from socio-economic and political conditions outside the hospital walls. Given this, the solution can be found internally: control the unions, introduce a time and motion study to control the workers and reduce the beds.

The more obvious first step, sharing resources with the 'white' Port Elizabeth Provincial Hospital, which lies a mere 2 kms away, is not seriously considered. Doctors at Livingstone have pointed out that Provincial has a 55% bed occupancy, whilst there is a 120% bed occupancy at Livingstone.

A bedcount in late 1987 showed that Livingstone was overextended in every category:

	Authorised	Actual
General block	402	616
Paediatric block	200	281
Maternity block	67	212
Casualty	4	45
Intensive care unit	673	1192

In a letter to medical superintendent Dr White, dated 4 July 1990, a specialist in ICU Dr Behari pointed to the seriousness of the situation:

'We cannot admit patients if there are no beds available and until this matter is resolved satisfactorily and other hospital beds are made available to our patients, then our patients would continue to die in Casualty, the rest rooms, admission rooms and corridors of Livingstone Hospital.'

Probably inspired by Dr Venter's admission that if three hospital beds were needed for every 1 000 people, then South Africa had a surplus of 11 700 beds for whites and a shortage of 7 000 beds for blacks (*BMJ* Vol 306 No 2, 1990), Dr Behari sought some support from Provincial. However, there has been a distinct lack of co-operation. He notes in the same letter that 'a patient was sent back from Provincial Hospital with a malfunctioning pacemaker with *no* notes, *no* referral letter and *no* telephone call'.

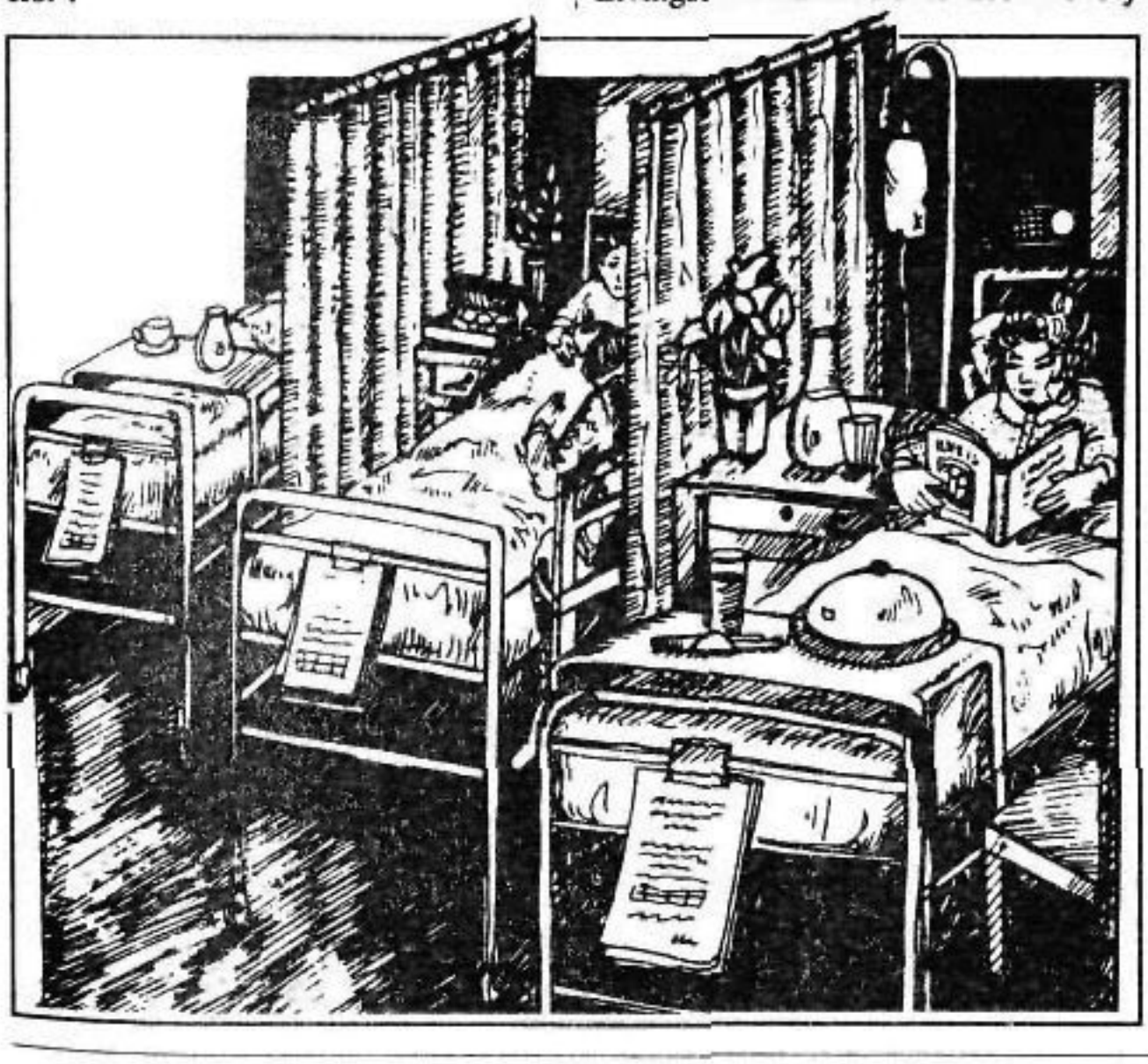
Excluding patients on racial grounds

In confirming the possibility of beds being reduced, Dr White reinforced the position that solutions could not be found by confronting the discriminatory and inefficient practices of the apartheid state. For Dr White the only long-term solution was the reduction of birthrates!

In a letter dated 24 July 1990 to medical superintendents Drs White and Rank, head of medicine Dr Naidoo noted that Provincial transferred patients to Livingstone's ICU after hours for post-operative care and follow-up post-surgery. This was despite the fact that 'when cardiac surgery was commenced at Provincial it was originally stipulated that post-operative care and follow-up post-surgery would be the responsibility of Provincial'. For Dr Naidoo these 'quick transfers' appeared to be made 'on racial grounds'.

Provincial Hospital is much closer to the african township of Walmer. However, doctors at Livingstone allege that ambulance drivers have been ordered to bypass Provincial and deliver patients to Livingstone.

Leon Cilliers, Cape Provincial Services regional director, stated bluntly: 'I am taking paying non-white patients at the Provincial to lessen the load at Liv-



ingstone, but I can't be expected to take over the chaos at Livingstone and transplant it into Provincial'.

Responses from progressive health organisations

The South African Health Workers Congress(Sahwco), the National Medical and Dental Association(Namda) and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union(Nehawu) issued a joint statement condemning the planned reduction in beds as 'nonsensical'.

The statement argues: 'No cognisance is taken of the context of overcrowding in our hospitals. No mention is made of the need to integrate the existing hospital services in the area - Port Elizabeth Provincial Hospital serves a largely white patient load and wards within the hospital remain closed/ underutilised. If apartheid is truly dead in our hospitals, the first recommendation should be the integration of our health care delivery. This is both economically sound, and indeed socio-politically correct'.

In what a leading Port Elizabeth newsapaper called a dramatic development, a statement condemning the planned reduction of beds at Livingstone was supported by the majority of doctors at the hospital. The statement argued that the planned reduction in beds would 'exacerbate the exisiting problem and make it even more difficult to meet ethical obligations to patients'.

For the doctors the problems could only begin to be addressed by the desegregation and full utilisation of available health resources. Here the statement noted the huge imbalance in resources between Livingstone and Provincial.

Mass action

Despite the Minister of Health's announcement that apartheid has ended in South African hospitals, influential functionaries lower down the ranks are determined to frustrate any attempts to ensure the deracialisation of health facilities. For progressive health organisations it is becoming increasingly clear that deracialisation and a more equitable sharing of resources will not occur simply on the basis of ministerial pronouncements. A reversion to mass action is seen by progressive organisations as the only means to break down the doors of apartheid hospitals.

The state's response will probably be to accelerate privatisation. The National Health and Population Department's plan for restructuring South Africa's welfare system already points in this direction. The plan emphasises the need for a market-based welfare system, and outlines a privatisation stategy.

Welfare organisations have rejected the plan, arguing that it reinforces inequality, and that it fails 'to address the issues of socio-economic backlog, economic distribution, underdevelopment or the need to dismantle welfare apartheid'.

Similar sentiments have been expressed by health organisations around the issue of privatisation of health care. This will only serve to exacerbate an already volatile situation.

In terms of resources and the problems they face, the PE Provincial Hospital and Livingstone Hospital are a world apart. Yet in terms of physical distance they exist within 2 kms of each other. It is this distance that progressive organisations organising at Livingstone hope to travel *en masse* in 1991 in order to challenge what they perceive as deliberate racially discriminatory practices at Provincial. •

Scenario of an unlikely deal

PATRICK BOND and MARK SWILLING offer a guide to the latest social contract proposal

Three enormous financial institutions - Old Mutual insurance, Nedbank and the Perm building society, all closely linked through ownership and director relations - are trying to sell an extraordinary middle-road deal to organised labour, civic assocations, progressive political parties, the regime and big capital.

The deal - which visionary Perm MD Bob Tucker calls a 'compact' - is in effect an unlikely (and in parts fundamentally flawed) marriage of ANC-Cosatu *Growth through Redistribution* 'basic needs' economics, with the current efforts by state and capital to mimic *Newly Industrialised Countries* like South Korea and Taiwan.

The compact's aims are not merely anti-apartheid, but seek a broader transition from authoritarianism, violence and racial segregation.

'The finance houses' new plan is an unlikely marriage of ANC-Cosatu economics with the current efforts by state and capital to mimic newly industrialised countries like South Korea and Taiwan'

Eclectic 'scenario planning'

How did this new position emerge? In the middle of last year, Tucker assembled a star-studded group of economists and political thinkers, including several from the ranks of the democratic movement, and promptly spent R1,7 million on 'scenario planning.'

The scenario team took as its starting point some rather stereotypical views expressed by 40 Nedperm executives, who were interviewed for two hours each about what they want to see in a post-apartheid society. The well-respected Tucker managed to weld selective progressive positions onto an utterly orthodox framework,

As the project has matured, this eclecticism permitted Tucker to present scenario planning to groups as diverse as the cabinet, the ANC national executive, Anglo American, Cosatu leadership and its 'Economic Trends' group, the ANC Department of Economic Planning, and Planact (an urban policy group linked to the union and civic movement). FW de Klerk was said to be especially keen.

Tellingly, however, the presentations were not made to opposing combinations of these audiences. And persuading big business of the merits of Growth through Redistribution, social investment taxes ('prescribed asset requirements'), and other deals with the ANC and Cosatu will not be an easy task.

But the team concludes that a compact is in everyone's interests, because managing South Africa's forthcoming political transition fundamentally depends on both a lack of violence in society and strong economic growth. The time for reforms in the social structure, they conclude, is before not after the transition begins. In all these respects, SA will be lucky to emulate other 'successes': Colombia (1958); Venezuela (1960); Spain (1976); Turkey (1985); and Chile (1989).

In reality, unmanageable township strife and the spreading slump in manufacturing-mining-agriculture sectors appear as insurmountable barriers to a

successful social democratic transition, leaving open to Tucker and others only the hope of forging the compact of progressive and establishment leadership.

Simple-minded cultural model

Unquestionably, any South African political transition will depend on a successful framework for racial integration. In this respect, the scenario team uses the American anti-model of deracialisation and 'underclass' formation to emphasise the importance of conservative cultural values. Here the analysis comes perilously close to 'blaming the victim' in classic neo-conservative style.

The argument in essense is the following: modernisation absorbed a range of minority communities into industrial society - especially migrant job-seekers from the US Deep South - who failed to adjust to the demands of capitalist urban life. Without an inbred protestant ethic (and hence impoverished because of their failure to work hard), these wretched communities became the hapless beneficiaries of liberal-driven welfarism that, in turn, made worse their poverty and dependence instead of removing it. When, from 1964, civil rights were introduced - again another liberal plot - the supposed middle class 'role models' fled the ghettoes and left behind the underclass to rot in a swamp of crime, drugs and AIDS.

The Perm's US consultant (a Harvard business professor) makes no mention of the effects of continuing institutional racism, the flight of urban manufacturing employment, the role of banks' widespread discrimination against inner-city homebuyers of all races ('redlining'), pervasive unethical tactics of estate agents ('block-busting'), or of the way structural economic crisis destroyed other foundations of African-American communities. All of these are lessons South Africa will certainly learn first-hand in coming years.

To make matters worse, the scenario team's simple-minded cultural model is uncritically applied to South Africa to prove the proposition that our townships will face the same fate when the middle class flees to the white suburbs.

By contrast, the civic movement's profoundly **working class** leadership may have a very different view given that very few will be able to afford suburban homes. In fact, the dismal state of knowledge about the civics and how they have shaped the nature of township protest is revealed most graphically in the team's constant equation of mass action with violence.

On the economic side, however, Tucker stunned his audiences with the most ambitious housing programme yet mooted in SA. Through extensive new state subsidies, he suggests that 400 000 new sites can be serviced with electricity each year until at least 1995, with 200 000 cheap (ie less than R15 000) houses and 200 000 self- help structures.

Tucker is sensitive to criticisms that he and top Eskom management (also represented on the team) are 'talking to their own book' - ie, constructing a plan that best suits their own interests. So the Perm chief has tried to spell out how a construction job corps and other demand-side factors would provide a 'kick-start' to the entire economy, not just financial and landed capital. That kick- start, he argues, would be exhausted by 1994, and then the standard manufacturing export thrust would go into gear.

Gear-shifting

There are all manner of problems with this 'gear-shifting' approach, including a failure to truly convince basic needs partisans that South Africa must export to grow.

Indeed, Tucker and his advisors simply assume that producing labour-intensive goods for local production is, in the near-term, a dead-end, even under conditions of global recession, spreading financial panics, and rampant protectionism. Such logic was disproven by South Africa's experience in the 1930s - which already the 1990s appear to be following as closely as the 1980s resembled the 1920s.

Even though this prospect is built into the team's 'world scenario,' it is taken so lightly that gold price forecasts do not consider the hedge and speculative demands for gold - not a small failing in the context of increasingly unstable international financial and political conditions (not just US banks and the Middle East, but momentous problems sorting out Eastern Europe and USSR, and the increasingly regular Third World coup or governmental collapse). The team insists that unlike earlier periods, 'gold is not about to bail us out.' This allows them to more forcefully and blindly put the case for the manufacturing export approach.

Such argumentation may prove off-target, yet what scenario planning has nevertheless done well is chip a big crack into the armour of smug self-satisfaction that Tucker says characterises the current occupants of the economy's commanding heights. With no irony, the scenario team criticises the opulence of South African corporate elites, who spend more money on buildings and fanciful decoration than on R&D and new machinery (the Perm's luxuriant headquarters is a case in point).

And while the Harvard business professor trashed epidemic financial fraud as part of his critique of immoral US cultural values (somehow transmitted via the 1960s student and anti-war movements!), he failed to draw to the attention of at least one audience that day's lead *Business Day* headline, on corporate crime (insider trading, stock manipulation and foreign exchange fraud) under investigation at the top ranks of Old Mutual.

Indeed, between Old Mutual, Nedbank and to a lesser extent the Perm, there are few institutions so wed to the most parasitic and self-destructive tendencies of the SA economy - speculation in overvalued JSE shares and postmodern real estate, and international capital transfers. Tucker, though a true Christian liberal and clearly the most proactive establishment player in low-income housing, is nevertheless faced with the prospect of throwing stones from his own glass house.

We can only hope he succeeds, of course, in his first-phase effort at raising the masses' expectations about provision of housing and electricity. But any broader, longer-term compact between these financial institutions and the progressive forces will need to be very carefully scrutinised by the latter before decisions are taken to contract into the deal.

Alternative planning

Alternatively, progressive forces could deploy their intellectual power more creatively than helping capital do its work, by launching a scenario planning excercise to serve the **existing** 'alliance' of representatives of poor and working people. This could provide our leaders with the policy back-up required for them to propose to the nation a credible alternative to the shaky, speculative house of cards that financial capital seems likely to deliver.

For this to happen, however, the initiative will have to come from the leadership of the liberation movement itself: does it want a plan of its own or does it want to accept someone else's because no better option exists? •

• *Patrick Bond is the author of **Commanding Heights and Community Control: New Economics for a New South Africa** (Johannesburg: Ravan) and Mark Swilling's latest book is an edited collection titled **Views on the South African State** (Pretoria: HSRC).*

Is the SACP really communist?

DAVE KITSON, a former political prisoner and member of the SACP, responds to Joe Slovo's *Has Socialism Failed?*, and argues that the party does not live up to its claim to be Marxist-Leninist

What is it that makes a communist party different from all other parties, including parties that *claim to represent the* masses or the workers? It is its adherence to Marxism-Leninism as a guide to action. The spokepersons of the SACP have repeatedly announced that their party is Marxist-Leninist. However the espousal of Marxism-Leninism does not necessarily mean that the theoreticians of the party have correctly used the theory to illuminate the problems before them. Of course, they should not woodenly apply the principles used by their predecessors, Marx, Engels, Lenin and others, in different ages and in different struggles.

Yet there are some principles at least which have become almost self-evident truths. These include that society ultimately has an economic basis. The history of society is the history of class struggles. The Communist Party should lead and serve the working class in the capitalist epoch. The aim is socialism. *Socialism is a period of transition* between capitalism and communism.

If it is a Marxist-Leninist party, the SACP should uphold at least some of the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, even though the situation in South Africa may be regarded by them as unique. Nowadays party spokespersons have produced statements and documents concerning socialism. This might be thought odd as they do not regard socialism as being on the agenda for the time being. However, eventually the aim is socialism, and one must react to the setbacks which the socialist cause has received in various parts of the world. Let us see if their reactions are Marxist-Leninist.

In his pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed? (HSF)* (London, Inkululeko Publications, 1990)*, Joe Slovo quoted Rosa Luxemburg on freedom. It is the fashion nowadays to quote her (see Cronin in *SA Labour Bulletin*, Volume 15 No. 3). However the SACP claims to be Leninist. Whatever Lenin's regard

* See also *SA Labour Bulletin* Vol 14 No 6 and *WIP* 64

for Luxemburg as a person of integrity and as a revolutionary might have been, what was his opinion of her grasp of Marxism? In his '*Notes of a Publicist*', published in 1922, Lenin said:

'Rosa Luxemburg was mistaken on the question of the independence of Poland; she was mistaken in 1903 in her appraisal of Menshevism; she was mistaken on the theory of the accumulation of capital; she was mistaken in July 1914, when, together with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky and others, she *advocated unity between the Bolsheviks* and Mensheviks; she was mistaken in what she wrote in prison in 1918 (she corrected most of these mistakes at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 after she was released)'. (*Lenin Collected Works*, vol 33, p 210. Lawrence and Wishart London) (hereafter *LCW* 33, p210).

In particular, Lenin castigated Luxemburg in his 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination' dubbing her 'the practical Rosa Luxemburg' for her approach to the national question, a matter of some importance for South African liberation politics. A Leninist should not take Luxemburg's viewpoints for granted but subject them to Marxist analysis. Thus Slovo quotes Luxemburg: 'Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently'. (*HSF*, p14)

Firstly, one can observe that this does not square with Engels' definition of freedom - namely, that freedom is the appreciation of necessity. Secondly, it lacks a class attitude, implying that freedom to differ should apply to everybody, including those who think differently because of their class.

One of the finest democracies that ever existed, with complete freedom of speech, was that of ancient Greece - provided that one was a member of the polity and not a slave. There is freedom in class society for the rulers and their hangers on only. Under socialism, *whatever the defeated bourgeiosie might* think, they cannot be permitted to act differently from the needs of the people. Rousseau, in describing the action of his concept of the General Will, understood this in saying that after a policy had been decided on by the majority, the minority might have to be forced to be free.

What Luxemburg should have made clear is that under socialism, all members of the ruling proletariat and its allies, the overwhelming majority, should be free to think differently, even, in some cases (the nut cases), in disregard of necessity. Failure to respect this in Soviet society under Stalinism contributed to the difficulties it faces today. Ultimately, in Luxemburg's sense, there can be no freedom until classless society appears. As Leninists, the SACP should not espouse Luxemburg's opinion in this respect but Lenin's.

We do not say to the world: 'Cease struggling - your whole struggle is senseless'. All we do is to provide it with a true slogan of struggle
— Karl Marx, 1843

Despite her propensity towards theoretical error, Lenin had great respect for Luxemburg, comparing her to an eagle, which could attain heights no hen could aspire to. She got it right when she said of German socialism that it was 'a stinking corpse'. Were she in South Africa today she would recognize the stench.

Once the programme of the SACP was entitled 'The South African Road to Freedom'; now it is 'The Path to Power'. 'Power' is preferred to 'Freedom'. Of course, the SACP has not enjoyed power, unless one counts its domination of the upper echelons of the ANC. Perhaps one could modify Acton's aphorism 'the *desire for power corrupts' to explain the* stink of corruption characteristic of the practice of the Stalinist approach to politics.

Slovo and Marx

Slovo complains that 'there was not enough in classical Marxist theory about the nature of transition period to provide a detailed guide to the future' (*HSF* p12) and quotes Gorbachev to this effect. Some people want everything presented to them on a plate. However, Gorbachev was not saying anything new: the first to point this out was Marx himself, in his concern not to be regarded as an Utopian socialist.

Scientists base themselves on observed data. Marx analysed the capitalism of his day so thoroughly that his analysis still stands. Because of this we know that if the multi-party democracy advocated by the SACP is a superstructure on the base of a capitalist society, it will not avoid the inexorable crises that are endemic to capitalism, even an enlightened capitalism envisaged as a part of South Africa's future. Thus, Plekhanov says: 'We must study the facts of the past life of mankind *in order to discover in them the laws of its* progress. Only he is capable of foreseeing the future who has understood the past' (*The Development of the Monist View of History*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, p40).

If one prefers a more contemporary authority, one can quote Harry Braverman: 'In this, as everywhere else in Marx, the limits of speculation are clear and definite; analysis is used to lay down the principles and never to speculate on the eventual result should those principles continue to operate indefinitely or over a prolonged period of time. It is also clear that Marx grasped the principles with his customary profundity and comprehensiveness, in a manner which neglected no part of the architecture of the capitalist system and its dynamics of self reproduction. (*Labour and Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1974.)

This is what Marx did. Lenin sums this up in his 'What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats' written in 1894, nearly 100 years ago, before the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party renamed itself the Communist Party (partly because the Bolsheviks wanted to disassociate themselves from the ideological turpitude of the leaders of the Second International like Kautsky and Bernstein). He said:

'Everybody knows that scientific socialism never painted any prospects for the future as such; it confined itself to *analysing the present bourgeois regime*, to studying the trends of development of the capitalist social organization, and that is all ... Marx wrote as far back as 1843 (and he fulfilled this programme to the letter): 'We do not say to the world: 'Cease struggling - your whole struggle is senseless'. All we do is to provide it with a true slogan of struggle. We only show the world what it is actually struggling for, and consciousness is a thing the world must acquire whether it likes it or not'. (Marx's letter to Ruge, Sept 1843). Everybody knows that 'Capital' for instance - the chief and basic work in which scientific socialism is expounded

- restricts itself to the most general allusions to the future and merely traces those already existing elements from which the future system grows.' (*LCW* 1, p184)

Everybody knows, that is, except, apparently, Slovo. Thus he should not complain, but think for himself. Of course, now there is an accumulation of detailed knowledge about the nature of socialism, much of it cautionary, in view of the events in Eastern Europe. However one can recommend, for instance, *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Dr Carlos Tablada (Pathfinder Press, Sydney, 1989.)

This book has sold 250 000 copies in its Latin American editions. It makes it clear that it is not enough to transform the basis of society into a socialist one. One must also simultaneously transform the superstructure of the society concerned by consciously involving the workers, in particular, and the people, in general, in full and continuous participation in the running and developing of socialist society, as part of the process of creating a Communist attitude to life by everyone.

The dictatorship of the proletariat

Whilst recognising that the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' reflected the historical truth, the term has been abandoned by the SACP due to its unpleasant connotations (*HSF* p15-16). It is not mentioned in the new party programme, 'The Path to Power', although the need for workers' power to establish socialism is. This is like wearing a transparent figleaf. One can still see the beastly thing, and it will be assiduously pointed out by the enemies of communism.

Workers in particular must grasp the nettle of truth, especially as truth is biased in favour of the working class. Absolutely central to the concept of socialism is the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky', a pamphlet which should be read by all interested in the current departure from Marxism-Leninism by the SACP, Lenin said: 'The fundamental question that Kautsky discusses in his pamphlet, is that of the very essence of the proletarian revolution, namely the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a question that is of the greatest importance for all countries, especially for advanced ones, especially for those at war, and especially at the present time. One may say without fear of exaggeration that this is the key problem of the entire proletarian class struggle.' (Marx Engels Lenin, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, p331).

In passing, it may be said that Kautskyites prate of revolutionary fervour, while practising reformist opportunism. Despite his distaste for it, Slovo complains that the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat was dealt with rather thinly by Marx as a transition to a classless society without much further definition. (*HSF* p13). However, Progress Publishers have published a collection from the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, of which 130 pages are occupied by the writings of Marx and Engels on the subject. Is this rather thin? Maybe Slovo expects it to be as thick as two planks? 360 pages of the same collection are devoted to Lenin's writings on the topic. This is to be expected as Lenin actually lived through three revolutions.

Since the Bolshevik revolution, other countries like China, Vietnam and Cuba have experienced revolutions leading to socialist systems. Whatever might have happened subsequently, there is much data on the necessity of workers' rule exercised through a type of state entirely different from any preceding form of state if socialism is to be built. However, in view of the experiences of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, Rakosi in Hungary, Ceausescu in Romania and the Kmer Rouge in Kampuchea, among other, it is clear that there is a tendency to Thermidor, to put it mildly, in countries where revolutions have succeeded.

On the other hand where they have failed, as in Chile, Indonesia, or Germany, the consequences are even more disastrous, especially for communists. The SACP is walking a tight rope and needs to take careful stock of what to do. The consequences of developing theory incorrectly can be very painful.

Slovo and Lenin

Slovo says: 'Lenin, for example, believed that capitalism was about to collapse worldwide in the post-October period' (*HSF* p10). In his 'Slogan for a United states of Europe', Lenin said in 1915:

'Uneven economic and political develoment is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victor of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone'.

Also in his 'The importance of Gold' written in 1921, which is post-October, he wrote: 'After the victory of the proletariat, if only in one country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism' (*LCW* 33, p115).

Thus it is most unlikely that he believed there would be a worldwide collapse of capitalism. On the other hand, he observed that there was a worldwide crisis of capitalism in 1917 (after all crisis is endemic to capitalism) called World War 1, and keenly followed events in such countries as Germany and Italy, which caused him to believe that workers' rule might be established in such countries. Indeed the equivalent of rule by Soviets did emerge in Bavaria and communists came constitutionally to rule in Hungary. All put down by force leaving the Soviet Union to attempt to build socialism alone, even though Lenin saw 'that the joint efforts of the workers of several advanced countries are needed for the victory of socialism'. (*LCW* 33, p206).

Of the chances of building socialism in the Soviet Union, he said in 'Notes of a Publicist' in 1922:

'Those communists are doomed who imagine that it is possible to finish such an epoch-making undertaking as completing the foundations of socialist economy (particularly in a small-peasant country) without making mistakes, without retreats, without numerous alterations to what is unfinished or wrongly done. Communists who have illusions, who do not give way to despondency and who preserve their strength and flexibility "to begin from the beginning" over and over again in approaching an extremely difficult task are not doomed.' (*LCW* 33, p207)

So it looks like the whole of Eastern Europe will have to begin again as, in view of Marx's analysis of capitalism, no long lasting panacea can be gained from a return to a market economy, or to capitalism itself.

Slovo says 'Lenin did not address'... in any detail the nature of established socialist civil society ...' (*HSF* p14).

In the early stages of Soviet socialism, Lenin left copious writings of the problems which confronted the Soviet Communist Party. In State and Revolution, written on the eve of the October Revolution, Lenin wrote:

'Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must start with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but a state of armed workers'. (*LCW* 25, p474).

In the event, the Soviet Union did not escape the grasp of bureaucracy. Many of Lenin's specific proposals were not put into effect. He said, for instance, that all representatives should be subject to immediate recall, and all public officials should not be paid more than the average wage of a skilled worker. Lenin advocated proportional representation, which implies the presence of more than one candidate in elections, and considered the problem of implementing this in the face of a policy of immediate recall.

He realised that it is not enough just to transform the economic basis of society into a socialist one and to expect that desirable changes in the social and political superstructure will automatically follow. Everybody should be consciously and continuously drawn into the building of communist society and into the understanding of its nature.

Most important is that socialist democracy should be built. On the occasion of marking 30 years of the Cuban revolution, Castro said: 'To some of the Western countries that question democracy in Cuba we can say there is no democracy superior to that where the workers, the peasants, and the students have the weapons. They have the weapons! To those Western countries that question democracy in Cuba we can say: give weapons to the workers, give weapons to the peasantry, give weapons to the students , and we'll see whether tear gas will be hurled against workers on strike, against any organization that struggles for peace, against the students: We'll see whether the police can be ordered to attack them while wearing masks and all those contrivances that make them look like space travelers; we'll see whether dogs can be turned loose on the masses every time there's a strike or a peace demostration or a people's struggle.

'I believe that the supreme test of democracy is arming the people!! when defense becomes the task of the entire people and weapons become the prerogative of the entire people, then they can talk about democracy'. (Fidel Castro, *In Defence of Socialism*, Pathfinder, New York, 1989, p81). That is an endorsement, from experience, of Lenin's proposal (and Marx's) on arming the workers! That puts the cat among the pigeons! That would ensure that the way will be open for a peaceful progression towards our party's ultimate objective - a socialist South Africa (*HSF* p27).

Is the SACP communist?

It is clear that the SACP has made serious departures from the principles of Marxism-Leninism in their repeated and ill-informed denigration of the doctrines of Marx and Lenin. Yet there are countries where the leaders of the people struggling for liberation and socialism appreciated necessity correctly through their understanding of Marxism-Leninism and through their ability to apply its tenets to their problems, thus gaining victory.

Why should one bother with an organisation that has lost its way so thoroughly? It is because one wants to see the victory of liberation and the victory of socialism in South Africa. One knows, from the experience of history, that victory can be won with the correct guide to action through the application of Marxism-Leninism. Many people see the SACP as the vehicle that will produce this guide. There is a discussion going on, to which this piece is a contribution, that might provide such guide.

There might be little hope for aged and crusted Kautskyites, or for the members of the petty bourgeois intellegentsia given to intellectual havering. But the SACP also has members who are respected workers' leaders, steeled through struggle, who if theoretically informed can lead the workers of South Africa to victory. They must read the works of Marx, of Engels, of Lenin and of their successors. Then perhaps the struggle for socialism in South Africa will win victory too in South Africa one day.

What is needed is a Marxist-Leninist party to lead the struggle for workers' power. It remains to be seen if the SACP can fit that bill. It certainly is not communist at the moment in the sense that Lenin intended it. Perhaps a more accurate appellation of its current theoretical approach is to call it Kautskyist-Luxemburgist. •

NAMIBIA: ONE YEAR ON

At ease!

'The fact that you are standing next to each other as brothers and compatriots is a positive and encouraging development for peace. Let us therefore embrace each other with open hearts and open arms as members of one family and citizens of one country. — President Sam Nujoma, addressing soldiers of the Namibian Defence Force

In April 1989 Swapo guerillas clashed with the colonial security forces in the most intense fighting of the protracted Namibian bush war. Less than a year later these forces had been disbanded or withdrawn to South Africa and many of their soldiers were serving side by side in a new national army.

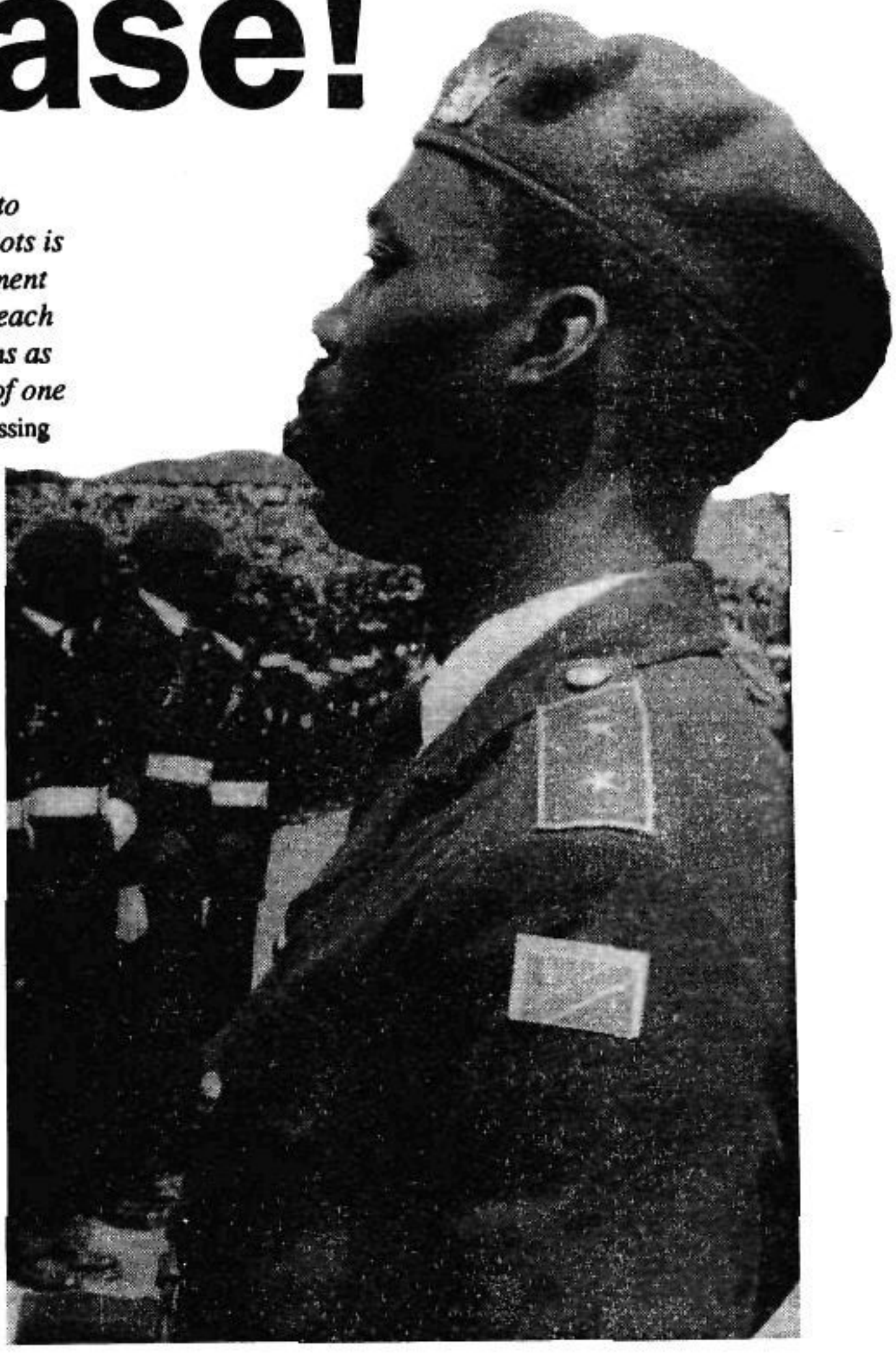
Since independence in March 1990 the Namibian government has been engaged in building an army that unites former enemies, assumes a conventional defence role, enjoys the confidence of the population as a whole and adheres to internationally accepted norms and practises.

In South Africa the government has categorically rejected the possibility of a similar integration of its army and that of the African National Congress (ANC) after apartheid. On the other hand, the ANC and many independent analysts believe that this is both inevitable and desirable. If such integration does occur, there will be much to learn from the Namibian experience.

Overview

In the course of 1989 the United Nations supervised the withdrawal of the South African Defence Force (SADF) from Namibia and the demobilisation of the South African controlled South West African Territory Force (SWATF) and Swapo's armed wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (Plan).

Shortly after independence a British Army Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) arrived in Namibia to help establish and train the Namibian Defence Force (NDF). Since then battalions have been formed on a gradual basis as groups of Namibian officers complete leadership training courses.



and army have undergone a fundamental transformation, as sworn enemies from the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (Plan) and from the South-West African Police (Swapol) and South-West African Territorial Force (SWATF) came together to build the Namibian Police (Nampol) and the Namibian Defence Force (NDF). In the following two articles, LAURIE NATHAN traces these developments, and argues that South Africa can learn many lessons

By the end of the 1990-1 financial year the army will comprise three infantry battalions and a logistics-support battalion with a combined total of 5 000 troops. Final force levels have been set at 10 000. No system of conscription is envisaged.

The NDF is comprised of ex-Plan and ex-SWATF soldiers in roughly equal number. Leadership positions are held by former members of the colonial forces but tend to be dominated by ex-Swapo commanders.

The army's primary role is to protect Namibia against foreign aggression and unauthorised foreign exploitation of its natural resources. A secondary role is internal deployment if the police are unable to contain an insurrection or outbreak of terrorism.

While some serious problems have arisen, the formation of the NDF has proceeded smoothly and successfully on the whole.

At the same time, Namibia has achieved a level of peace and stability since independence that few observers predicted possible.

These positive developments can be attributed to four factors in particular: a policy of national reconciliation; the new constitution; a process of demilitarisation; and the role of the international community.

The policy of reconciliation

There has been a surprising absence of antagonism among NDF soldiers who had previously fought in opposing armies. This is largely the result of the BMATT training programme and the policy of national reconciliation.

Swapo initiated a policy of reconciliation during the 1989 election campaign because of the 'priority of healing the wounds of war' and because 'national reconciliation and unity are necessary preconditions for peace, stability, economic reconstruction and the development of our country' (Swapo election pamphlet).

The policy involved extending a 'general pardon' and 'a hand of reconciliation' to 'all those Namibians who were misled and misused by the colonial powers to prevent the achievement of independence, including those who were in its armed forces and security and intelligence networks'.

Since independence the government has continued to promote and apply the policy, especially with regard to the army and police:

- it has ruled out the possibility of conducting war trials or prosecutions for past human rights offences;
- it has downplayed Plan victory celebrations;
- it has sought a balance between former SWATF and Plan members in the composition of NDF troops; and
- it has not excluded any person from the NDF or Namibian Police (Nampol) because of their prior affiliation or conduct.

A similar policy could not be implemented in South Africa while the security forces continue to harrass the democratic movement.

However, it would yield important results if adopted by the ANC once negotiations are under way and then pursued by the new government. As in Namibia, it would reduce the danger of tension among former adversaries in the new police force and army, lower the potential for violence between political parties and ethnic groups, contribute to building a sense of nationhood and boost the confidence of foreign investors, the business community and whites.

Training

Despite the fact that all NDF soldiers had prior military experience in SWATF or Plan, a high priority has been placed on retraining them. This provides the opportunity to:

- overcome antagonism and build commitment to the new army and constitution;
- instill a greater sense of discipline than before; and
- familiarise troops who were previously engaged in either revolutionary or counter-revolutionary warfare with the *modus operandi* of a conventional army.

The training programme, devised and supervised by BMATT, concentrates on officers and non-commissioned officers who are then responsible for training their own troops. The syllabus includes physical training, weapon handling and firing, tactics, administration, leadership, various specialist skills and instruction on the Geneva Convention and new constitution.

Soldiers are trained in the practises of the British army as these are seen as providing a 'happy medium' between the approaches of the two former armies. Former procedures have been retained where these are more appropriate to Namibia.

A similar emphasis on training will be necessary in a new South African defence force. ANC guerillas and SADF members will require reorientation in the areas of strategy, tactics and conduct. The guerillas will also need to be trained to use sophisticated weaponry and equipment.

A post-apartheid government could invite a British military team to oversee the retraining of its troops. In Namibia and Zimbabwe the neutrality of these teams and their experience in conventional defence greatly facilitated the integration process and the promotion of internationally accepted norms and practices in the new armies.

South Africa should also consider more seriously a broader role for the international community in the transition to democracy.

In Namibia and Zimbabwe the UN and Britain respectively supervised and monitored the ceasefire, the conduct of the security forces, the elections and the drawing up of the new constitution.

Whatever the problems associated with this role, it introduced a 'neutral referee' into the volatile situation, reduced the level of violence significantly, guaranteed that the elections were 'free and fair' and thereby ensured that the results were accepted by the internal parties and the outside world.

Human rights and the constitution

Under colonial rule in Namibia atrocities were repeatedly committed by the South African controlled security forces and, to a lesser extent, by Swapo. Since members of these forces now make up the NDF and Nampol, there is the danger that they will continue to commit human rights abuses in the future.

The new constitution, heralded by Amnesty International as an outstanding human rights document, is a crucial first step towards preventing this danger.

It guarantees the right to a fair trial, the right not to be tortured, arbitrarily arrested or detained and the right of any person whose rights or freedoms have been infringed to seek redress in court. It also guarentees fundamental freedoms such as those of expression, association, religion and peaceful assembly.

These and other rights and freedoms are entrenched in the constitution and may never be repealed. Certain of them may not be suspended, even under martial law or a state of emergency.

In a post-apartheid South Africa many soldiers and police will similarly be accustomed to violating human rights with impunity.

The Namibian experience shows how the constitution can implicitly and explicitly limit their powers and give citizens protection through the courts if these powers are abused.

The Namibian government consciously formed and trained its new police and army according to the spirit and provisions of the constitution. The positive effects of this have been evident in

Victory celebrations, 21 March 1991: Specific celebrations for Plan combatants have, however, been limited to ease the process of military integration

the conduct of these forces since independence.

Significantly, the only units thus far accused of human rights offences - the police border guards and the President's bodyguards - were not properly incorporated into the NDF or Nampol and were not retrained before being deployed.

The behaviour of these units highlights the fact that the constitution alone is not a sufficient safeguard of basic rights.

It is also essential that a multi-party political system prevails, that citizens are made aware of their rights, that the courts are independent and interpret the constitution broadly, that the police and army develop a culture of respect for human rights and that criminal behaviour by members of these forces is severely dealt with.

Demilitarisation

From the late 1970s Namibia became increasingly militarised. Pretoria relied chiefly on force to maintain its occupation of the territory, deploying thousands of troops on the border, establishing an indiginous army and imposing martial law on over half the population.

For its part, Swapo engaged in armed struggle as a principal strategy for liberation.

After independence the new government initiated a far-reaching process of *demilitarisation:*

- The NDF will comprise 10 000 troops, one-seventh of the total number of soldiers previously involved in the Namibian conflict.
- Conscription has been scrapped.
- There has been no major deployment of troops since independence, nor is any envisaged by the Defence Ministry. The police and not the army will patrol the northern border.
- Government policy is to resolve political conflict through diplomacy, mediation and the rule of law. This policy was tested in September 1990 when the government peacefully defused an armed rebellion by the Rehoboth Basters.
- The Defence Budget for 1990/1 is R123m, one-fifth of South Africa's official military expenditure in Namibia.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has embarked on a rigorous process of civilianising the para-military police force and *reorientating its functions from counter-*insurgency to crime prevention.
- The government is committed to 'healing the wounds of war' by actively promoting concepts like peace, reconciliation and nationhood.

A post-apartheid South Africa will face similar circumstances to those that

informed the Namibian government's decisions: limited financial resources, a range of social and welfare priorities, the absence of a major external threat, a pervasive war psychosis and a militaristic police force.

Namibia provides an outstanding example of how these issues can be addressed. The ending of apartheid will in fact create the potential to demilitarise Southern Africa as well as South Africa. It is possible to envisage a future regional security alliance with a collective programme to reduce force levels, military spending and arms production.

The problems

Three serious problems have arisen in the course of establishing the Namibian army.

First, there is mounting discontent among NDF troops over low pay. In October 1990 a group of soldiers staged a 'work stayaway' around this issue.

Second, thousands of former Plan and SWATF soldiers have not been incorporated into the NDF and are unemployed. They are becoming increasingly frustrated and may turn to banditry if their situation is not addressed.

Third, the appointment of Solomon Hawala as chief of the army was highly controversial. Hawala was previously the head of Plan's security department that detained, tortured and allegedly killed hundreds of Swapo members in exile.

The opposition parties bitterly condemned his appointment as undermining the country's policy of reconciliation and commitment to human rights. The move was welcomed by Swapo groups though, and justified by the government in terms of its decision to not exclude anyone from the NDF or Nampol because of their prior role.

Despite these problems, the formation of the NDF has been a remarkable success. Perhaps the most important lesson for South Africa is symbolic: the seemingly unimaginable prospect of uniting former enemies-in-arms is not only possible but can be done in such a way that it contributes to national and regional peace and stability. •

• *Laurie Nathan is a senior researcher on peace and security at the Centre for Intergroup Studies in Cape Town. The research for these articles was conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Southern African Studies (University of the Western Cape) and included interviews with members of the Namibian government, military and police. A research report will be published as 'Southern African Perspectives: a working paper series. No. 4'.*

From a police force to a police service

Despite the dissatisfaction caused by the disproportionate number of white policemen at the top echelons of Nampol, enormous strides have been made to make the police force accountable, democratic and effective. LAURIE NATHAN reports

The Namibian government's efforts to transform the South West African Police (Swapol) provides a useful case study of a project to fundamentally alter the nature of apartheid policing. Established by Pretoria in 1981, Swapol had the same features and limitations as the South African Police (SAP) and played a similar role in enforcing oppressive and repressive laws.

The formation of the Namibian police service (Nampol) points to the policy and practical changes that could be made in South Africa and to the problems that might arise in making those changes.

Unlike the colonial army, Swapol was not disbanded during the transition to Namibian independence. Its leadership and structure form the basis of Nampol. The definition of its role - to prevent, detect and investigate crime and to maintain internal security and law and order - has also been retained.

The new government is determined, however, to transform the character of the police and the way it fulfills these functions. Swapol is regarded as having been an 'instrument of suppression in the hands of the state', with 'militaristic and brutal anti-people features'; the public consequently developed a negative attitude towards the police and would not co-operate with them (Minister Designate of Home Affairs, press statement, 19.2.1990). The Ministry of Home Affairs, which is responsible for policing, is committed to reversing these tendencies and perceptions. The overriding objective is to establish a conventional police force that serves the entire population. Specific aims are to civilianise the police force, improve its relations with the public, promote public co-operation with it and reorientate its focus from counter-insurgency to crime prevention.

Since independence the Ministry has sought to realise these aims through a number of measures: a new weapons policy; the replacement of military-style uniforms and vehicles; a crime prevention programme; a new training programme; and a campaign to promote public co-operation with the police. Each of these measures is discussed below.

Crime prevention

The Minister of Home Affairs refers to the high level of crime in Namibia as 'public enemy number one; it is becoming a daily phenomenon in our society and leading to a situation bordering on anarchy and lawlessness'.

In response to this crisis the authorities have created a special cabinet committee on organised crime, formed a new criminal investigation unit, increased the salaries of the lower categories of police personnel, deployed police on 24-hour patrols in certain areas and repeatedly appealed to the public to hand in unlicensed arms and ammunition.

The government has also enlisted the support of the business community to reduce unemployment through job-creation programmes; it believes that this is the most effective way of reducing crime in the long run.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is convinced though that the above steps will be inadequate without a high level of public trust in, and co-operation with, the police. British police officers in Namibia have advised the ministry that sound police-community relations are the main ingredient in successful crime prevention.

The authorities have launched a media

campaign to promote the new role and character of the police, emphasise its commitment to serving all Namibians and underline the necessity of public co-operation in tackling crime. The campaign has been reinforced by cabinet ministers and police officers travelling round the country to address urban and rural communities on these issues.

Of greater importance has been the introduction of Public-Police Relations Committees (PPRCs) in each of the ten police districts. The committees comprise representatives of Nampol, major public organisations, employer federations, trade unions, political parties and church, sport, student and community groups. The PPRCs are intended to provide a forum for the police and the public to discuss matters related to crime, policing and 'the fostering of proper relations'. The initiative also aims to encourage public involvement in the prevention and combatting of crime.

Nampol officials believe that the PPRCs have improved public perceptions and co-operation, as well as lowered the crime rate in certain areas. There has been less success in the northern Ovambo region though, where the majority of people still mistrust the police .

Some black residents share the positive aspects of this assessment. In southern towns they have noted that 'troublemakers' in Nampol have been replaced by more sympathetic officers, police have become more responsive to requests for assistance, they are no longer 'rude' and 'rough', and they now consult community leaders and social workers.

The significance of the PPRCs is that *they are more than an exercise in public* relations and crime prevention, as important as this is. They also provide a direct line of communication between Nampol and the people it serves, with the result that policing in Namibia is likely to become more accountable, democratic and effective.

Recruitment and training

When the new government came to power it was confronted with an acute shortage of trained police. Many South African officers in Swapol had left Namibia shortly before independence and there was a large contingent of 'special constables' who had only received a few weeks of training.

The government immediately recruited a substantial number of additional special constables. Roughly one third of the new recruits were previously in Swapo's army, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (Plan); some of them had undergone police training in exile.

'The Ministry of Home Affairs has devised a new weapons policy — police may only draw their firearms if their lives or those of the public are threatened'

A new training programme, devised and supervised by a British advisory police team, was introduced to facilitate the transformation of the police and 'ensure that its members are capable of serving the people professionally, diligently and efficiently'.

Police training currently includes instruction on the handling and use of firearms, courses on human rights and an emphasis on public relations. It is orientated towards the detection, investigation and prevention of crime.

As a result of the shortage of police and the length of time required to train new recruits, two units comprised of former soldiers employed as special constables - the Presidential Guard and the border guards - were deployed without being properly trained. These units were repeatedly accused of undisciplined behaviour.

In September 1990 the border guards were withdrawn from active duty following a wave of allegations of misconduct; they were incorporated into the army for military training. The government also pledged to retrain the Presidential Guard after members of the unit fired shots at motorists who failed to give way to the President's motorcade quickly enough.

Civilianising the police

After independence the Ministry of Home Affairs made a concerted effort to demilitarise the police. It believed that the para-military character of Swapol had instilled fear in the population and was wholly inappropriate to conventional policing.

The ministry replaced military-style uniforms, vehicles and rank designations. Riot-control training, which had previously been extended to all police personnel, was restricted to a special task force. The notorious counter-insurgency police unit, Koevoet, was disbanded in 1989 and has not been replaced.

The ministry also devised a new weapons policy. Police may now only draw their firearms if their lives or those of the public are threatened. Unlike before, weapons may no longer be used in the apprehension of criminals or the prevention of crime if these circumstances do not prevail.

The government's success in civilianising Nampol is most evident in the Ovambo region, previously known as the Operational Area. Under colonial rule the police were scarcely distinguishable from soldiers with their brown uniforms, military vehicles and heavy weaponry. Today the police wear light blue uniforms, travel in land cruisers and in most circumstances do not carry guns.

White leadership

In February 1990 the Minister Designate of Home Affairs announced that the leadership of Swapol would not be expelled from the police after independence; he insisted that these officers were all 'sons and daughters of Namibia'.

This decision is not as surprising as it initially appears. It was based on the policy of national reconciliation, which guarantees that former members of the colonial administration and security forces will keep their jobs, and on the fact that Swapo had no police experience of its own.

The top echelon of Nampol is currently comprised almost exclusively of white former members of Swapol. This includes the Inspector-General (chief of police) and the heads of all line functions. The sole exception is the Deputy Inspector-General who was a commander in Plan.

Although this situation stems from sound policy considerations, it has given rise to considerable tension. The Swapo Youth League has called for the dismissal of 'white thugs' in Nampol and Swapo newspapers have accused the police leadership of attempting to destabilise the government.

These criticisms are rejected by the government and bitterly resented by senior officers.

Furthermore, in October 1990 a group of black officers publicly called on the

Inspector-General to address the racial composition of Nampol's command structure; they claimed that 82% of the officers of and above the rank of Inspector were white. The group threatened to resort to legal action to correct the 'unconstitutional imbalance'.

Senior police officials are sympathetic to this problem but oppose affirmative action that is not based on merit. They are unhappy that the government has promoted a number of inexperienced ex-Plan members in the police; this has 'undermined standards of professionalism and efficiency and led to resentment among non-Swapo police persons' (Brigadier Eimbeck, interview).

Lesson for South Africa

In mid-1990 Archbishop Tutu summed up the central challenges facing the South African Police (SAP): 'We would be insistent that the police ought to be using normal international standards of policing. They should not only be impartial but be seen to be impartial. We really need a police force that enjoys the confidence of everybody'.

Outside government circles it is widely accepted that the SAP does not meet these criteria: it is overwhelmingly partisan; it lacks the support of the majority of citizens; it is racially segregated and biased; it is geared more towards counter-insurgency than crime prevention; it is understaffed and underpaid; and it has a deep rooted culture of violence, extra-legal activity and disrespect for human rights.

Although the changes that the Namibian government has made to its police force are all worthwhile in themselves, their real value lies in the fact that they are part of an endeavour to effect a fundamental reorientation of the police.

If the SAP is ever to meet the essential requirements identified by Tutu - impartiality, credibility and compliance with internationally accepted standards - the South African government will similarly have to develop a new philosophy of policing.

Above all, this philosophy demands that the police are accountable to the public at both a parliamentary and grassroots level, that they serve all sections of the population in a fair, unbiased and efficient manner, and that their leadership and membership reflect the ethnic composition of the country.

At the heart of the Namibian government's approach is the desire that Nampol comes to be regarded by its members and the public as a 'police service' rather than a 'police force'. •

Towards democracy or neo-colonialism?

CHRIS TAPSCOTT looks at the political economy of Namibia one year after independence, and argues that, although the process of transition has been handled with maturity and tolerance, much more will have to be done to eradicate the deep scars of apartheid

As the last colony in Africa to attain independence, Namibia is unique both because of the promise it holds as a democratic and stable society and because of the difficulties which it must overcome.

The transition from colonial rule to independence in Namibia has been hailed as perhaps the most successful intervention yet by a United Nations task force. The Namibian constitution, forged through inter-party negotiation, has likewise been heralded as a model of democracy for the rest of Africa, while the policy of national reconciliation has been lauded as a mark of political maturity. Despite the praise, Namibia still bears the scars of its recent and distant past. As a consequence, the tasks of transforming an ethnically fragmented society, of redressing extreme imbalances in access to resources and of building a more advanced and equitable economy, remain formidable.

The legacy of apartheid

The legacy of colonialism in Namibia is far-reaching, and apartheid policies have created and deepened racial and ethnic divisions within the society, to the extent that different communities still remain segregated geographically, economically and socially. Namibian society has inherited structured inequalities which manifest themselves in severe income distribution skews (the top 5% of the population are estimated to command 71% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while the bottom 55% control just 3%) and unequal access to productive assets and basic social services.

Extreme differences in income between racial/ethnic groups further serve to distort standard measurements of national production to a point where they are largely meaningless as indicators of human development. Applying a simple arithmetic mean, the GDP per capita for the total population was estimated by the UN Statistical Office and Population Division to be $1 044 in 1988, placing Namibia amongst the lower-middle to middle income countries. In part as a consequence of this, attempts to acquire 'least developed country' status for Namibia were initially turned down by multilateral funding agencies.

However, when this indicator is broken down, a markedly different picture emerges. GDP per capita amongst the white population, which constitutes no more than 5 % of the total, was estimated to be $14 560, equivalent to norms in high income countries (falling between the Netherlands and Austria) (UN 1989).

By contrast, figures for the black population are comparable to those amongst the lowest income countries. According to 1988 indices, the GDP per capita of about $319 amongst the black population (roughly 95% of the total population) would place Namibia amongst the world's 20 poorest countries (lying between Rwanda and Niger). Figures for the black rural population present an even bleaker picture. The estimated GDP per capita (including subsistence income) of $63 amongst black people living in the 'traditional' economy (an estimated 55 % of the population), is lower than that of Mozambique, the world's poorest country in 1988.

Markedly uneven access to productive resources, markets and services, as well as to education and incomes, has resulted in patterns of inequality closely related to race and ethnicity.

This unequal access has also, inevitably, resulted in unequal employment between ethnic groups. Whilst compre-

hensive data are unavailable, statistics from a 1988 survey of Windhoek - which provides 42% of formal sector employment in the country - are instructive. The survey found that unemployment rates were 0% for white, 8.2% for coloured, and 19.1% for African people (Pendleton & Du Bois,1988). In all other urban areas unemployment rates are substantially higher for coloured and African people.

Huge disparities in education

Existing educational statistics provide a similarly stark picture of inequality of educational opportunities among young Namibians. They also illustrate the poor quality of current educational services which have led to high rates of failure, repeats and dropouts.

Large disparities in percentages of qualified teachers by region, in pupil:teacher and classroom:pupil ratios, also contribute to unequal access to 'effective' education. Pupil:teacher ratios in 1989 ranged from 13:1 in schools under the 'Administration for Whites' to 37:1 for schools under the 'Adminstration for Ovambos', the national average (all levels) being 28:1.

In 1988 the ratio of pupils to permanent classroom structures in Ovambo was 56:1 compared to 38:1 in the country as a whole and 12:1 for 'whites'. Pass rates at Standard 8 are below 7% in the Ovambo and Kavango regions. Most estimates of literacy in Namibia place the percentage of literate adults at well under half - a further indicator of previous as well as present educational neglect (Unicef/Niser).

Similar disparities exist in the provision of services in other sectors of the social economy. The quantity and quality of services tends to deteriorate the further the region is from Windhoek.

In attempting to redress the inequalities of the past the Swapo government confronts the difficult task of balancing improved production with greater social equality. Its attempts are inevitably limited by the country's dependent and narrowly-based economy. Namibia's GDP is largely accounted for by four major sectors: mining and quarrying (32% in 1989), general government (18%), wholesale and retail (13%) and agriculture and fishing (11%). The manufacturing, commercial services and utilities contribute less than 7% each to the GDP.

Thus the Namibian economy remains heavily dependent on South Africa. About 75% of all imports currently come from South Africa, which largely determines the price, range and quality of goods sold in Namibia. At the same time, Namibia's exports are extremely narrowly based. Mining in 1988 represented 73% of export earnings, and was based largely on diamonds, uranium and copper-nickel, all reliant on world market prices and subject to fluctuations. Agricultural production, in years of good rains, generates 10-12% of export earnings.

As a consequence of the war, of political uncertainty, and a decline in mining sector productivity, the Namibian economy suffered stagnant growth during the past decade, with an overall decline in GDP per capita of 23% between 1980 and 1990. High levels of 'security' and administrative spending (the maintenance of 'second-tier' ethnic administrations in particular) resulted in the Namibian treasury showing a persistent deficit during the 1980s.

Budgetary assistance from South Africa ended at independence, with the Namibian government simultaneuosly inheriting some R727million of colonially-incurred debt, the servicing of which has taken up an estimated 11.5% of government expenditure in the first full financial year after independence. Debt servicing will continue to significantly constrain resources available for government spending and capital investment for the next 3-5 years.

Though donors will help overcome these financial constraints, it is easy to overrate their possible contribution. Aid to Africa is dropping in real and absolute terms partly through disenchantment with the development performance of sub-Saharan Africa, but also because of the opening up of Eastern Europe as a field for Western aid and investment.

Constraints on the economy are inevitably limiting the options for generating mass employment - the new government's most daunting task. At present 43% of the labour force is in paid employment in the formal sector, with open unemployment ranging between 25% and 30% (ILO 1990). Prospects for creating more work are limited partly because of increasing capital intensity in mining (which employs just 5% of the work force) and commercial agriculture. Continued expansion of the public sector, hitherto the largest single employer of wage labour (in excess of 30%), is impossible at present salary levels.

Trends within the 'traditional' agricultural sector are equally disquieting. Much of the small-scale agricultural sector appears to be in decline and pressure to move off the land is increasing. The drift to the urban areas (to Windhoek in particular) has accelerated in the post-independence era. Given the shortage of formal wage opportunities, it is likely that a sizeable proportion of the growing urban work force will be compelled to seek employment in the limited informal sector.

In attempting to reorient the economy and improve social services, the new government has had to confront the dead hand of the colonial past. The attempt to maintain existing services and to meet at least some of the expectations of the poor majority has meant the retention of the administrative status quo. The Namibian government has to continually rely on existing officialdom and ethnically-oriented institutions until qualified repatriated exiles and other sympathetic workers can develop a more suitable public sector.

National reconciliation

It is still too soon to make any profound pronouncements on emerging trends within the Namibian political economy. Critical observers, nevertheless, might discern developments which suggest a drift towards a classical pattern of neo-colonialism. This observation relates primarily to the emergence of a new elite (comprising much of the existing white settler elite together with a new class of senior black administrators, politicians and business people), who inhabit an economic and social world largely divorced from that of the majority of the urban and rural poor. With the limited resources available, sustaining this elite must inevitably be at the expense of development projects for the poor.

In the run-up to the 1989 elections, Swapo was denied a two-thirds majority in the Constituent Assembly. Although difficult to substantiate conclusively, there is evidence to suggest that funds from South Africa were used to bolster the DTA election campaign, and to undermine Swapo's electoral support. It was thus unable to draw up the constitution of its choice, and was compelled to negotiate a constitution which entrenched many of the existing privileges of the colonial administration.

Article 141 (1) of the constitution, in particular, served to reinforce the status quo, by affirming that 'any person holding office under any law in force on the date of independence shall continue to hold such office unless and until he or she resigns or is retired, transferred or removed from office in accordance with law'. This clause has been interpreted to imply that individuals employed by the colonial government would lose none of their existing employment benefits including generous housing, pension, medical aid and car allowances.

The provision, in essence, presented the Swapo government with something of a dilemma: whether to implement a differential system of benefits for existing and in-coming civil servants (many of whom were Swapo members) or whether to equalise all employment packages. For both practical and political reasons the decision was taken to maintain the existing system of benefits.

Whilst on one level this decision is understandable, at other levels it does little to redress one of the most glaring inequities of the colonial system : that of the disproportionate spending of public funds on a largely urban elite (roughly 20% of Namibia is urbanised).

Mixed economy

The decision to opt for a 'mixed economy' - in practice a capitalist economy - although in large part dictated by circumstance (Namibia's dependent economic status, and the collapse of support from socialist countries in particular) has also limited the policy options open to the new government. While Swapo controls the political arena, it does not control the economy which continues to be dominated by forces which vary in their support from indifference to open hostility.

Consequently, in its efforts to promote the confidence of the business sector (which retains the ultimate sanction of disinvestment from Namibia), the government has moved extremely cautiously on issues of affirmative action, minimum wages and the question of land redistribution. The question of the appallingly low wages in the commercial farming sector, for example, has been one which the government has thus far been reluctant to tackle.

The government's caution in effecting extensive changes within the political economy, has led to charges that national reconciliation is a one-sided process that is benefitting the settler community far more than the poor majority. This bitterness is perhaps most strongly felt by the thousands of repatriated exiles who are struggling to re-enter the labour market and to fully reintegrate themselves into Namibian society. A survey conducted by Unicef in northern Namibia (which absorbed roughly 38 000 or 85% of repatriated exiles), for example, found that less than 10% of potentially economically active 'returnees' had managed to find wage employment by June 1990 - for many, a year after their repatriation.

Despite the fact that a significant number of 'returnees' had received some form of training while in exile, this was of variable quality. In addition, few exiles had the opportunity to apply their skills on a sustained basis following the completion of their training, and a decay in knowledge and levels of skill was an inevitable outcome. As a consequence, there has been an antipathy among many employers towards recruiting 'returnees', although it is also certain that political (and racial) discrimination has played a significant part in this. To date there have been no serious efforts to upgrade the skills of 'returnees' or to match them to existing work opportunities.

Although there are no serious signs of desertion from Swapo at present, there is unquestionably growing disillusionment amongst 'returnees' and others in the populous Ovambo region (the party heartland) with the pace and form of economic reconstruction.

The 'land question', in particular, remains a vexed issue. Unequal access to productive land and to water is a central feature of Namibia's colonial inheritance. In a context where both resources are absolutely scarce, the private ownership of some 45% of the total land area and 74% of the potentially arable land by some 4 045, mainly white, commercial farmers is a major factor in determining inequality of incomes and wealth.

The government has deferred all land questions to a national conference scheduled for June 1991. While this has eased immediate demands for action, it has also raised unrealistic expectations on what can feasibly be achieved at such a conference, which will be attended by parties from across the political spectrum together with a host of interest groups with differing ideas on the disposal of land. If the experience of Zimbabwe is anything to go by, the 'land question' is likely to remain a contentious issue in Namibia for some time.

A commitment to democracy

Notwithstanding the many difficulties now confronting Namibia, there does seem to be a serious commitment to the process of democracy within the ruling party. Although the tradition of open debate within Swapo, as a party, still remains weak (the 'detainee' issue, for example, has yet to be openly addressed) the government has resisted the temptation to react to the vitriol (and frequent unprofessionalism) of the opposition press or to silence the voices of its opponents, however unpleasant these might sometimes be.

Upholding of the constitution and maintenance of the rule of law have been seriously adhered to even if such steps have not always met with mass approval. The presidential guard who fired on a white motorist who failed to react to his instructions has, for example, been prosecuted despite popular conviction that the actions of the motorist had been provocative and his injury, at least in part, self-inflicted.

The government has also displayed skill in its attempts to forge a government of national unity. A number of opposition leaders have been brought into the Cabinet and white Namibians (not all of whom are Swapo members) occupy key portfolios in the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, Justice and Transport. The government has also taken steps to shore up support amongst a number of its most important constituencies by appointing key individuals to the Cabinet, to parliament or to senior positions in the civil service. The appointment of the militant miners leader Ben Ulenga to a deputy ministerial post has been the most recent of these initiatives, but also one which has prompted charges of co-option.

In its favour, Namibia is a large country with a small population. In both relative and absolute terms the scale of socio-economic problems confronting the country, whilst serious, is not critical in comparison to that found in many other African countries. The travails of the new government in transforming the country from a colony into an independent state, likewise, are by no means unique and have been experienced in countries throughout Africa. What does make the Namibian experience of particular interest however, is the fact that the society is, to a considerable extent, a microcosm of South African society. The manner in which a post-apartheid society is being established in Namibia (in terms of both successes and failures), will provide pointers for South Africa, and as such is a process which needs to be carefully observed (Haines and Tapscott, 1991). •

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Zimbabwe's land reform:

Has it buried the land question?

While the South African government continues to refuse to return land to dispossessed people, in Zimbabwe, 11 years after independence, the Zanu(PF) government intends giving land-hungry peasants land presently owned by white commercial farmers. LAUREN VLOTMAN assesses the debate, and argues that although a step forward, the measures will favour black commercial farmers at the expense of communal farmers

Zimbabwe's 4 million communal farmers have always had a raw deal, although since independence in 1980 conditions for many have improved slightly. Now ten years after independence the Minister of Agriculture, Witness Mangwende, has added new hope by announcing, on 11 January, that 5 million of the 12 million hectares of prime agricultural land presently owned by white commercial farmers will be acquired for resettlement of the land hungry peasants (commonly referred to as communal farmers) and the landless amongst them.

He also announced that the state will provide assistance to blacks to enable a selected number to join the ranks of the more than 4000 white commercial farmers. Since independence only approximately 300 blacks have managed to become farmers in this sector without special state assistance.

Dual system of agriculture

The expiry during 1990 of the restrictions on the acquisition of white commercial farm land contained in the Lancaster House agreement provided the first real opportunity for government to live up to its socialist pronouncements and restructure the whole agricultural sector. This announcement, however, provides for the continued existence of the communal and commercial sectors. This means that there will be no real change in the social and economic structure of agriculture in Zimbabwe.

At independence the Mugabe government inherited a dual system of agriculture whereby the land was divided along racial lines. The commercial sector, consisting of approximately 50% of the land, was reserved exclusively for white farmers on freehold basis, with an average farm size of 3 000 hectares. It was situated in the most fertile arable areas, with reliable rainfall, as well as large tracts of ranching land (sometimes as big as one million hectares) in the south and west of the country.

More than 4 million people were squeezed into the communal areas consisting of the remaining 50% of the land, situated in the marginal arid areas. A large number of migrants also periodically resided in these communal areas. Each family occupies between 0.5 - 12 hectares, which is used mainly for cultivation, while those with livestock (less than 40%) have access to communal grazing areas.

The Lancaster House Agreement tied the hands of the government. It stipulated that for ten years after independence land could only be acquired from commercial farmers on a willing buyer-willing seller basis at current market prices, with part of the payment in foreign currency. This stipulation was welcomed by the commercial farmers who used it to get rid of marginal semi-arid areas, while propping up property prices.

By 1988 only about 3 million out of 15 million hectares had been purchased and 40 000 families resettled. Under this arrangement, called Model A, individual households receive 5 - 6 hectares of land to cultivate, plus access to common grazing land for cattle used mainly for draught, manure, transport and milk.

The development of the commercial sector has always occurred at the expense of the peasant sector.

When white settlers first came to the area north of the Limpopo in search of minerals, the indigenous people were soon able to fully supply the food needs of the new towns. However, when the quantity of minerals found was much less than anticipated, the settlers turned to agriculture. By the 1930s agriculture had become the backbone of the settler economy. Black farmers were alienated from the land by the Land Apportionment and other acts, and were relegated to 50% of the total land area in the most arid and infertile areas of the country.

To further bolster the white farmers and ensure the success of this sector, discriminatory marketing prices were introduced with the Maize Marketing Act of 1931. With state support in the form of cheap credit, transport, extension services, research and perhaps most importantly guaranteed prices for some

items, this sector grew. By independence it was responsible for almost all of the marketed agricultural output in the country.

On the other hand the pressure on the land in the communal areas had increased. Already squeezed into the most infertile parts of the country, as the population increased, it became more difficult to leave some areas fallow, and soil erosion increased. The unreliable rainfall and lack of other reliable sources of water compounded the problems.

In a country were more than 80% of the population is dependent on land for their livelihood, land became a major grievance and was one of the central issues at stake during the liberation war.

While the Lancaster House Agreement put a tremendous burden on the coffers of government, many have argued that government has used this financial problem as an excuse, as its own commitment to socialist principles dwindled. Government has not lived up to its promises of improving conditions for all peasant farmers.

Although discriminatory marketing practices and prices have been abolished, credit provided by various state institutions, like the Agricultural Finance Corporation, only reaches 12% of communal farmers. Much of the land purchased for resettlement is still unoccupied and government has not provided sufficient training for those who have been resettled. Government has also been criticised for its technocratic approach to resettlement and for not involving communal farmers or their representatives in planning and implementation of the programme.

There is also an apparent lack of support for producer co-operatives under the resettlement scheme (called model B). By 1984 only 41 of these had been established. Although situated in more fertile areas with reliable rainfall, many of these have reverted to subsistence agriculture, as government has not paid out grants of approximately Z$ 250 000, as promised, to establish the co-operatives with equipment and other imputs.

White farmers say productivity will decline...

Government's stated intention to acquire more land for redistribution to blacks once the ten year stipulation of the Lancaster House agreement expires has put the representative body of commercial farmers, the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU), on the defensive. Much of the debate over the redistribution of land has focussed on the comparative levels of productivity between the communal and resettlement farmers on the one hand and the commercial farmers on the other.

At independence commercial farmers were responsible for providing the nation with almost all the marketed cotton, maize, sugar and other agricultural produce, as well as all the quality beef and virginia tobacco. Both of the latter are very important foreign currency earners, as they contribute significantly to the Z$500 million earned annually from agricultural exports. The CFU has also argued that if too much land is utilised for resettlement, there will be a consequent loss in production levels, as resettled areas are not as productive as commercial farming areas.

Along with this, they argue, Zimbabwe will no longer be self- sufficient in food production and thousands of jobs in agriculture will be threatened. The view is now commonly held that without the commercial farming sector, the very existence of agriculture in Zimbabwe will be threatened.

Minister Mangwende stated during his 11 January announcement that 'the importance of the large scale commercial sector in the economic development of Zimbabwe is appreciated'. And 'the reason why it is necessary (to maintain the existing farming systems) is because the country cannot afford to be without any one of them. For example, as much as we desperately want to redistribute the land through resettlement we also want to benefit from the role of the large-scale commercial agricultural sector.'

...but communal farmers prove them wrong

It has, however, been shown that only between 20 and 40% of commercial farm land is productively utilised, with only approximately 3% under cultivation. Since 1980, the marketed contribution of communal farmers in maize, soyabeans, sunflower seeds, beef, milk, tobacco and cotton and other products accounted for less than 10% of the total.

By 1988 this had exceeded 50%. This is largely due to the provision of credit, and extension and marketing services to communal farmers. Hence, the argument goes, if sufficient credit and other services and support were made available to this sector, Zimbabwe could remain self-sufficient in food and could also produce enough for export.

Research has shown that communal farmers, particularly in the more fertile areas, with good access to roads, markets and credit have done particularly well since independence.

What the debate about productivity has however overlooked is the possibility of substantial land redistribution solving the problem of unemployment. It can absorb some of the 180 000 school leavers who compete for the 10 000 new jobs created annually.

The debate has also not looked at how massive resettlement may be able to solve the problems of malnutrition, particularly among children in communal lands. Solutions to the social problems created by a high level of migrancy of young able-bodied men have also not been considered.

The stipulations on land contained in the Lancaster House Agreement was a bitter pill for the Patriotic Front to swallow. Over the years the agreement has been severely criticized and blamed for the lack of significant progress in providing land for the landless. In 1986 government introduced the Land Acquisition Act which gives government the first option for refusal on all agricultural land offered for sale, as well as limited rights to acquire underutilised land. The regular attacks on the Lancaster House stipulations on land and the limited legal means government was able to use to acquire land, have kept the flames of hope burning that land may one day be made available to the land hungry. Minister Mangwende's announcement has given further hope.

However, during his announcement Minister Mangwende stated that the success of commercial farmers is due mainly to state support to this sector in the form of credit, transport, research, extension and marketing services. 'Government should resuscitate those special programmes to assist the emergent black large-scale commercial farmers', he said.

What the minister omitted to mention was that the success of the commercial farmers in Zimbabwe has also always been at the expense of the communal farmers, who are forced into more marginal smaller areas and given less and less state support, as the greed of the commercial farmers grows.

The land question in Zimbabwe has not been solved. It will remain a problem as long as a dual system of agriculture, consisting of a commercial and a communal sector, continues to exist, as this effectively means that there will continue to be conflict over resources, especially land. The announcement by the Minister of Agriculture has given hope to Zimbabwe's land-hungry peasants, but it has not buried the land question.•

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Sarhwu calls for unity of transport unions

The third national congress of the South African Railway & Harbour Workers Union (Sarhwu) ended on 2 March 1991. Sarhwu seems to have emerged out of it stronger and more prepared to face the challenges of the transitional period. A spirit of unity prevailed throughout the congress, whose theme was 'Organise, Educate and Advance to Unity of Transport Workers'.

Almost the entire leadership was re-elected. The only new face is that of the assistant general secretary, Johnny Potgieter, who replaced Bafana Sithole. Justice Langa was re-elected president, T.E. Moshoeshoe first vice-president, Thembekile second vice-president, Jonas Makhavhu national treasurer, and Martin Sebakwane general secretary. The veteran ex-Sactu trade unionist Archie Sibeko, popularly known as Zola Zembe, was elected honorary presidenT.

The congress looked beyond simply consolidating its own ranks, but went further to consider the unity of former trade union adversaries within the transport sector. The opening session was addressed by Ahmed Kathrada of the ANC, the SACP's Doctor Mkhari, Sydney Mufamadi, Cosatu assistant general secretary and Willie Matsi of the Namibian Transport and Allied Union (Natau).

Among international guests were FNV (Holland), CGT-railway (France), and AALC (US) and the British National Union of Railwaymen, Maritime and Transport Workers.

Strengthening the union

Since the last congress Sarhwu has grown significantly. It has about 50 000 signed up and about 45 000 paid up member. The three bruising strikes of Sarhwu brought its membership closer together, and seems to have made them more dedicated to working class ideals. In his report the general secretary listed those who lost their lives during the strikes, those who lost their jobs and those who are at present on death row. The congress resolved to intensify the campaign for the release of the four Sarhwu members on death row - David Mamphanga, Wilson Matshile, George Maungedzo and Patrick Molefe. The congress declared 1991 *the year of action for the release of* all those on death row.

It was resolved to create structures to upgrade the skills of strike victims, by involving them in literacy classes and other projects. It was also decided to pressurise Transnet not to employ new personnel, but to give priority to strike victims when vacancies arise. The congress recognised that it was the sacrifices of these workers which contributed to Sarhwu winning recognition in 1990. However, it was noted that despite the agreement between Sarhwu and Transnet, stop-orders have not been properly implemented by Transnet. Expressing the angry mood of workers on the ground, president Justice Langa gave Transnet until April to correct the damage caused by the delays.

The congress felt that the strength of the union lay in its lowest structures. It was therefore resolved to consolidate constitutional structures in order to facilitate accountability and workers' control. Although it was noted that the centralisation of funds has been adopted by all Cosatu affiliates, delegates felt that this does not develop the lower structures of the union.

It was argued that regions and branches should operate as Sarhwu in miniature, that is they should be capable of running themselves and accounting properly to the upper structures. This would enable the upper structures to, from time to time, draw in capable cadres to fill vacancies at national level.

After long discussion it was resolved that the new leadership should prepare the necessary guidelines towards the decentralisation of funds and train officials to handle funds at all levels. The congress, however, was conscious of the complex nature of this task. It was agreed that a special national executive committee (NEC) meeting will work out this process.

The congress took practical steps towards uniting all transport workers. In a bold move which confronted old prejudices, Sarhwu invited to its congress the National Confederation of Trade Unions (Nactu) and its transport affiliates, as well as all Transnet unions, including white, coloured and Indian unions. The congress was addressed by the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) assistant general secretary, who also called for unity in this sector.

Delegates unanimously accepted the unity of all transport workers. A new element that emerged was that, unlike before, the presence of security workers and cleaners in TGWU was not seen as an obstacle to unity. It was felt that the position of these workers could be considered at an appropriate time in the future. However, the congress was cautious about not being mechanical in dealing with the issue. The feeling is that this should be a process which will involve the workers on the ground, not a mere agreement at the top.

A meeting between Sarhwu and TGWU just before the congress decided that the NEC's of both unions should meet to work out a mechanism for the whole unity process. They agreed on the need for intensive education, publicity and united action around this matter, so that no worker would be left out. Both unions see themselves as only starting a process that will eventually involve all transport workers of South Africa.

The congress assessed the present political situation and agreed to intensify the drive to organise the unorganised workers. It was also noted that Sarhwu never had time to consolidate its structures because of the confrontation with Transnet. It was resolved:

- that Sarhwu , Cosatu and other unions take up the campaign against retrenchment, and call for an overtime ban and shorter working hours without loss of pay.
- to maintain the unions policy of non-alignment internationally. It was however stated that bilateral relations with sister unions should be promoted.

In its memorandum to Transnet and the government, Sarhwu called for the immediate termination of the illegal occupation of Walvis Bay and the offshore islands by Pretoria, and demanded that Transnet withdraw from the occupied territory and persuade their government to do likewise.

The congress did not finish its business. Some resolutions were referred to the NEC to finalise. One of these concerned strengthening the alliance between the ANC, SACP and Cosatu, and the question of the distribution of responsibilities within the alliance to avoid overloading a few capable cadres. On the resolution calling for Constituent Assembly, Interim Government and All Party Conference, there seemed to be consensus that there should be no compromise on this. The NEC is expected to sit before the end of April to finish congress business. **— Mazizi Sjadu •**

Ciskei strikes:

Going toe to toe with Oupa Gqozo

LANGA ZITA and FRANZ KRÜGER report on the latest civil servants' strike in Ciskei, and the different approaches within the liberation movement towards the Gqozo regime

In the wake of the successes achieved by Ciskei civil servants in their recent strike, the democratic movement may be forgiven for thinking that the stick is mightier than the carrot. The action, which virtually paralysed the Ciskei's administration for almost a month, marked the most serious confrontation between the Ciskei regime of Brigadier Oupa Gqozo and progressive organisations. And workers carried away significant gains: a promise of pay parity with South Africa, recognition of their right to belong to unions, and the withdrawal of disciplinary proceedings and criminal charges arising out of the strike.

However, with South Africa preparing to re-establish control of the homeland, the victory may turn out to be a profoundly ambiguous one.

Initial co-operation

The confrontation was in sharp contrast with the co-operative relationship which first seemed to be emerging between the ANC-led alliance and Gqozo, after he took power a year ago.

The spontaneous uprising which engulfed the whole homeland in a matter of a few weeks was given organisational content and direction by semi-clandestine structures of the UDF. This helped to forge closer relations between progressive organisations and the regime.

With the Transkei situation as a model, the ANC and its allies enthusiastically launched into an attempt to bind Gqozo into a firm alliance. The brigadier's first public appearances took place under ANC banners and there were extensive consultations. The co-operative relations reached a peak during the violence and looting that affected urban areas, particularly, in the wake of the coup: ANC marshalls joined forces with Ciskei soldiers to try to calm the situation.

But relations soon began to cool, as a range of local issues brought conflict between popular organisations and the Gqozo regime. It was the issue of civil servants' right to unionisation which brought the most dramatic conflict.

Encouraged by the Ciskei government's move to legalise trade unions, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) and the Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potwa) moved to recruit public servants in post offices and government offices.

But here the unions seemed to hit a blind spot in Gqozo's apparent liberalism. He quickly made it clear that he would not countenance his own civil servants joining unions.

And so the issue of union recognition took its place alongside pay parity as the main issues at the heart of the civil servants' battle with the regime, which was to last almost a year.

But the conflict also saw tensions emerging between the unions and the regional political leadership, who saw the conflict as jeopardising the progressive movement's newly-found legal space in the homeland by antagonising the Gqozo regime. Unions, for their part, pointed to the need to address the legitimate demands of public sector workers.

Mpumelelo Madikane, vice-chairperson of the Cosatu local in King William's Town, said: 'The whole set-up was controversial. As the liberation movement, we did not all see the situation in the same light. When we initiated the strike, certain people did not see it as correct: they talked about the legal space. Other organisations saw their legal space whilst we did not have it.'

After an early strike by civil servants, the military government almost banned Nehawu and Potwa, and those who joined the unions were threatened with charges of misconduct and dismissals. There was a stalemate in relations until June, when the new labour decree was issued. Despite massive improvements in the unions' position, the decree excluded civil servants, enterprises employing less than 20 workers and domestic workers.

Late in October, workers initiated another strike, which was suspended when the regional presidents of the ANC and UDF, Arnold Stofile and Mluleki George, were asked to set up a meeting with Gqozo. The meeting never materialised.

The issue was referred to the affected trade unions. By this stage, relations between the popular organisations and the Ciskei government were at an all-time low. Gqozo had accused the ANC of plotting to overthrow him, had threatened to shoot MK chief of staff Chris Hani and had called the regional ANC leadership 'a bunch of nincompoops'.

Madikane said: 'There was broad agreement that Gqozo had to be punished. At this stage Gqozo had clearly been co-opted by Pretoria. He had insulted the National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) during the Mercedes Benz strike and had vilified Chris Hani, and was constantly undermining the regional leadership of the liberation movement.'

On February 9, Nehawu resumed its suspended strike. The action widened dramatically after Ciskei security forces sjambokked and teargassed a march of demonstrating strikers. In response, postal workers and journalists at Radio Ciskei, organised by the Association of Democratic Journalists, joined the strike, as did workers at other parastatal bodies.

The march had been timed to coincide with a visit by a top-level ANC delegation, which was holding talks with Gqozo in an attempt to patch up differences. In the wake of the talks, which went on for some eight hours, a conciliatory statement was issued in which both parties agreed not to attack each other in public.

Sjamboks

The contrast between the talks inside the Ciskei government buildings, and the strikers being sjambokked outside, dramatised the differences in approach between the ANC national leadership and the regional organisations.

The Ciskei government then unilaterally announced pay parity would be implemented, and this gave rise to further differences. Some workers began to return, while the unions were still insisting on recognition. Some members of the alliance argued the emergence of divisions among the workers, and the pay concession, meant it was better to call off the strike and pursue the struggle for recognition from within.

The strike was leaving its mark, however, and on March 1, Cosatu and the Ciskei government signed an agreement that ended the strike. Ciskei promised to implement pay parity immediately, to lift suspensions, other disciplinary proceedings and criminal charges arising out of the strike, and to pay salaries for the

duration os the strike. It also committed itself not to victimise civil servants for being union members.

However, the strike also had an unintended consequence: It created such an image of instability in the Ciskei that it brought intervention by the South African government. Foreign Minister Pik Botha arrived in Bisho, and after a cursory consultation with Gqozo announced that South Africa would 'help' Ciskei implement a new constitution. An agreement was signed in Cape Town, which allows Pretoria to appoint several key members of the Ciskei cabinet.

The response from the ANC-alliance has demonstrated the difficulty this move has presented. The dissolution of the homelands has, of course, been a long-standing demand of the alliance, and this has made it difficult to come outin direct opposition. At the same time, the fact that Pretoria has been able to take complete control of the process has caused deep unease.

Conflicting responses

This dilemma is reflected in the responses to the move. One of the first came from the Congress of Traditional Leaders (Contralesa), the ANC-aligned chiefs body, which slammed it as a violation of international law - 'freedom granted, cannot be revoked'. The argument seems a bit thin: clearly, the revocation of the homelands' 'freedom' has long been a demand of the ANC.

In another surprising response, the Botrder branch of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (Nadel) called for the establishment of an interim administration for the Ciskei, involving the ANC and its allies.

It seems highly unlikely that the ANC would countenance such an arrangement. The Border ANC would not comment, but said ANC structures were debating when reincorporation should take place.

The strongest response to Pretoria's intervention came in a joint statement from Transkei and Border regions of the ANC/SACP/Cosatu alliance. The statement called for the overthrow of Gqozo, and described the reincorporation as being 'on the orders of Pretoria over the needs of the people'. This clearly contradicts the agreement made by the NEC delegation. But Transkei ANC publicity secretary Ezra Sigwela said the statement was justified in the light of experiences in the area. He said he believed that the leadership was aware of the problems in the homeland but 'our leaders have a fatherly approach and hoped that things would turn to our advantage in the long run'. - **Ecna** •

OBITUARY

Robyn Rafel

ROBYN RAFEL, *WIP*'s labour reporter, died on 14 February after an operation and a brief illness.

A labour reporter treads a fine line between unions and management. The reporter must achieve the respect and confidence of all parties. Both sides must be willing to talk - at length. Achieving this balance, and the linking of members of both camps, takes an inordinate amount of hard work, charm and push. Despite anything she may have said to the contary, Robyn Rafel managed to find this balance.

For most of her adult years, Robyn Rafel was a thinker, a doubter and a doer. A perfectionist in the extreme, she would spend the long hours of the night before deadlines closeted in her various offices, writing, crossing out, writing and writing again. In her eyes her writing was never perfect - but it always turned out more than good enough on the printed page.

Robyn turned to journalism later than most, but she brought to her career much experience and knowledge of the labour field from inside and out. After achieving a BA degree from Wits, she spent some time doing research on occupational health. She then worked for two years as the welfare officer for the industrial council for the knitting industry.

It was in this job that Robyn gained an insiders knowledge of conditions and problems on the shopfloor. She then decided on a career change and joined the SAAN journalists cadet course, spending time on the various SAAN newspapers around the country. Gradually she began to specialise in labour reporting and became known as one of the most reliable and accurate reporters in the labour field.

Moving away from daily journalism, Robyn moved to the *Financial Mail* where she eventually became the senior labour journalist. While at the *Mail* she undertook a number of special project reports and, for her comprehensive report on Soweto, received the Stellenbosch Farmers Winery award for journalism. She then moved to *Finance Week* for a number of months.

Robyn then undertook a research project on the violence in Natal for the legal firm Cheadle, Thompson and Haysom. Based originally around information gained from the hearings into the violence, involving lawyers from the firm, Robyn's work on this project expanded and grew. A three month research brief turned into a two year marathon of collecting and collating information and attempting to give those chaotic events a coherence and rationality.

Robyn found this project extremely draining and often commented on the quite unbelievable magnitude and horror of the Natal situation. Her approach to any project was to take the 'long view', to attempt as much as possible to put events in context.

Before coming to *WIP* Robyn worked briefly for Theo Heffer, an industrial relations consultant.

At *WIP*, after two years away from labour journalism, Robyn again threw herself into catching up, getting in touch with old contacts and living and breathing labour again. Her office piled high with newspapers, she was once again to be found working through the night fighting to meet that deadline. Robyn brought to *WIP* journalistic professionalism and keen but independent knowledge and understanding of the labour sphere.

Prior to working at *WIP* Robyn contributed to the magazine on occassion and also contributed articles to *The South African Review*, a book published jointly by SARS and Ravan Press.

Robyn was not politically 'involved' but she had a keen understanding of contemporary politics, and a healthy suspicion of all those who claimed to have 'the answers' to South Africa's problems. Yet she believed passionately that people had a right to know the truth about any situation. She was particularly concerned about the problems workers faced in their daily lives, on the shopfloor and in the hostels. Her concern about the conditions and consequences of migrant labour were the topic of a number of articles in *WIP*.

Her rough and ready presence, her cheerful approach and her forthrightness, have already been sorely missed. - *Ingrid Obery (on behalf of WIP advisory board and staff)* •

What hope for socialism?

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LEFT
Edited by William K Tabb
Monthly Review Press
Reviewed by JEREMY CRONIN

In the 1970s and 80s the ANC and its allies inspired a world- wide anti-*apartheid solidarity movement. It* was an international success that was the envy of militants confronting regimes (certainly no less vicious than our own) in Chile, the Philippines, the occupied West Bank, and elsewhere.

But there was at least one significant, negative side-effect of our achievement. There has been a tendency within the South African liberation movement to be extremely self-absorbed. We have tended to think of South Africa as the centre of all the world's concerns. We imagine that South Africa is especially deserving of solidarity, that we have very little to *learn from others, that we are, in short,* unique.

This tendency was never healthy. As we move into a new transitional period in our country, in the context of a rapidly changing international situation, neglecting the world beyond the Limpopo is both dangerous and stupid.

In the first place, and if for no other reason, we need to study the world out there in order to equip ourselves more adequately for the concerted ideological attack we are facing. A whole chorus of local luminaries has taken up the international howl: 'Socialism is dead'; 'The market represents the highest form of economic rationality'; 'Without capitalism, no democracy'; 'A wide open door to the world (i.e. to imperialism) is the only path to economic development'; etc, etc.

Of course, we have local South African evidence to counter this great hymn in praise of capitalism. But when we produce local evidence we run into the other side's version of our own 'South Africa is unique' assumption. The apparent shortcomings of capitalism in South Africa, we are told, are really only the shortcomings of apartheid.

In the context of all this, *The Future of Socialism : Perspectives from the Left* is an extremely useful and timely collection. In fact, it should be prescribed reading for South African activists.

The perspectives offered by the contributors are fairly diverse. The collection includes a slightly abridged version of Joe Slovo's 'Has Socialism Failed?'. There are articles by a Brazilian Workers' Party militant, and by a long-standing Italian communist criticising the decision to re-name and change the character of her party. William Hinton writes on contemporary developments in China. There are a number of contributions from those broadly within the 'World System' Marxist tradition, including Samir Amin. There are also two articles on the prospects for a socialist movement in the US. Needless to say, the whole book is written under the shadow of the recent events in Eastern Europe.

Rampart world capitalism...

Although there are many differences of perspective and emphasis, all the contributors agree on two essential points.
One: In the last three years or so, the world has become an infinitely more difficult place to carry forward the socialist project; but
Two: The relevance of a democratic socialism is greater than ever before. ('The international conditions that enabled some Third World countries to choose a socialist strategy no longer exist,' writes the Mexican, Carlos Vilas, 'but those that forced them to do it are stronger than ever' (p217).

In a sense, all the contributors subscribe to Gramsci's often quoted call for 'A pessimism of the intellect, an optimism of the will'. There can be no running away from the real crisis and real difficulties confronting socialism. But realism must not be confused with capitulation. As Pat Devine succinctly puts it: 'It is realistic to start from where *people are. It is not realistic to deny them* the possibility of changing' (p196).

So where, globally speaking, are we? And what are the possibilities of change?

The collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the deep crisis in the Soviet Union finds us in a world dominated by three major and interlocking capitalist power centres - a Europe with its unofficial capital in Germany; Japan and the Pacific rim; and the United States. Notwithstanding recent events in the Gulf, the United States is, increasingly, the weakest of these three power centres.

... is bad news for the world's poor

But this rampant world capitalist order is, to say the least, bad news for the working and unemployed majority of our planet. It is daily bringing greater inequality and poverty, even within the advanced capitalist countries themselves. (Michael Milken made $550 million in 1987. An American on the minimum US wage would have to work 79 000 years to earn as much).

But, above all this rampant capitalist world order is bringing devastation to the Third World. At least one of the contributors, Samir Amin, suggests that we need to coin a new term, 'The Fourth World' for those countries which are *now increasingly not even lucky enough* to be the ongoing victims of neo-colonial exploitation.

The 'Fourth World' is made up of countries that are rejects, so to speak, cast-offs, more or less totally excluded from the world division of labour. According to Amin, this is the fate awaiting most of Africa. It is a fate caused 'by a system that has consigned the continent to specialisation in agriculture and mining until the soils are exhausted, and by a technological revolution that provides substitutes for some of its still-plentiful raw materials' (p111).

Eastern Europe rushes towards capitalism ...

And what are the prospects for Eastern Europe? Many of the contributors remark upon the sad naivete with which much of Eastern Europe is rushing into the 'free market'.

'Forty years of communism has unleashed a simple-minded faith in the magic of the market. When Hungarians think of capitalism they think of Germany or the United States or Japan or perhaps South Korea. They don't think of Peru or Bolivia or Kenya...Selling state enterprises to foreign companies is seen as the dismantling of socialism, not

as the creation of new forms of subjugation, not as a headlong rush into rampant deindustrialisation. Having faced the party state for forty years, the world capitalist market is seen as liberator, not as exploiter.' (Michael Burawoy, p169).

While the former East Germany and possibly Czechoslovakia might become components of the First World, the fate awaiting the rest of the old Second World, under the combined impact of 'booty and boutique capitalism' (Burawoy) is a demotion into the Third World.

... and fails to learn from China's tragedy

As William Hinton suggests, we are not without a concrete example when it comes to predicting possible outcomes in Eastern Europe. The processes that are underway in most of Eastern Europe have already been in motion for a decade in China. Over the last ten years, under the leadership of Deng, China has privatised agriculture, attempted to privatise industry, and introduced a free market and decentralisation which has privileged coastal regions against the interior.

The results have been tragic. Bureaucratic corruption is rife, the enormous social and moral achievements of the Chinese revolution are being reversed. Open prostitution and begging have returned to the streets, and there is now a huge pool of unemployed. In the winter of 1988-9 50-million people were uprooted from the countryside, but without any job prospects in the cities. In order to combat inflation the government shut down 10 000 construction projects and created some four or five million more unemployed. The birth control and family planning programme, one of the outstanding achievements of the Chinese Revolution, has now virtually collapsed (Hinton, p146-7).

It is against this background that the mass actions in Tiananmen Square unfolded. This generalised crisis, and the eventual bloody Tiananmen Square massacre are, of course, being portrayed in the Western media as the last gasp of communism in China. But, according to Hinton, 'it's not that at all. It's the ultimate result of having betrayed the revolution ten years ago...Ten years ago Deng was a very popular man [in the West]. Ten years ago he was supposedly saving China from the debacle of the Cultural Revolution and putting China back on its feet by introducing a measure of freedom and discussion, a free market and other liberating innovations. And here, ten years later, there is absolute military dictatorship...' (p146-7).

Is this also the fate of Eastern Europe ten years hence? Will all the euphoria of the Spring of 1990, turn into bloody, authoritarian dictatorships, as the new comprador booty and boutique capitalists combine forces to teach the masses a lesson in the free market? After all, however flawed the socialism of Eastern Europe has been, the working people of these countries have come to expect full employment, free education, free healthcare, and low rents. The people of Eastern Europe want democracy in addition to these rights, not instead of them. But that isn't exactly what the free market will deliver.

Clearly, then, looking at events worldwide there is much on which to exercise a pessimism of the intellect.

Renewing the socialist tradition

But is there a socialist way out? And what specific lessons can we draw for South Africa from the contemporary international situation?

Again, the different contributors have different emphases and somewhat differing perspectives on the way forward. But there are at least a number of important points of convergence.

In the first place, there is the need to renew and review the socialist tradition. This means a number of things. As Joe Slovo (in his contribution familiar to us here) and the Italian communist, Luciana Castellina, both agree, it means rediscovering the essentially democratic and humanist vision of Marxism. For Castellina this means, amongst other things, reviving the critique of the state by Marx and Lenin. After all, Marx and Lenin called for a 'withering away of the state'. They agreed with the anarchists in this objective, but disagreed that this meant renouncing political struggle for state power in a first stage.

Reviewing the socialist tradition requires, also, not throwing the baby out with the bath water. Economic planning is, as Pat Devine argues, a case in point. The failure of the administrative command system is an argument against overcentralised and undemocratic planning, not against planning. 'No less than the direct instructions of command economies, the coercion of market forces reinforces and reproduces alienation' (p197).

Reviewing the socialist tradition also means going back over some old divisions, and assumptions. According to Castellina, in Europe 'the old divisions between reformers and revolutionaries are obsolete; national fragmentation will

Marxism in South Africa - Past, Present and Future

A three-day conference on 'Marxism in South Africa - Past, Present and Future' is to be held at the University of the Western Cape, under the auspices of UWC's Marxist Theory Seminar, from Friday 6 to Sunday 8 September. The conference provides a forum for assessment of the achievements and limitations of Marxist theory and practice in South Africa, and debate on the way forward in the changed conditions of the 1990s.

Contributions are invited on topics concerning the historical development of Marxism in SA; theoretical issues of Marxist economics, politics, philosophy, etc, especially as these relate to SA; and problems and prospects for building a Marxist tradition in SA today.

Enquiries to: Marxist Theory Seminar
c/o Department of Philosophy
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville
7535

be lessened as the result of European unification; and there is no longer a social-democratic model to rebuild or a revolutionary model to replicate. Everyone is very conscious of this situation, and the abandonment of old divisions may well provide the basis for a new unity.' (p47).

Building a new anti-capitalist movement

Then there are the new movements. Since 1968, there have been a number of major social movements with a world impact (the peace movement, feminism, black consciousness and anti-racist movements, the greens, gay rights, progressive religious movements, etc.). There has been a complex, sometimes hostile, relation between these movements and the older socialist and working class formations. Connections need to be deepened and a mutual process of learning and development needs to occur.

In Castellina's words : 'To capture this connection, a great renewal of theory and practice is necessary, because if the traditional capital/labour conflict does not find a new discourse of struggle, the working class will remain isolated and the new movements will remain mere expressions of distress' (p45-6).

In forging links between mass social movements and the working class movement, the experience of the Brazilian Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) is instructive (see the contribution by Maria Helena Moreira Alves). Emerging in 1979 out of a whole range of mass movements (the trade unions, civics, the women's movement, a black consciousness movement, and indigenous people's organisations), the PT has as a major objective providing a socialist political umbrella to these various formations, without undermining their grass-roots independence.

There are many interesting parallels between the Brazilian mass democratic formations and those in South Africa. And indeed, we have built up our own dynamic experience in this area. But the parallels between our two countries are more profound, and need to be related to the overall world system.

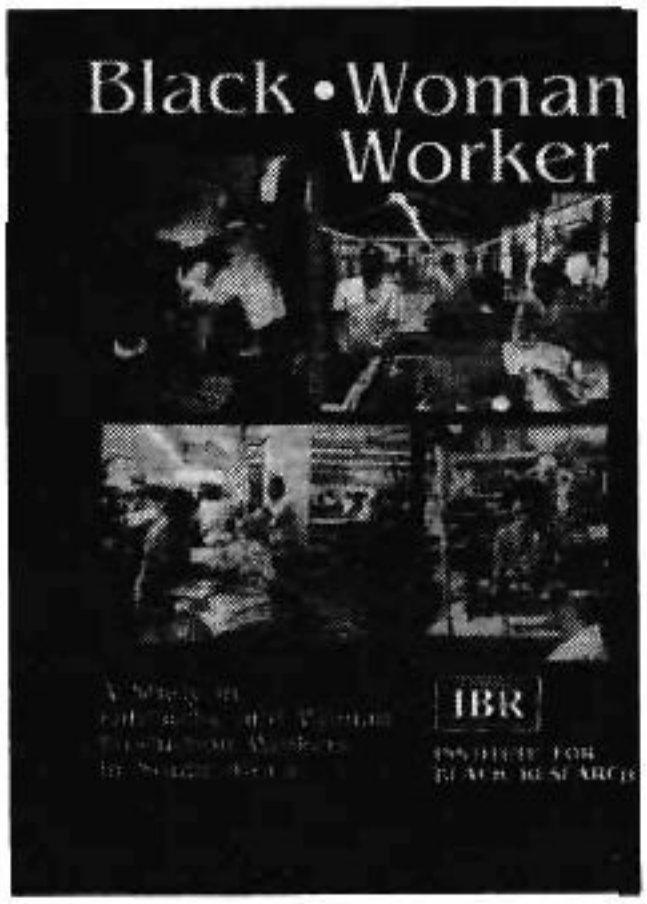
Where, in this present world capitalist system, is the weak link? Where does a democratic socialist breakthrough hold out the most promise? Several, if not all, of the contributors agree that the weak link in the present world system lies not in the core centres (the advanced capitalist countries), nor in the peripheries (in the Third World, sinking into the Fourth), but in the 'semi-periphery' (in countries like, precisely, South Africa and Brazil). Working class motivation, according to Chase-Dunn, is lacking in the advanced capitalist countries. In the peripheries there is motivation but not opportunity.

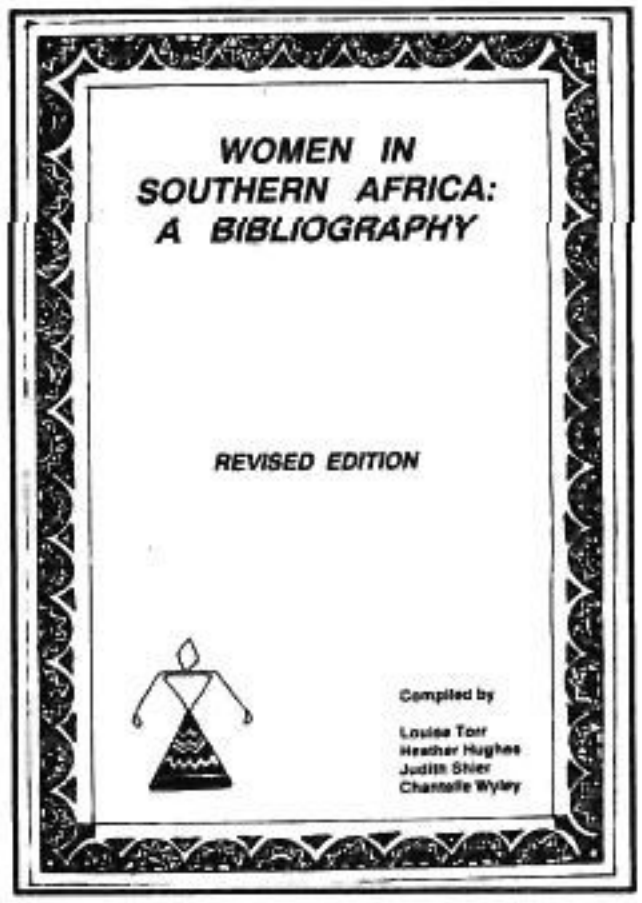
'These things are less true of the semi-periphery. Here we have both motivation and opportunity. Semi-peripheral areas, especially those in which the territorial state is large, have sufficient resources to be able to stave off core attempts at overthrow and to provide some protection to socialist institutions if the political conditions for their emergence should arise.' (p81).

All of this is the product of changed patterns of capitalist development. 'Large-scale heavy industry, the classical province of strong labour movements and socialist parties, has been moved to the semi-periphery.

This means that new socialist bids for state power in the semi-periphery (eg. South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, perhaps Korea) will be much more based on an urbanised and organised proletariat in large-scale industry than the earlier semi-peripheral socialist revolutions were.' (Chase-Dunn, p82).

There is room, then, at least here in South Africa and in other 'semi-peripheral' countries, for a socialist optimism of the will. In this sense, South Africa could be said to be relatively unique. But it is a uniqueness that we can only fully grasp if we begin to study seriously and come to grips with our connections to that world out there, beyond the Limpopo.•





Gender, Race and Class

WOMEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: A BIBLIOGRAPHY
By the Durban Women's Bibliography Group
Available from the Group, c/o Dept of Politics, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban 4001
(1991 revised edition) R30 (approx)

BLACK-WOMAN-WORKER
Edited by Fatima Meer
Madiba Publications, Durban (1990)
Available from Institute for Black Research, PO Box 3609, Durban, 4000
R30 (approx)

WOMEN AND GENDER IN SOUTHERN AFRICA TO 1945
Edited by Cheryl Walker
David Philip Publishers, Cape Town (1990)
R33.95

Reviewed by SHIREEN HASSIM

'When I turned to women's past I realised how unconscious I had been of how the history I had studied before women's liberation had neglected women. We were always led to believe that women were not around because they had done so little. But the more I read, the more I discovered how much women had in fact done - (Sheila Rowbotham, Dreams and Dilemmas, London: Virago, 1983, p174)

Although the bland title of Cheryl Walker's edited volume on *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* conceals it, the reader will find herself confronted with the same sense of discovery, and excitement, upon reading the range of articles spanning the 150 years from pre-capitalism through colonialism to the Second World War.

The contributors discuss gender oppression in precapitalist societies (Jeff Guy), the changing legal status of women (Sandra Burman), constructions of patriarchy (with a substantial focus on education) (Anne McClintock, Jacklyn Cock, Sheila Meintjes, Heather Hughes), Indian women under indenture (Jo Beall), ideologies of domesticity and motherhood (Debbie Gaitskell and Elsabe Brink), migrant labour (Phil Bonner and Walker), deviance (Linda Chisholm) and (white) women's suffrage (Walker). These are all well-known South Africanists, but here they bring to light areas of their research which had hitherto been buried within theses or in boxes of unpublished research notes.

Walker's introduction attempts to put forward a framework for understanding the period. She makes a strong plea for the importance of rigorous historical research in developing this framework: '..before one can construct a more sophisticated theory of gender, one needs to have a far better understanding of the dynamics of men and women's experience in society and cross- culturally - one's theory needs to be emprically grounded' (p4).

The recovery of this experience is, of course, more than an academic exercise. It is a significant part of any movement of women to liberate themselves. Claiming and giving voice to their past is a central feature of women discovering their power to represent themselves in the present.

Imperialist research?

In South Africa this is a more complex process than might appear at first glance, however. There are very few black woman academics, and these few are often reluctant to engage in Woman's Studies for fear of even greater marginalisation. The task of recovering the history of women in South Africa, black and white, has largely fallen upon white women (and in this volume white men). Their work has contributed to the growing history of the underclass in South Africa, a factor not insignificant in undermining the power of apartheid's propaganda.

Walker anticipates the charge that *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* represents 'imperialist research', that is white women writing about black women. She demolishes the notion, expressed by Dabi Nkululeko in Christine Qunta's book *Women in Southern Africa* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1987), that the history of 'Azanians (including women) is being written by those who have colonised them' (p88). Nkululeko argues that `...the subjects of historical knowledge have the most legitimate right to carry out research and to write about themselves' (p89).

Walker counters, rightly, by pointing out the dangers of such a position: 'If one were to follow Nkululeko's point to its logical conclusion, one would end up in a solipsistic cage where the historian would have to abandon her or his work in favour of autobigraphy and the specifics of personal experience only' (Walker, p7).

A more powerful point about the importance of history is made by Christine Qunta: 'African women must speak for themselves. They should also decide for themselves who they are, where they are going, what obstacles face them and how to remove these'. (Qunta, p13). This self-representation is a necessary process for

any oppressed grouping and should not be excluded by the demands of intellectual rigour. On the other hand, it cannot develop healthily within exclusivist circles only - indeed, some of the tools for self-representation are to be found in Walker's unique volume.

Gender: an elastic concept

Taken as a whole, the Walker volume points to the relative fluidity and elasticity of the concept of gender. Colonisers and colonised alike continually shaped and reshaped social roles and cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Beall's piece, for example, shows how difficult it was for indentured Indians to maintian the elaborate rules of caste in their new environment. She argues that 'although the form in which gender relations was culturally specific, much of its ideological content was confirmed and reinforced by the dominant ideology of gender prevailing among the ruling settler class' (p159).

At the same time, Walker argues in her introduction that definitions of 'woman' were ultimately constructed differently within colonist and colonised societies. `While both indigenous and settler women bore and raised children, this act took place in a web of socially specific relationships that were embedded in two profoundly different sets of productive relationships' (p26).

By the late 19th century, though, a more coherent capitalist economy had begun to emerge. Walker perhaps underemphasises the extent to which this new capitalist society began to impose itself through its interaction with the indigenous communities. This theme is pointed to by Meintjies, Gaitskell and other contributions.

The impact of capitalist penetration

Meintjes, for example, writing about the Christian community at Edendale in an earlier period, argues that 'the transposition of the evangelical Victorian ideology of gender and sexuality and its assimilation by an African mission community was a complex process, and did not represent a mere imposition on a malleable and passive community... The process involved interaction, compromise and synthesis' (p126).

This captures the point that, while constructions of gender may have originated from vastly different social and productive contexts, as capitalism established itself, especially in the cities, the increasing collusion between cultures, particularly the embracing of Christianity by african women, made differences more difficult to detect.

This process of interaction and collusion underlay the paradox which was to dominate the twentieth century: contact with capitalism increased african women's economic options and their capacity to survive independently of men, while at the same time its ideological impact tended to make them reluctant to explore these options. Many chose to to sink into the arms of a religion which confirmed their subordinate position. Perhaps this paradox will offer a theme for a companion volume to Walker's, which traces the path of women's lives into the present.

Culture, subordination and struggle are also the motifs for Fatima Meer's volume Black-Woman-Worker. This book records and interprets the findings of a 1984 survey into the status of black women factory workers in the Durban-Pinetown area. Some 1 000 women and 243 men were interviewed by a team of researchers led by Prof Meer.

Poor spelling, punctuation and sloppy editing notwithstanding, the book is an important contribution to the body of literature on gender. It represents a collective effort by black women researchers to come to grips with the experience of black working women. It not only offers useful statistics on employment patterns and aspirations; it also contains fascinating and sometimes moving comments from women on their experiences of race, class and gender oppression. In reproducing interviewers' questions as well as respondents' answers, the book makes explicit the dynamics of women interviewing women, the sharing of common perspectives and the space for personal insights to be aired.

The power of ideology

Like Walker, Meer's chapter introductions offer a theoretical framework for analysing gender in South Africa. Meer discounts the argument that women's subordination is rooted in biological difference. Instead, she looks to the power of ideology and of social institutions (in particular the family) for explanations. Like Walker, Meer believes that definitions of 'woman' are culturally constructed. However, Meer's notion of culture is closely bound up with that of religion. Exploring the 'foundations of women's domination', she examines in turn Vedantic philosophy, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

There is little explanation as to why these religions were selected: presumably they represented the 'cultural roots' of the women interviewed in the survey. It is baffling that while Meer makes such careful distinctions between the different religions of her indian subjects, she treats Christianity as an undifferentiated system. As Debbie Gaitskell shows in her contribution to Walker's volume, african women belong to various Christian denominations, each with its specific set of cultural rituals.

There is no sense in Meer's formulations that tradition might include non-religious forms as well, and that African women may draw on a memory of their past that falls outside Eastern and Western religions. Unlike the Walker volume, there is little understanding here of the complex interaction between different cultures, of the mutual moulding and contestation between dominant and subordinate cultures.

There are several interesting findings in the Meer study, which could make for interesting comparisons with similar work such as *Vukani Makhosikasi and NUMSA Women Organise*. The survey shows how, in the factories studied, racial differences override gender and class solidarity. Just over a quarter of the women interviewed expressed positive feelings towards their fellow workers. For the most part, african, indian and coloured women chose to eat their lunch separately and chose not to socialise with each other.

This is further underlined by the women's lack of faith in workers' organisations. Again, just over a quarter felt that conditions could be improved through united worker action. There are clearly implications here for the future organisation of working women.

In a work concerned so directly with women, it is ironic that nowhere in the book is the work of other South African women acknowledged or referred to (bar one reference to Jill Nattrass). By contrast, references to Marx, Engels, Gandhi and Freud abound. Meer's work stands stranded on an intellectual island.

A wealth of women's research

That there is no shortage of writing on women and gender issues is underlined by the over 1 500 references contained in the new edition of *Women in Southern Africa: A Bibliography*. This invaluable source provides a map for a voyage of discovery of 'how much women have in fact done', as Rowbotham put it.

The Durban Women's Bibliography Group, based at the University of Natal, has revised and updated its 1985 edition, adding approximately 600 new entries in both English and Afrikaans. Sixteen categories, from 'Love, marriage and divorce' through 'Women's associations'

to 'Bodies and minds', are comprehensively covered. At the same time, its extensive coverage of work and workplace organisation, and of resistance, offer activists a wealth of background material for workshops and popular publications. Readers will be encouraged to discover that there are no less than 13 journals which cover women's issues in the region.

The *Bibliography* is sure to become the first recourse of any researcher wishing to examine gender issues. A pity therefore that its bulky A4 format makes it a little unwieldy for those frequent trips to the library.

Reference works such as this remain useful only if they are continually updated - one way to do this easily and cheaply would be to make available annual editions on floppy disk. However, the future of the *Bibliography* is by no means secure, and depends largely on the energies and time of the compilers, three of whom are already bearing the double loads of motherhood and careers! Typically for feminist publications, the *Bibliography* was produced with minimal resources by a voluntary group. Despite the sellout success of the first edition, the group received no personal financial reward, nor were they able to afford any assistance in producing the second edition.

Hopefully, the demonstrable demand will encourage some publisher to take on the third edition. Where else would we ever discover that in 1905, the *Imperial Colonist* published an article on 'The terms and conditions of domestic service in England and South Africa', written by Lady Knightly of Fawsley? •

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