

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE FOR A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

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A homecoming in Paris

By Ronel Scheffer

FOR A brief moment in Paris earlier this month some 100 South Africans had a rare taste of being fêted by the world. Europe's most charming city opened its heart to them in an almost overwhelming display of generosity and support for their efforts to resolve the conflict in their country. Escorted through the wintry avenues of Paris by presidential outriders and entertained in ministerial banquet halls, the group had cause to be both humble and proud.

South Africa had barely started out on the road of attaining the noble objectives of the French Revolution of two centuries ago, and yet many in the group had decades of proud struggle behind them, had experienced extreme suffering and made huge sacrifices - between them a total of 150 years behind bars, in fact. It was no coincidence therefore that the debate at the six-day Paris conference hosted by France Libertés, the human rights arm of the Danielle Mitterand Foundation, was characterised by an unusual spirit of humility, expressed almost without exception by all those among the diverse group of South Africans, the majority of them in key leadership positions in politics, business, labour, academia and the press.

There were important differences of perception and position in many areas, ranging from the De Klerk government's contribution and intentions to the relationship between revolution and negotiations and methods of restructuring the economy to achieve both growth and a redistribution of wealth. But there was remarkable common ground as well. Delegates agreed that the process of achieving a non-racial democracy had to be accelerated and that the internal debate between the opponents of apartheid must become more vigorous; that the white community must more actively be integrated in this process; that it would be counter-productive to build group rights into a future constitution, and that the return of ANC exiles was a matter of urgency.



Delegates to the Paris conference Hein Willemse of UWC, ANC members Pallo Jordan and Neo Mnumzana, and Dr Sam Motsuenyane, a Johannesburg business leader, at the new entrance to the Louvres. Idasa assisted in organising the conference.

On the first day of the conference the first lady of France, whose personal involvement with the dialogue programme between exiled members of the ANC and their compatriots inside the country goes back to the historical 1987 Dakar conference, placed her foundation's invitation to the South African delegation in the context of France Libertés' commitment to building a fairer world. She noted that at a time when dictatorships around the world are being abolished, South Africans are "awakening from the nightmare of apartheid". The world consciousness is expanding fast, she added, and ignorance can no longer be a pretext to justify passivity in the realm of extending human rights to people throughout the world. France Libertés, she said, was honoured to participate in a small way while South Africans were writing a page in their history.

Over the next five days, as delegates grappled with a wide range of crucial issues and debates surrounding the transition to a non-racial democracy in South

Africa, it became clear that Madame Mitterand's expectations of the conference were not exaggerated. The presence of both ANC leaders and leading MDM activists clearly introduced an important dynamic in the discussion, elevating the debate throughout. ANC leaders, white businessmen, unionists and activists in the mass democratic movement, leading journalists, academics and even a lone National Party supporter visibly moved closer together and were indeed writing a page in the country's history, and probably in an unprecedented spirit of honesty and openness as well.

It moved UDF publicity secretary Murphy Morobe in the final session to remark that despite the vigorous debate "it is almost magic that we leave this conference with not one of us showing a scratch from another".

"We are beginning to learn very critically from the lessons history has taught us - not to shy away from contradictions because without disagreement and

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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

IDASA's goals are:

- To encourage South Africans of all races to reject apartheid and discover an alternative that is non-racial and democratic in the true sense of the word.
- To assist people to accept and work for a post-apartheid society as a way of allaying their fears.
- To mobilise the skills, knowledge and experience of all those who can assist the communities in the crisis areas of South Africa.
- To provide forums and opportunities on a nationwide basis to find democratic solutions to South Africa's problems.
- To assist in creating a climate for genuine negotiation towards a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

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EDITORIAL

Breaking down walls to build bridges

RECENT successful Namibian elections and the remarkably reasonable start to the debate in the territory's Constituent Assembly focus once again on the necessity of negotiation politics for a successful resolution of South Africa's internal conflict. While it is conceded that South Africa is very different from Namibia and that there is a lot of hard work ahead before formal negotiations can start, there is nevertheless a growing commitment among many South Africans to move more rapidly than ever before towards the negotiation table.

One of the fundamental problems facing successful negotiations is the difference in perception between the leadership of the black majority on the one hand and the De Klerk-led government on the other. The former is clear that fundamental change is demanded, leading to a new government where the majority of faces in that new government will be black. Insofar as the state is concerned, one cannot escape an uncomfortable feeling that at the end of the day, there is a perception not only within government but in the minds of most whites that while the ugly face of apartheid will disappear white control in some form or another will remain. In other words, there is a yawning chasm which exists between the two major protagonists.

Informal negotiations

Is it possible to narrow the gap between these two poles in order to make formal negotiations a reality, and if so, how? The essential first step is to create a climate of informal negotiations at every level in our society - and here we can learn from events in Europe.

The crumbling of the Berlin Wall, which so long divided East and West, has significance far beyond West and East Germany and even Europe. In many ways South Africa is a divided society and whatever else is true, the reunification in spirit which is

beginning to take place in Germany is a necessary prerequisite before successful negotiations can take place. We too in South Africa have built not one wall but many walls which have successfully divided one group from another in every walk of life. These walls will have to come down.

Ordinary people

In Berlin *ordinary people* rejoiced and joined hands and sought to break down not only the physical wall but the barriers which have existed for so long. It was one of those unusual, totally electrifying moments when *ordinary people* take over and all the professionals from politicians to border guards quietly stand aside and get out of the way. If we are to have a similar breaking down of walls both actual and imagined, then the *ordinary* South African, black and white, must play a major role. Fortunately there are already signs of spontaneous action from people who for so long have remained in the closet of their own prejudice, confusion and weakness. Those who were fortunate enough to participate in the recent marches in the major centres and in many small country towns of South Africa, marvelled at the fact that so many people who stood watching later joined in the marches and experienced a sense of participation which in itself is liberating. In many small communities there are growing numbers of ordinary South Africans who are determined no longer to wait for government decisions, for Acts of Parliament, but are prepared to begin to break down the walls which divide their own particular part of the South African society.

Reconciliation

To change the metaphor, in the pre-negotiation era in which we are living, there is a desperate need for bridge-building to take place at every possible level. One of the exciting new factors in our society is the discernible desire of many white South Afri-

JA-NEE

All things to all people

Upholding its fine record of giving all sides of the story regardless of the consequences, the Sunday Times recently printed a rather offensive set of fantasies on the world's most famous prisoner - concocted by a British columnist appropriately named Peter Simple.

Speculating elaborately about the reasons why Nelson Mandela should be re-

sisting release from his "cosy court" at Victor Verster prison, Mr Simple concludes that to Mr Mandela this setting was preferable to facing "the shrill screaming of Archbishop Tutu" or "the tasteless antics of Winnie Mandela and her football team" outside prison.

-Nice constructive stuff that will keep some customers happy no doubt.

No room for race

The term "non-racial" clearly means different things to different people. Take for instance the response of a Boland hotel re-

ceptionist when asked if her hotel was non-racial. "Yes, lady," came the friendly reply, "we are . . . we don't take blacks and coloureds."

-Reserved for a non-race, perhaps?

Gierige gode

Xau!, die San-ster van The Gods Must Be Crazy I en II, is gesien by die stembus in Namibia, geklee in 'n Swapo T-hempie. Hy het aan 'n joernalis vertel dat sy bydrae tot die twee films hom 'n skamele R7 000 in die sak gebring het. En ja, hy voel die filmmakers het hom "verneuk" in die

LETTERS

Address your letters to: The Editor, Democracy in Action, 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray 7700.

Radical mouthpiece shows true colours

YOUR propaganda writers must surely be congratulated for their excellent command of the written word in order to manipulate people's thoughts and thinking.

I refer to the article "A banner is a banner", under your Ja-Nee column which says the following:

"At the recent beach protest in Durban a racist bully assaulted a middle-aged white woman carrying a banner. It said nothing nasty about the AWB, CP or racism. Its simple message was 'Jesus is Alive'. Even more astounding: 'Policemen, ever vigilant in their defence of Christian values, helped the man remove the banner.'"

Analysis proves the following speculative, inaccurate guesswork. Why should the man have been a racist? If he was then he must have been black, or Indian, or maybe the woman was an Italian and the man an Aborigine. (Refer to the Oxford dictionary for a definition of race and racism.)

Granted the banner said nothing about the AWB or the CP, but neither did it say anything about Margaret Thatcher, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Pol Pot, the DP, Idasa or the SACP. Your writer takes the facts and turns them so that it seems that the man who is called a "racist", based on no facts at all, is a racist because he is a member of the CP or the AWB which is based on the surmise that the assaulting bully is a "white" racist attacking a white woman which is impossible and which is in turn based on no fact at all.

How you manage to pervert facts based on total unknowns astounds me. Why you intend to create divisions in a country already divided astounds me. Why you don't rather spend your money and energy on seeking solutions astounds me. Why you don't rather start development activities amongst the "lesser privileged" astounds me. How come you take South Africans for "bloody fools" astounds me.

If Idasa truly stands for democratic alternatives in South Africa I would expect them to be more tolerant and appeasing and rather seek "alternatives" than incite hate and division.

Obviously it is not your policy to publish nameless letters but even if I did give you my name you would not have seen fit to publish this letter for it shows you for what you are.

A change-committed true South African

(Letter shortened)

(The person in question formed part of a right-wing group that interfered with a protest against beach apartheid. In our book that makes him a racist. - Editor)

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cans in particular to find some way of joining in discussion and in debate with their fellow black South Africans. There is room in the creation of a climate of reconciliation for organisations to use their resources, their expertise, their opportunities to build bridges so as to enable people who have been so long divided to come together.

The Paris conference is one example of providing an opportunity for leading South Africans to talk honestly and openly with each other about their aspirations and their fears and hopes for a new South Africa. But clearly this must happen not only at leadership level but at grass roots as well.

Contradictions

Certainly it is the experience of Idasa that the demands for such opportunities are almost impossible to meet. Whilst the facilitating role has produced encouraging results, we must redouble our efforts in this fragile and hazardous pre-negotiation period. Therefore part of the breaking down of walls and the building of bridges must also include the highlighting of those events and practices which maintain our divisions and make the building of bridges difficult. We must identify openly and honestly the contradictions which still exist. It is not being bloody-minded to remind gov-

ernment that every time one person is detained without trial, this inflames a society and prevents reconciliation; that every time a school seeks to be opened to all children irrespective of race but is frustrated by legislation and bureaucracy, it is one further brick in the wall rather than the breaking down of the barrier. To remind government that there are at least 50 statutes which are based on race is not to be cynical or even uncaring about reforms which have already been introduced. It is simply a desire to speed up the process so that genuine formal negotiations can take place sooner rather than later.

There are of course reservations and fears among many who watch the accelerating changes take place, not only in Eastern Europe but in South Africa. Changes which are being welcomed by many cast long shadows in the minds of the fearful. But these are yesterday's people and tomorrow belongs to those who want to see the end of repression, of discrimination and the fundamental denial of basic human rights. Tomorrow belongs to those who are prepared to break down walls and build bridges today.

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

proses.

-Dalk is daar nou 'n tjekkie in die pos vir Swapo.

Praatkoors

Op dieselfde dag dat President F W de Klerk vir die AWB-leier, Eugene Terre'Blanche, te woord staan, sien Mandela 'n pas vrygelate PAC-leier vir 'n paar ure.

- Die droewe en wyse land in perspektief.

Strand toe met julle

Wees nie bevrees nie, die strande is nou oop en Rapport merk op dat Suid-Afrikaners wat

vir soveel jare uiteen gehou is, die somer mekaar op die strande kan begin vind.

- 'n Mens wil nou nie lugkastele op sandkastele begin bou nie, maar alle bietjies help seker.

Superbright

Dr Van Zyl Slabbert - along with other South African luminaries like Ken Owen and Alex Jay - made Style magazine's list of the country's 100 brightest people. How did Idasa's director of policy and planning qualify for this exceptional accolade? Too astute for parliament, said the magazine.

- A minor achievement, some would say.

More talks with ANC needed, says Volksblad editor

HENNIE van Deventer, editor of Volksblad and a great admirer of F W de Klerk, returned from the Paris indaba committed to drawing other members of the Afrikaner establishment into discussions with the ANC and leaders in extra-parliamentary politics.

He felt enriched by the discussions and found it particularly valuable to hear how members of the ANC motivate and defend some of their "unpopular" positions in debate. "I am in a much better position now to authoritatively deliver comment on extra-parliamentary politics," he said.

He admits to having felt uncomfortable with some aspects of the discussions, but agrees that being in a position to "put faces to names" takes some of the sting out of impressions based on press reports.

Van Deventer, editor of Volksblad for the past 10 years, believes that Afrikaans newspapers should inform their readers more fully on the views of extra-parliamentary groups to overcome their extensive ignorance in that area.

Afrikaner intellectuals too should be more receptive to the views of the democratic movement, and also use opportunities for dialogue to voice their own aspirations to that community.

As far as his own role as newspaper editor is concerned, Van Deventer plans to step up the content of Volksblad on black views. "I will certainly make more information available to my readers, but it will not necessarily be sympathetic reporting. In fact, I have returned with some ammunition to still defend some of my earlier viewpoints."



The editor of the Bloemfontein newspaper Volksblad, Mr Hennie van Deventer, and Mr Thabo Mbeki, the ANC's director of international affairs.

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contradiction there can only be stagnation and no development," he said.

As the conference drew to a close, however, an ANC leader cautioned that constant focus on strategies to end apartheid should not overshadow the actuality of what is happening on the ground in South Africa. In spite of many positive developments, repression was continuing along with reform in the country, and there was enormous suffering among millions of people in the region. "We have an urgent task to end the hunger, to end the poverty, to end the death," he said, also focusing again on the need for unity among all South Africans. "None of us acting alone will be able to end the system of apartheid. We have to act together and find out what we need to do together to get to that commonly defined future."

Perceptions differed sharply on the motivating force behind the more liberal management style of the new National Party leader. At the one end of the spectrum MDM and ANC leaders insisted that F W de Klerk had not had a change of heart, but that he was acting under the pressure of internal and external forces mobilised by the democratic movement, and indeed merely shifting the line of defence. It was not apartheid that De Klerk wanted to save but power and control, argued the director of the Legal Resources Centre in Port Elizabeth, Fikile Bam. "In the process De Klerk is even prepared to put apartheid in jeopardy," said Bam.

At the other end of the spectrum, the editor of the Bloemfontein-based Volksblad, Hennie van Deventer, maintained that De Klerk's initiatives were not a "cynical exercise to maintain strategic advantage" but the result of a moral

"It is almost magic that we leave this conference with not one of us showing a scratch from another."

awakening of consciousness among the Afrikaner leadership who sincerely wanted to establish a just and equitable society. In this context Idasa's director of policy and planning, Van Zyl Slabbert, cautioned against the rarefication of any particular form of struggle to end apartheid, stressing the importance of both the planned and unplanned forces of change. "The whole South African situation is driven by an internal dynamic," he said.

As the debate shifted to negotiations, Dr Willie Breytenbach of the African studies department at the University of Stellenbosch stressed that there was an inherent danger for the ANC in the De Klerk government's apparent readiness to allow mass mobilisation inside the country. "The more the government allows mass mobilisation, the higher its international credibility will grow and the ANC might well be seen as intransigent and to be delaying the process of transition," he said.

The ANC countered that its insistence on a normalisation of the political process inside South Africa was being misconstrued as pre-conditions for negotiation. Their demands for the unbanning of the

ANC, releasing of political prisoners and the lifting of the state of emergency in fact merely amounted to the creation of a climate for negotiation. But there was concern too that the ANC was approaching negotiation as a "trick used in the revolutionary paradigm". Slabbert said negotiation would unleash a dynamic which would create a completely new situation on the ground and neither side would have complete control over the agenda. Jay Naidoo of Cosatu argued that there was an inextricable link between revolution and negotiation in resolving the South African conflict, and that the one would not be possible without the other. Democratic Party co-leader Wynand Malan made a plea for flexibility on both sides. "The problems of the past will only be solved by the politics of the future," he said.

Idasa's executive director, Alex Boraine, noted the importance of the process of local level negotiations that has started in several centres of the country. Community structures were in this way beginning to challenge the power base of white councils and all parties were learning valuable lessons for future in the process.

ANC and MDM views on the participants at the national negotiating table proved interesting. While some argued against the presence of groups like Inkatha (because it is not active in the struggle against apartheid) in a formal negotiating forum, it appeared that there may be room for all significant groups at the table but that it will consist basically of two sides - with those who share the vision of ANC and MDM on one side and the rest on the opposite side.

There was a tentative exploration too of the concept of an honest broker to super-

The human face of socialism

A SOMEWHAT protracted debate on sanctions in the French National Assembly on the second day of the Paris indaba put the conference in the right frame of mind to seriously deliberate the future of the economy, a debate which emerged as the most fruitful part of the discussion.

JCI economist Ronnie Bethlehem suggested that delegates should bury the

Africa needed a mixed economy, but the question was "how to get the mix of the mixed economy right", said Pieter le Roux of the University of the Western Cape. The present vast inequalities were the result of "apartheid on top of capitalism" and there was an urgent need for investment in human capital - which could be a form of redistribution of wealth - to secure the survival of the economy in the long-



Van Zyl Slabbert, Madame Danielle Mitterrand, Prime Minister Michel Rocard and Alex Boraine.

hatchet on sanctions as it really was "yesterday's debate". The most important issue that needed to be settled was the redistribution of wealth and growth of the economy, and "tomorrow's debate" would be the meaningful integration of South Africa's economy with that of the sub-region.

The undisputable star of the economic debate was Alec Irwin, education secretary of Numsa, who didn't mince his words and exploded a myth-a-minute as he set out to prove that labour was not intent on destroying the economy.

"We do not hide the fact that we have a socialist approach, but our concern is the development of the whole society and to do that we need a coherent approach." He identified the central areas of dispute as that of growth and ownership. On both issues capitalists had outmoded ideas, he claimed. "The important question is whether people are being employed while we grow, are we talking about caviar or food."

There was some consensus that South

term.

Le Roux said nationalisation drove the "fear of hell" into capitalists, but at issue was not so much who owns the means of production, but how to establish democratic control over the surplus.

Irwin argued strongly that neither free market capitalism nor command economy socialism could solve the critical unemployment problem, low wage levels, vast housing shortages and the housing and education crises.

Current privatisation policies would prove disastrous - what was needed was an investment policy which would ensure that companies were internationally competitive, the cost of production was lowered and employment increased.

Irwin said the labour movement was critical in its approach to socialism and had no objection to an interchange with economists to begin to fashion policies to deal with the problems of the economy. Labour was also not proposing the nationalisation of every company, but would insist that any restructuring be democratically planned.

Exposing the myths of 'white history'

By Hans Pienaar

DURING the past two decades an almost insatiable appetite has developed for history in South Africa. New Nation newspaper every week devotes several pages to history and even the Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa has sold 130 000 copies.

These observations were made by Prof Colin Bundy of the University of the Western Cape in his introduction to the Weekly Mail Book Week panel discussion on "Peeling the Myths off South African History" in Johannesburg in November.

There were good reasons for this, he said. An entire generation's contempt for the history offered at schools and the need for a substitute has led to a palpable pressure on historians from the most surprising quarters.

Communities who glimpse the possibility of a different future also want to know something about their past because without this knowledge they resemble children without knowledge of their parents - insecure, uncertain and invalidated.

Dr Neville Alexander, of the South African Committee for Higher Education in Cape Town, later illustrated the urgency of a rewriting of history when he read from the recently rediscovered notebooks he had kept on a kind of alternative history workshop which was held during his "10-year course" at the "University of Robben Island".

"Consider what would happen if we did not have this (rewritten) image of the past," he said. "The revolution would then be superimposed upon an alien soil, it would appear as a natural catastrophe, frightful and inexplicable."

He revealed that the Robben Island inmates actually decided that a foundation should be established for historians to write an alternative history, without knowing that a revolution in historical studies had already started shortly after the 1976 student uprising.

By now this has become a tide, as Prof Bundy described it, within which a particularly strong current flows: The assault

on perceived wisdoms or myths. Two demonstrations were given of this "assault": Self-employed historian Jay Naidoo spoke on the Jan van Riebeeck myth, and Xhosa history expert Jeff Peires on the infamous cattle killing instigated by Nongqause in the 19th century.

Naidoo, a South African who works in

peaceful co-existence, although there was no actual evidence to support this contention.

The facts could easily have been checked, Naidoo said, as Van Riebeeck's deeds were very well documented in the compulsory diary of his activities and his steady correspondence with the Dutch East India Company (DEIC).

In fact, David Livingstone already exploded the myth in 1853, when he pointed out that Van Riebeeck had suggested the enslavement of Khoi women and children on ships bound for Batavia, and forced labour for Khoi men, as the only way by which they could be deprived of their livestock, in order to ensure a steady supply of meat to passing ships.

The DEIC themselves knew that Van Riebeeck was an advocate of plunder, and not of peace. They consistently denied his requests for more muskets and horses and entreated him over and over again to display more friendship towards the Khoi. They finally lost their patience after he had provoked a war with the Khoi, and transferred him to Batavia.

Peires tackled the myth that a "different mode of understanding", or superstition, had led to the infamous cattle killing instigated by

Mhlakaza, Nongqause's uncle, a myth centred around the description of him as the Xhosa nation's greatest witch doctor.

Not so, he said. Mhlakaza actually was the first Xhosa to be baptised in the Anglican Church. With his new name, Wilhelm, he tacked on to Archdeacon Merriman of Grahamstown, and was at his happiest when he accompanied the latter on his long evangelising journeys to Eastern Cape towns.

Back in Grahamstown the archdeacon eventually rejected him because he was a lazy servant. This led to Wilhelm's return to his Xhosa village, and the re-adoption of his original name. Among the Xhosa he began to spread his own gospel of the Resurrection, which was one of the main forces bringing about the cattle killing.

Slightly adapting an adage of Ambrose Beirce, Peires said that myths were designed to conceal a truth. "Once a myth is spotted, it is the task of the historian to unearth the particular truth that is being con-



Panelist Lezlie Witz . . . elicited lively response from the audience.

The Dutch East Indian Company knew that Van Riebeeck was an advocate of plunder, and not of peace

France, called Jan van Riebeeck "white South Africa's first hero", around whom a deliberate myth was created in a specific year, 1852, by a specific institution, the Dutch Reformed Church.

For more than a century historians embroidered on this first portrayal of Van Riebeeck as the man who brought Christian charity to South Africa. As late as 1976 scholars insisted that he was a believer in

cealed."

Throughout the session the panelists in various ways warned that progressive historians should also be aware of the danger of developing their own myths.

In such a vein Steven Friedman, policy researcher at the South African Institute of Race Relations, speculated on a provocative theory he called "Wellingtonism".

This was named after Wellington Buthelezi, who in the 1920s had amassed a huge following by preaching the liberation of black South Africans by Russians and American negroes who would descend from the heavens.

A similar line of thinking dominated resistance politics until the forties, Friedman said. Instead of mobilising their supporters, ANC activists poured most of their energy into a strategy of petitioning the government and the Crown.

The myths surrounding this history become dangerous when latter-day activists teach that after the forties the ANC drastically changed course and transformed itself into a militant mass-based organisation. On the contrary, Friedman argued, many strategies which the Congress movement adopted then had been designed to undermine the moral legitimacy of the South African government by appealing to foreign opinion.

The earlier strategies of petitioning had merely been translated, and not abandoned. Forms of mass protest were used primarily to influence the United Nations.

Since then a lot of anti-apartheid politics has been dominated by the idea that freedom comes from abroad. That has begun to change only in the last few years. The trade union movement and civic associations have begun to instill the idea that blacks do have power and that the freedom they long for, is going to be won by their own efforts.

In an earlier session on teaching alternative history in the classroom, Wits historian Cynthia Kross expressed her concern about the "snappy headlines" of newspaper pages devoted to alternative history.

She got the feeling that journalists believed that they had "extracted the answers from fumbling academics", an attitude which had its dangers because it implied that it was possible to be in possession of the "real story at last".

Alternative methods of teaching history were presented by Ishmail Waadi and Lesley Witz, which elicited some lively responses from the audience on the almost insurmountable problems presented by working in a hostile system still very much devoted to government policies.

In his talk on the Inkatha school syllabus Blade Ndzimandze showed how the classroom remains a political arena for apartheid forces. Inkatha cynically employs black cultural concepts like ubuntu (brotherhood) and hlonipa (respect) in its syllabus to reinforce the establishment of Inkatha Youth Brigades in schools.

At the same time he warned against viewing ethnicity in terms of the government's divide and rule strategy and not from the perspective of lived traditions as part of the daily experience of black people.

Hans Pienaar is a freelance journalist based in Johannesburg.

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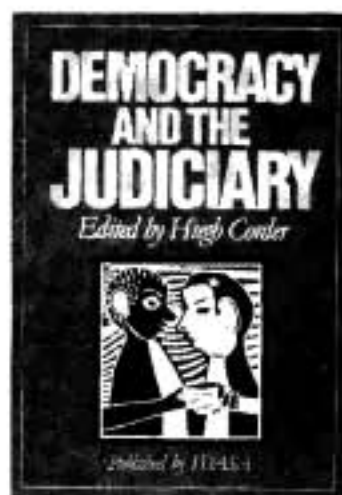


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Towards the end of the discussions they had clearly achieved a more open attitude towards each other. There was a plea from business that the adversarial relationship between business and the unions should be played down so that they may arrive at a point where everyone saw themselves as stakeholders in companies. JCI chairman Murray Hofmeyer maintained his position that business needs to take advantage of any opportunities it may get to influence the government. It was untenable for business and labour to continue lambasting one another with "recrimination upon recrimination", he said. The time had come for serious dialogue between these two parties in the economy. On the side of the unions there was an encouraging recognition of the importance of the business community in the generation of wealth.

In the closing session of the conference, the vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Professor Stuart Saunders,



UDF national treasurer Azhar Cachalia and Murray Hofmeyer.

highlighted a lesson that was implicit throughout the deliberations. He said although it was generally agreed that negotiation had to come as quickly as possible, it was vital to remember that these negotiations should be aimed at securing the future. The debate on the economy therefore had to be extended as a matter of urgency to investment and participation in programmes to improve of education, health and housing, the critical areas of need in the country.

Breyten Breytenbach, the world renowned South African poet who "master minded" the conference and the lavish reception in Paris of his fellow South Africans, remarked that there was a need to strengthen the dynamic process between our methods and what we are aiming for. "We should try to take as many people as possible with us."

At the end of the Paris indaba, one was left wondering how long Idasa could continue to play a role in initiating debates of this nature beyond the borders of the country. Clearly everyone at the conference was feeling the effects of this dimension of the South African schizophrenia. Everyone wanted the ANC to come home soon, not only to end the personal suffering of the individuals concerned, but also so that their remarkable vision of the future can be shared among all South Africans.

NEGOTIATION

World watch as NP, ANC manoeuvre for moral high ground

By Pierre de Vos

ALTHOUGH both the National Party and the ANC have in principle endorsed the concept of negotiation, it is clear that the two groups hold profoundly different views on what the result of these negotiations should be.

Both groups would like to see their constitutional framework adopted as a starting point. At present, both parties are manoeuvring themselves into a position which would enable them to gain the initiative for the moral high ground without a commitment at this stage to sit down at the negotiating table.

The eventual outcome of this game may hinge on the government's willingness to accept a negotiated settlement that would culminate in the handing over of power from the white minority to the majority of the people in South Africa. This in turn may depend on whether the opposition forces would be willing to sacrifice at least some of their principles to entice the government into striking a bargain.

At present the possibility of such a historic compromise seems most unlikely - not the least because this would entail that the present government would then become the first power in the history of the world to voluntarily negotiate themselves out of power.

But in the rapidly changing world in which we find ourselves almost anything seems possible. Despite the very conservative record built up by State President FW De Klerk before his election as leader of the NP, he started talking about the promotion of a climate for negotiations shortly after ousting PW Botha.

But the fact that the once mighty and rigid National Party has transformed itself into a flexible and, some would argue, much more dangerous opponent, does not mean that the party is on the defensive and on the brink of going into "surrender talks".

According to Prof Hennie Kotzé, head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch, the state of the economy had a lot to do with the way De Klerk acted during his first two months in power. The devastating effect of the economic isolation of South Africa, the difficulty in repaying foreign debt and the absence of a foreign banker for the developing country all contributed to make the government realise that "things can't go on as they used to".

According to Kotzé, the Minister of Fi-

nance, Mr Barend du Plessis, had no final control over government spending before De Klerk took over. "He could not bring the reality of the economic situation home to the Cabinet. But that is all changing now."

The government's skilful handling of the Commonwealth summit in Kuala Lumpur and the successful re-negotiation of their foreign debt demonstrated a new understanding of the political and economic realities they find themselves in. "De Klerk knew he had to deliver something to stave off the sanctions threat in Kuala Lumpur," says Kotzé.

The question remains, however, whether De Klerk's tenure in office won't be a repeat performance of that of former President Botha. Will the new president turn out to be a smiling version of the previous NP leader?

James Selfe, Democratic Party member of the President's Council and DP research officer, is one of many people involved in Parliamentary politics who believe that De Klerk is qualitatively different from his predecessor. "It might even be that the man had a ideological change of heart after coming into office. He is definitely far more clever than PW. Intellectually he has accepted that the present regime is unacceptable."

Tactics

Whatever the political make-up of President De Klerk may be, his new tactics have forced both the MDM internally and the ANC externally to change their tactics. The ANC and the MDM met in Lusaka in July to thrash out a position on negotiations.

New Nation, a newspaper which supports the MDM, commented recently that the Lusaka meeting came out of the realisation that "the imperialists and the regime" hoped to win new space and regain the initiative by launching a negotiation initiative with which they plan to confuse, divide and demobilise anti-apartheid forces.

Titus Mafolo, a member of the UDF executive, explained that the MDM also viewed negotiations as a weapon used by both sides to advance their interests and positions. "Thus it is important that we see negotiations as part of struggle to be waged simultaneously with other forms of struggle. Some liberals argue that negotiations will solve all our problems. But this is based on the mistaken view that conflict between the NP and the ANC is based on a misunderstanding.

"The ANC and the government represent classes whose objective interests are in

conflict. The conflict between the white ruling bloc and the oppressed cannot be resolved by discussion, but only when the system of white minority rule is replaced by a national democratic state."

Mafolo said the challenge to the MDM was not a simple one.

"We cannot just reject negotiations. If people sense that we have ignored the chance to end the conflict in our country peacefully, we will be isolated," he said.

The document drawn up at the Lusaka meeting argued that negotiations could only follow once discussion had taken place "between the liberation movement and the South African (government) to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing on a mutually binding ceasefire". This process, it was agreed, could only take place if certain pre-conditions were met by the government. These included:

- the unconditional release of all political prisoners and detainees;
- the lifting of all bans and restrictions on organisations and individuals;
- the removal of all troops from the townships;
- the ending of the State of Emergency and all legislation which curbs political activity; and
- the end to all political trials and executions.

Although both the MDM and the NP agree that the climate for negotiations will have to be created, the MDM sees these conditions as necessary to create the space within which to organise, to build and strengthen their organisations.

"One cannot negotiate from a position of weakness," explains Barbara Frieman, a member of the Executive of the Cape Democrats and involved with the Five Freedoms initiative.

"The defiance campaign must also be seen in this context. It is a conscious effort by the MDM to show to the world that it is a force to be reckoned with." This helped to get the ANC's framework for negotiations accepted, first by the Frontline states and later by the Organisation for African Unity (OAU).

While the ANC and the MDM were accepting negotiations as part of the struggle, the NP stated that the only pre-condition for negotiation should be that the people sitting around the table with them "should be committed to a peaceful process of political change", according to the Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr Roelf Meyer. As is the case with the ANC however, they envisage the parties sitting around *their* table working with *their* agenda.

"The government is prepared to negotiate a new constitution to include all South Africans," says Meyer. "We have not finally decided on the specific type of political system that will be accepted. This will be the result of negotiations and we would not want to be prescriptive in this regard.

"But we have committed ourselves to



President FW de Klerk . . . A smiling version of PW Botha?

certain principles such as powersharing and the protection of minority rights and the provision of equal vote to all South Africans. We are in favour of a system that will provide equal sharing of power between voluntarily formed groups. We are not in favour of a system whereby all the power would be vested in the hands of the majority - or the minority - whereby domination could take place."

Group rights

He acknowledged that the government felt strongly about the protection of minority rights. "But we are prepared to put this on the table and, for example, to negotiate about the definition of a 'group' as well as what rights should be protected in which way.

"We are not rigidly bound to certain non-negotiable views regarding group rights. In return, potential negotiating partners should not have their own non-negotiables; for example that they would only negotiate about the transfer of power or about the one-man, one-vote system in a unitary state. Negotiation is, after all, a process of give and take where positions are mutually shifted in order to come to an agreement," he said.

The necessity of compromise during the negotiation process is also accepted by MDM leaders like Titus Mafolo who warns that negotiations always involve compromise. "If an enemy was so weak that no compromises were necessary, no negotiations were necessary either," he says.

The big question now hinges on the rigidity with which the parties cling to their "non-negotiables" which in return depends on the relative weakness or strength of the parties. At this stage it is not clear what the government is prepared to relinquish, but it may be forced to make

choices not even contemplated at present.

"From the ANC's perspective it would therefore be imperative that the NP makes some concessions to the organisation to enable the organisation not to go into the process empty handed," says Kotzé. "Both parties could actually gain something if the government decided to make some concessions that were within its reach."

According to Dr Pierre du Toit, a lecturer in Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch, any talk about negotiations must be viewed as premature. In order for real bargaining to take place deals will have to be struck by the parties involved; there will have to be mutual profit for the parties involved and there will have to be mutual acceptance of the other parties involved.

At present no such common ground exists between the agendas of the ANC and the NP to make this bargaining possible. "The ANC doesn't talk about making compromises. Both the ANC and the NP are prepared to negotiate from within their own framework. The ANC from their viewpoint as enumerated by the Freedom Charter and the NP from within the framework of their five-year plan. Because the two agendas do not overlap there are no common ground at present to make negotiation a possibility."

Du Toit says although talk of democracy is being bandied about by all and sundry, the content given to the term differs. "The Charterist form of democracy is based on substantive justice, implying equity and a redistribution of wealth. Liberal forces and even the National Party are talking about procedural democracy, implying a constitution based on the rule of law, and a Bill of Rights with independent judiciary."

The implicit acceptance by both the NP and the ANC of the importance of the world opinion in their manoeuvring for a stronger position if or when negotiations start, points to the real way in which the negotiation process could move.

"The Western powers could hold the key to a negotiated settlement in South Africa," says Dr Du Toit. "They are the ones who have the grip on the holders of power."

But why would the international community want to do this?

"They want to make South Africa safe for venture capital and they would like to see a stable conservative black government. They would like to see a conservative ANC government taking over with some guarantees given to whites," Du Toit argues.

In a world dominated by the capitalist economic system the seven Western powers could almost, if they wanted to, dictate government actions. "For a historic compromise to be reached these powers will have to operate behind the scenes in a very direct way proposing their own framework within which negotiations will then have to take place."

Involving whites in the demolition of apartheid

By Tony Karon

In recent years the MDM's approach to working among whites has moved from a narrow focus on the small group of whites prepared to align themselves directly with the MDM, to seeking to influence mainstream white politics.



A contingent from the Afrikaanse Demokrat

ANC PRISONER Ahmed Kathrada's first public address in more than 25 years was a passionate and deeply moving account of his movement's commitment to a non-racial future. "We have to persuade our white compatriots that the greatest dangers facing them, their children and their future, are not the black people, are not the ANC or the South African Communist Party, not Archbishop Tutu or Dr Allan Boesak," said Kathrada. "Their greatest enemy is apartheid, the National Party, the Conservative Party and all those who still propagate under different names the policy of white separateness and white supremacy."

Kathrada's speech also captured a key strategic dilemma faced by the MDM in its attempts to reach whites: "After we exclude the active but relatively small white groupings such as Jodac, the Cape Democrats, Nusas, the End Conscription Campaign and the Black Sash, not a single one of the white political parties comes anywhere near to accepting the type of society that we envisage in a free and non-racial democratic South Africa."

The MDM's ideological lodestar is the Freedom Charter, which proclaims that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white". Non-racialism has therefore long been a non-negotiable principle for its adherents. Over the decades, hundreds of whites have joined the active ranks of the MDM and its predecessors. Names like Bram Fischer, Helen Joseph, Ruth First and Joe Slovo figure prominently in the iconography of the liberation struggle. Indeed, the UDF had to sacrifice the potential support of Black Consciousness organisations for its insistence on including organisations based in the white community. Familiar anti-apartheid veterans like Helen Joseph and Beyers Naude

were prominent on UDF platforms, at meetings held in both black and white areas. The "white democrats" who filled these structures were those who were prepared to accept the programme and discipline of the MDM. Besides structuring the participation of whites in broader MDM campaigns, "white democrat" structures of the MDM were traditionally charged with the responsibility of projecting the movement's objectives in their own community, in order to bolster support.

While always a part of its programme, work among whites has never been the priority of the MDM. The MDM sees the political and economic power of collective action by the majority as the motive force of change in South Africa. Its priority has therefore always been organising that power in the townships.

In recent years the MDM's approach to working among whites has moved from a narrow focus on the small group of whites prepared to align themselves directly with the MDM, to seeking to influence mainstream white politics. UDF-affiliated organisations of white democrats are a small presence in the white community - nationally their combined membership is under 2 000, mostly ex-students, professionals and intellectuals.

The white UDF affiliates are more of a work-team for the MDM, than representatives of a substantial white constituency. Nonetheless, their energy facilitates an impact disproportionate to their numbers. Their rallies, pickets, pamphleteering drives, house meetings and cultural events created a presence for the MDM within the broader community of anti-apartheid whites.

Of course the UDF affiliates are not the only game in town. The Black Sash and the End Conscription Campaign have reached wider constituencies, at the same time as

winning the respect of the MDM for their contributions. Until fairly recently, however, most white opponents of apartheid maintained a narrow parliamentary view of opposition. With a few notable exceptions, the "official opposition" remained disdainful of the MDM until 1986. The UDF, on the other hand, called on whites to abandon parliament and join the extra-parliamentary movement.

The Front viewed parliament as an "institution of minority rule". Its opposition to co-optation through the tricameral parliament made the idea of parliamentary participation anathema to the UDF. Hence, between the parliamentary perceptions of most anti-apartheid whites, and the MDM's demand that whites quit parliament, there was very little meeting point during the early 1980s.

THE burgeoning strength of the MDM, and the consequent crisis in white politics, changed the situation. The nation-wide township revolt of 1985-6 marked a crisis-point for white politics. The government's reform programme lay in tatters, and the townships were aflame. White politics floundered in turmoil. PFP and business delegates took the (then) unprecedented step of meeting with the ANC. Opposition leaders Van Zyl Slabbert and Alex Boraine resigned from parliament to pursue extra-parliamentary alternatives. By 1986, large sections of the white political establishment had realised that the major political contest in South Africa would not be fought in parliament, but between the NP and its extra-parliamentary opponents. The Rubicon speech of 1985 made it clear that Botha offered no political solution.

While the MDM's politics was not exactly palatable in establishment opposition circles, they began to view it as an alterna-



er City meeting in October.

AFRAPIX

Finding the formula . . . for a change

By Paul Graham

THE State President's actions and rhetoric have unleashed a dynamic of change which must be managed and encouraged, according to participants in a recent Idasa workshop on change in the white community.

Referring to the "slippery slope" in which change is gathering momentum of which few people are able to determine the outcome, the workshop sat down to devise strategies for change which would take account of the fluid and open moment in the country's history.

Participants at the workshop came from organisations and institutions working as change agents in the white community. The 36 people did not represent particular organisations but were drawn from human resource consultancies, church organisations and political organisations based in Natal, the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape.

At the workshop time was given to each person to describe strategies they had used and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Amongst the many described, two strategies provoked a great deal of interest.

Tots Against Apartheid (TAA) is a campaign to encourage parents not to register their children at birth. Registration is linked directly to one of the pillars of apartheid, the Population Registration Act which categorises people by race. TAA provides parents with a rationale for their action and a support base from which they can express their disagreement with racial divisions.

The second strategy, whereby it is attempted to involve people in working for a non-racial democracy, involves the Black Sash of Port Elizabeth who keeps lists of all people who write letters to the newspaper expressing their disapproval of aspects of apartheid. The Black Sash then invite these people to an introductory meeting. The strategy includes providing transport as they have discovered how many women are isolated and unable to travel.

Many other ideas were shared and discussed and this activity in itself provided a major affirmation that change agents are working successfully in the white community. There was also a realisation that the most successful long term strategies for bringing about change often took a great deal of time and resources and seemed to be irrelevant to the major issues of the day.

The difficulties of doing this became apparent as people working with the business constituency came to terms with the reality that they were often in competition with one another out in the market place.

The workshop process enabled people to overcome this difficulty and produced a number of creative responses to the present context. In doing this they were guided by a working model of change that had been generated early in the conference by the novel method of reflecting on the personal experiences of the people present.

Agreeing with Roger Roman, a business consultant and part of the Five Freedoms Forum business group, that "we cannot change people, people change" the group attempted to define the environment within which people found it most easy to change.

This should include first hand exposure to other realities, a community of support and challenge in which the changes happening can be interpreted and re-inforced, and redefining individual self-interest as linked to the interests of other people. In this process values played a crucial role in either retarding change or encouraging it and a great deal of attention needed to be given to the ways in which people consider and reflect on their or alternate value systems.

The programme used this working model together with an analysis of the key forces encouraging and discouraging change in the

tive with which they could engage. Thus the beginning of a series of indabas both inside and outside the country, at which the leadership of the ANC, UDF and Cosatu met with Afrikaner intellectuals, captains of industry, opposition MPs and a range of others. For both sides the experience was novel and challenging. The State of Emergency, and the detention of tens of thousands of activists, made it clear to the MDM that the government was not about to collapse. While its emphasis remained organising its mass following as the major force for change, the MDM noted the shifts in white politics.

UDF and Cosatu documents began to stress the need to isolate the government from all potential allies in the white community. Thus, from a position which simply urged whites to leave parliament and join the MDM, the emphasis now became maximising opposition to apartheid on all fronts. "The white community does not have a history of extra-parliamentary opposition," UDF acting publicity secretary Murphy Morobe told an interviewer early in 1986. "The whole tradition of boycott politics has not been prevalent, so a different approach is needed."

A new dynamic in white opposition was heralded by the Dakar meeting between the ANC leadership and a delegation of prominent white establishment figures in 1987. The desertion of Afrikaans intellectuals from the National Party grew in size and scope. Elements inside parliament, like Wynand Malan and rebel-Prod Jan Van Eck, began to test a bridging role between the MDM and white establishment politics.

A Five Freedoms Forum conference in September 1987 turned into the first major indaba on strategies between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition. At that gathering, the MDM revealed its concern to reach whites beyond the small group already within its ranks. "I believe there are thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of white people in South Africa who desire an end to apartheid and want to see genuine negotiation, but we only see a tiny proportion of them getting involved in anti-apartheid organisations," Rapu Molekane, secretary general of UDF's most militant affiliate, the South African Youth Congress, told the FFF conference. "We need to do far more to ensure that these people find a place for themselves to work effectively for change. They may not support all the aims of the democratic movement but may nevertheless have an enormous amount to contribute in building a new South Africa."

UDF treasurer Azar Cachalia was even more direct: "Let us be self-critical and admit that our work in the white community has

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Finding a formula . . .

white community to develop potential new strategies.

Richard Steele, International Fellowship of Reconciliation worker, described these as "Yes, and . . ." strategies which would encourage people to continue taking the initiatives they believe to be significant and would then stretch them to go further.

In a summary statement on the forces for change, the workshop identified that the de-racialisation of society is happening, that the African National Congress is achieving general prominence, and that the nature of a post-apartheid society is now on everyone's agenda. In the area of negotiations the questions are about control of the process and who is taking the initiative rather than about whether negotiations are possible.

All these factors make it difficult to work with the old divides and rhetoric. As one person put it, "we must talk with the people in the National Party and not treat them as the enemy."

It could be dangerous to criticise the present changes being promoted by the South African government because it could marginalise people opposed to apartheid in the white community. This was mentioned as an important reason for adopting a positive approach.

Paul Graham is Natal Regional Director of Idasa.

Involving whites . . .

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perhaps been narrow in that we have not been able to reach out to significant sections of the white community. If we are not going to be able to turn enough whites against apartheid, the struggle is going to be much longer and much more painful. So in making a call to whites, the UDF is not narrowly asking them to join the UDF affiliates, or support the UDF. It is a call for whites to break decisively from apartheid and to act against it." Hence the MDM's recognition of a white 'middle ground' who were not prepared to align directly with the MDM, but were prepared to oppose apartheid.

WHILE parliamentary participation by white opposition parties could not be endorsed by the MDM, it could no longer be a stumbling block in the search for joint action against apartheid. In different parts of the country, alliances spanning traditional divides emerged over issues like the Group Areas Act and human rights abuses. A UDF official explained: "Alliances do not eliminate the differences between participants."

The parliamentary and extra-parliamentary groups differ significantly over the future socio-economic system, and strategies like sanctions, armed struggle and participation in government-created structures.

Elections obviously remain a point of difficulty. The MDM has toned down calls for whites to leave parliament, and has not campaigned for boycotts of white elections. They insist, however, that their respect for the strategies pursued by the anti-apartheid white political parties demands an

Activists work out solutions

By Sue Britton

THE struggle on the way towards a democratic society in South Africa is long and costly. The road is hard to find and there are no clear answers to the questions about which way is best. Most maps seem to confuse the route rather than make it more clear.

The Idasa workshop on "Strategies for Change" held in the Transvaal in November helped participants to understand this at a deeper level. Instead of listening to papers presented by experts on various aspects of the topic, and then discussing all these opinions, comparing them and drawing some conclusions, people who came to the workshop were challenged to work out their own solutions.

All the delegates were people who have been working for change in the white community for many years. Between them they had amassed a vast amount of experience. The workshop was designed to help these people share that experience and reflect on it in such a way that new strategies could emerge from the learnings.

But it didn't happen quite as easily as that. Halfway through the second day of the workshop people were struggling with the sheer amount and complexity of the information that a group of 35 highly moti-

vated and articulate activists had generated. Because everyone was also skilled in planning workshops, there were also inevitably numerous opinions as to how to work with all this information. It was a struggle indeed, and some felt it was not worth it.

But for those who recognised the need for and value of allowing a creative process to take its course, the seeming intractability of that "stuck" time was a challenge to persevere and not to give up the process. Participants continued to struggle with how to handle the information so that it would yield results.

And yield results it did - and they were gold. As participants gathered on the grass in the sunshine on the Sunday morning, it was clear that a shift had taken place, that the creative process had given birth to a fresh understanding of change at the present time in South Africa. People articulated a variety of strategies. What was amazingly common about all of them, was the positive tone and basic trust in the people of South Africa to take control of their own lives and to create a new society of justice and peace.

Ms Britton is social action organiser for Diakonia in Durban.

equivalent respect for the major strategy pursued in black communities: non-participation. Moves by white political parties to put up candidates in coloured and Indian elections therefore put those parties on a collision course with the MDM. The Democratic Party's fielding of Indian candidates in the recent general election generated widespread hostility within the MDM.

Nonetheless, the MDM remains committed to maximising active opposition to the NP. Through its defiance campaign, the MDM reasserted the centrality of the extra-parliamentary dynamic in dictating the pace of change. "The defiance campaign has created further cracks within the ruling bloc," an MDM spokesperson recently observed. "White mayors and councillors have joined the marches against apartheid. This is a victory for the struggling people of South Africa."

The defiance campaign underlined the challenge of organising the thousands of whites who joined its marches and beach picnics. The MDM will obviously seek to draw as many as possible directly into its structures, through its white affiliates. Some potential recruits balk at the idea of participating through a predominantly white affiliate. At present, however, the MDM's very strength is premised upon building its residentially-based structures. In practice, this means that the Group Areas Act determines the composition of its primary structures (although these are drawn together in non-racial co-ordinating structures and campaign work).

The breakdown of residential segregation in some city centres presents prospects for a new type of organisation, but at present the dilemma over non-racial structures

continues. The number of whites who will directly join the MDM is still a minority, even among anti-apartheid whites. The MDM is therefore faced with the challenge of relating to those outside of its own ranks. Here the object is to seek a consistent programme of joint action on immediate issues, such as segregation of residential areas and schools.

White workers

Although not a priority, Cosatu is also committed to joint action with white workers over economic grievances, which they hope will ultimately draw those workers into non-racial trade unionism. There have been limited but significant successes on this front. The deteriorating economic position of white workers increases the potential for such action. The Conference for a Democratic Future scheduled for early December reflects the MDM's concern to unite the widest possible anti-apartheid front. Here again, the question of drawing in a wider range of whites is a concern. "The CDF should not be indecisive about making further progress in this regard. We should seek ways of engaging in action all forces who are breaking away from the ruling bloc," an MDM spokesperson said.

It can be expected that the programme of action adopted by the CDF will give attention to the objective of drawing large numbers of whites into mass activity. Whether it be directly within its structures, or through alliances, the MDM is taking more seriously than ever the challenge of involving the maximum number of whites in the demolition of apartheid.

Tony Karon is the editor of New Era magazine.

The rocky road to democracy

While most people in South Africa – including the government and its main opponents – claim to believe in democracy, we seldom analyse the stumbling blocks on the road to building a truly democratic future.

THE focus of a recent Idasa conference in Port Elizabeth was not on the method of reaching democracy – the subject of so much current discussion around negotiations, preconditions and creating climates – but on the obstacles which both the government and its opposition place in the way of reaching this goal.

A top line-up of speakers provided a highly stimulating evening to the more than 80 participants from all walks of life.

Tiaan van der Merwe, chairman of the Democratic Party, kicked off by giving a succinct overview of the obstacles placed by the government in the way of democracy. While much of what he presented was commonly known, it was important to re-

state the obvious facts to which people have become anaesthetised through many years of abnormality: that all citizens do not have the vote, and that the government does not seem any nearer to accepting the principal of universal, non-racial franchise; that apartheid has created a heritage of fear, suspicion and social segregation to the extent that it takes an abnormal effort for an ordinary white person to relate normally to a black person. How can a democracy function until it has overcome this legacy?

Andrew Boraine of Planact then gave an enlightening paper on the obstacles placed by the Mass Democratic Movement in the way of building democracy. Speaking from an MDM perspective, he highlighted the need for a self-critical approach to politics. In a situation of extraordinary repression, he warned of over-centralisation in organisations, of unmandated leadership, of "hero-worship" of leaders and the unacceptability of criticising leaders, especially those in exile; of the need for unity leading sometimes to a stifling of debate; and of the lack of resources and skills – especially those needed by the masses, such as literacy, to enable them to play a full role in the democratic process.

Sefako Nyaka, a journalist from the *Sunday Star*, spoke on how access – or more pertinently, non-access – to information restricts a

society's ability to become democratic; where certain sections of the population are presented with one set of facts (which are more often than not distorted by editorial opinion), while another section of the population is fed a different interpretation, it is extremely difficult for individuals to make informed choices about their society. The role of the press, he stressed, is to make adequate information available to the public so that they can make their own, informed decisions. However, in a situation where the media is biased in favour of certain values, organisations or racial groups, it may be necessary to have "alternative" papers which provide news which is, admittedly, biased towards the "other side".

Professor André du Toit, of the University of Cape Town, then gave what was felt by all to be the most challenging address of the evening. Focussing on the topic, "Positive Indicators Towards Democracy", he drew on the experience of certain Latin American and Southern European countries. Using diagrams, he illustrated how in these countries a number of similarities characterised the process of change from authoritarian regimes to democratic governments.

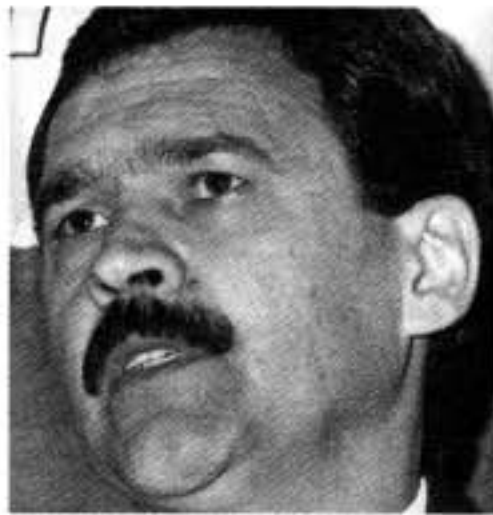
Usually, those in power were divided between the "hard-liners" and the "soft-liners"; the soft-liners initiated a process of liberalisation – allowing more open political opposition. This in turn led to the "resurrection of civil society", when the majority of the population became actively involved in working for change, through a range of institutions – civic organisations, the church, education bodies, etc.

The moment of popular upsurge which led on from this was a crucial point, at which three basic options existed: the "hard-liners" take the society back to authoritarianism, perhaps through a coup; there is a revolution (which is unlikely to result in a democracy) or there is a negotiated solution which begins with the formation of "pacts" by different sides in the conflict. In this situation, the government may have to democratise more than it had planned.

After tea, the delegates convened for a panel-discussion, and a lively debate ensued. Some questions focused on the role of the press, but most were directed towards Du Toit, trying to assess the relevance of his model to what is happening in South Africa. The outcome? That we are probably at that crucial stage in our country's history when we could, if we play our cards correctly and use opportunities wisely, be on the road to a democratic state.



André du Toit



Tiaan van der Merwe

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At this conference leading figures will diagnose the critical problems of democratic accountability in their respective fields and attempt to find constructive ways of building a culture of democratic accountability together.

Nats, Sowetans hold talks on city



Participants . . . Ellen Kuzwayo, Geoff Budlender (chairperson), Simon Brand, Marietta Marx and Ian Davidson.

"I WOULD never dare say that we will never talk to the Soweto People's Delegation (SPD). Personally I am prepared to talk," Mrs Marietta Marx, National Party member of the Johannesburg management committee in the city council said at the end of an Idasa forum entitled: "Johannesburg and Soweto: Can there be a common future?"

The forum took place at the end of November.

At the beginning of the meeting she told the 70 people in the audience that she had made some arrangements with friends to take her home when the forum had "killed" her or "leveled her to the floor".

Marx's fears were unfounded, as she herself admitted at the end. The participants, who ranged from Soweto civic association members to officials from the Rand Water Board, Eskom and the Transvaal Provincial Administration, found more common ground than they had expected.

The problem the panelists had to provide possible solutions to was best spelt out by Mr Ian Davidson, leader of the Democratic Party in the Johannesburg city council.

"There is a breakdown in city government in Soweto," he said, describing the lack and disintegration of services such as roads, electricity and water supply, storm water drainage and refuse removal. About 80% of Soweto residents are still not paying their rent and service charges.

"Soweto is bankrupt. Even if the rent boycott was ended and services were collected, Soweto would still not be financially viable."

The question, said Dr Simon Brand, chief executive officer of the Development Bank of South Africa, is not whether or not there can be a common future for Johannesburg and Soweto. "There is a common future, the question is what form that common future will take."

Marx acknowledged the economic problems of Soweto and argued for economic development and the Regional Services Councils (RSCs) as solutions. Since she saw no difference between the relationship between Johannesburg and Soweto and Johannesburg and Roodepoort, for example, she did not see a special relationship between the two cities.

Brand recognised the futility

of regarding Soweto as a completely autonomous city and acknowledged that Soweto could not pull itself up by its own boot straps. Brand argued that the creation of a single city was not an option because of macro political reasons, and thus proposed a model of economic development with budgetary assistance from central authorities such as the Transvaal Provincial Administration and revenue sharing from the RSCs.

The SPDs starting point was that Johannesburg and Soweto form two parts of a "colonial city" and argued that Soweto was not a separate city but a

dormitory township to serve the needs of white Johannesburg.

Because apartheid has created two so called "cities" out of what is in reality one city, inequalities and distortions occurred, argued Mrs Ellen Kuzwayo, member of the SPD. She cited the fact that whereas Sowetans earn R2 billion a year working in Johannesburg and spend about R1 billion in Johannesburg, they receive nothing in return for this contribution.

"The SPD would like to negotiate an urban development plan with the principal actors to

dismantle the colonial city, said Kuzwayo. Already they have begun to meet with the Transvaal Provincial Administration and Eskom to establish a new electricity supply system, the Rand Water Board, Soweto city council and some business people. They expressed regret about the fact that the Johannesburg city council and the RSC refuse to meet with them.

Kuzwayo spelt out the key issues that will need to be addressed by an urban development plan. They include:

- Ways of creating a common tax base;
- Appropriate forms of post apartheid metropolitan government;
- How houses can be transferred to the poorest sections of the community without leaving them to the mercy of the market;
- How to upgrade services and establish new service supply systems that can be controlled by the community rather than technocrats;
- How to dismantle the multiple administrative structures that have been created by apartheid.

While the SPD welcomed a report issued by Dr Brand the previous week, they argued that it does not go far enough. "Until these issues are put on the negotiating table by all parties concerned no progress will be made towards the creation of a united, prosperous and just city," said Kuzwayo.

Davidson agreed with the SPD's position that Johannesburg and Soweto were a single city. "Instead of unifying the cities, another administrative superstructure has been placed on top of it on ethnic grounds," said Davidson arguing against the RSCs as a long term solution to the problems facing Soweto. The RSCs, however, could play a role in the short term, he said.

"It is a question of short and long term goals and strategies," said chairperson Geoff Budlender in conclusion. "The people here are concerned to find short and medium term solutions. However we need to make sure that short and medium term solutions are consistent with our long term goals." He warned against devising technical solutions which would go against long term goals.

Lisa Seftel
Transvaal Regional Co-ordinator

New bid to end Natal violence

TWENTY-TWO people died recently in one weekend of bitter fighting between residents and supporters of different factions in the Natal township of Mpumalanga near Pietermaritzburg.

This was only one of many incidents in a township that has had to cope with violence for a number of years.

The mayor of Mpumalanga, Mr Roger Sishi, called on people from outside the township to visit in order to find out for themselves what was happening.

As a result of this a team facilitated by Idasa and others visited the township and spoke with the leadership of Inkatha and the UDF-aligned crisis committee about the conflict which had led to the township being divided into organisational units and strongholds.

The delegation also attempted to speak with the po-

lice and after the visit itself was able to do so, so that all sides involved in the violence could offer their perspectives on its causes, its results and ways in which the conflict could be resolved.

As a result of the meeting a statement was issued by members of the group in which they explained that both sides were committed to finding a solution and that they should be encouraged in this. In addition they called for impartial professional and local policing to bring the violence itself under control and to allow the residents the normal protection and service that could be expected from a police force.

The group included local and Durban-based business-, legal-, press- and church leaders. A number of initiatives have been launched in the area to bring about a sustained peace into which the experience of the visit has been fed.

“The problems with school is we don’t often get to think things out for ourselves. What the conference did was there in the title – we were thinking for a change!” – Nadia Basset, acting president of Pupa (Pupils Unite for Peace and Awareness), an organisation with branches at 20 schools in Cape Town.



W Cape pupils break down barriers

By Nic Borain

BY four on Friday afternoon on October 27, the 20 pupils who had spent a gruelling few weeks organising, were ready. The hall was decorated. The registration tables were prepared. The speakers, musicians, dancers and poets had all been invited and confirmed. It only remained to be seen if the pupils would turn up.

By 5pm the hall was filled with about 150 pupils from over 60 Western Cape schools. They gathered in communal groups and stared tentatively across at each other. Half an hour later, the black pupils were doing the toyi-toyi and many white pupils were starting to feel uncomfortable.

“At first it was quite hard,” said Nadia Basset. “We all come from such different backgrounds and we have such different life experiences. On that first night the organisers were worrying that the whole thing would be a disaster.”

Late into the night on Friday, after a provocative play by the Inter Church Youth and music from a marimba band, the pupils started to talk about their differences.

At first it was tentative, but later the debate became vigorous. Many white pupils expressed concerns about sanctions, violence and communism. The black pupils were, more than anything, concerned about being able to answer the questions

This set the tone for the conference. The next day, Dr Eve Bertelsen of the UCT English Department gave an audio-visual presentation on “How we come to believe the things we do.” Looking at advertising and

TV news footage, Dr Bertelsen identified the myriad subtle messages built into pictures. “How do photographers and directors try and make their message authoritative? By dressing up the man giving the message in a conservative tweed suit, giving him a pair of professorial glasses and putting him in front of a bookcase. We are meant to think he has read all of those books and therefore must be very clever;

‘We weren’t worried about whether we were black or white or what our backgrounds were. We just wanted to have a rave together.’

and therefore we should listen to what he has to say!”

This session challenged the fundamentals of ideas and beliefs and laid the groundwork for people to look with new eyes at other issues.

During the course of the weekend the pupils heard several other speakers and participated in workshops on Namibia, politics in South Africa today, the world in transition, culture and education.

“I think the highlight of the whole conference was the cultural workshop on the Saturday and then the party with Sabenza that evening,” said Nadia. “We learned so much about each other in a fun environment. We learned gum-boot dancing, the-

atre, poetry, silk-screening, clay moulding, songs (especially Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika) and it was just relaxed and I think it did more than anything in breaking down the barriers between us.”

Saturday night was taken up by a party. Like most teenagers, the conference participants just wanted to dance and listen to music. “When we were there we weren’t worried about whether we were black or white or what our backgrounds were. We just wanted to have fun and a rave together,” said Wendy Smuts, one of the participants.

Sunday afternoon was given over to the serious business of working out a programme of action for the white schools in Cape Town. The participants decided that the overwhelming priority was to establish solid functioning branches of Pupa in as many schools as possible.

“We have to become a well-established organisation, working efficiently side by side with others who have similar principles. At the moment we are trying to get representatives in each school who will be responsible for setting up a committee . . . We are living at a time when our country is going through so many rapid changes and developments that it is really important that young people get involved in thinking about the future . . . after all, the future is ours and we have a duty to make sure that it is the best possible future for us all.”

Any pupils from Cape Town who want to help with the establishment of a branch of Pupa in their school can contact Nadia Basset at telephone 686-3300.

Nic Borain is Regional Director of Idasa, Western Cape.

The free, fair and festive

The bright blue, red and green placard on the front door of a small match-box house in Katurura township outside Windhoek proclaimed the political allegiances of its inhabitants: "Swapo is the people - the people are Swapo."

The owner of the small house is a young woman who worked as an attorney in London before being imprisoned in one of the ill-famed Swapo "hell camps". Today she is a more passionate supporter of Swapo than ever before. "Swapo made mistakes," she says, "but that was during the war. Swapo remains the only liberation movement in the country."

Accompanied by Danie Botha, one of the 42 Swapo members elected to the constitutional assembly, we met some of the attorney's friends, among them a survivor of the Cassinga massacre and a woman who for three years was a Plan fighter in the north. We encountered a surprising lack of bitterness from these Namibians who, after 20 years of war, said they now long only for peace and freedom.

During election week, one was struck by contrasts in Namibia and constantly reminded of the dehumanisation brought about by the bush war - and more specifically civil war. We heard of the countless atrocities perpetrated by the colonial regime and its representatives that drape a bloody cloud over Namibia's history of liberation. But it is also well known that the oppressors were not the only guilty party. Swapo too detained infiltrators and spies and as some of these people were apparently imprisoned innocently it served as a

Contrast and irony

By Ian Liebenberg and Daniël Malan

powerful reminder that in a civil war nobody's hands are clean. Dehumanisation - as a result of war - is an ever-present threat.

At school we were taught that all members of Swapo were "terrorists" and that we should go and fight them on the border. But at polling booths in Windhoek we saw white and black people - DTA and Swapo supporters - standing in the same queues, patiently waiting to vote for the party of their choice. In the streets of Katurura we were greeted with thousands and thousands of colourful Swapo flags countered by thousands of DTA placards instantly recognisable because of their familiar victory salute. In the streets Swapo supporters rubbed shoulders with their DTA opponents.

One couldn't help but wonder why the war had to drag on for 20 years before the inhabitants of this former colony could exercise one of the most fundamental human rights - the right to vote.

Namibians showed the world that a multi-party non-racial, free and fair elec-

tion was possible. To us that pointed to an important and hopeful possibility - that one should work for this in South Africa as well. But we were also plagued by the counter-side of this coin: Would South Africa also have to go further down the road of military action and a destructive civil war before we could have our version of non-racial, free and fair elections?

The irony of this was not lost on South African observers as it is generally accepted that the current process in Namibia is, in many ways, a prelude to what is inevitably going to happen in South Africa. The extent to which extra-parliamentary forces inside South Africa are forcing the government to shift its position (as seen with the release of ANC leaders) reflects the way in which South Africa was compelled to allow the freeing of the political process in Namibia. Given the outcome of the election in Namibia, it becomes clear that the extra-parliamentary forces are going to play a key role in the democratisation of our country.

The final election results could, of course, be interpreted differently by different people. The fact that more than 97 percent of the registered voters eventually participated in the elections, had some journalists concluding that democracy was the real winner. Watching the professional and mostly very efficient United Nations personnel bustling around Windhoek in their white lorries and Golfs, one couldn't help but admire the way in which they handled the sometimes explosive situation.

For whites in South Africa there must lie

Unease after the cele

By Gary Cullen

THERE was an atmosphere of celebration in Namibia. Supporters of rival parties went about their daily business in political T-shirts and flew party flags from almost every township house. Yet behind the festival appearance of the elections, Namibians were worried.

This was the view of Ms Jenny Irish, a member of the Durban Youth Congress who was part of a fact-finding mission to Namibia prior to the elections. On their return some members of the delegation, consisting of representatives from white Mass Democratic Movement affiliates countrywide, addressed a report-back meeting arranged by Idasa in Durban. The group visited the south of the country and Windhoek and travelled extensively in the north, speaking to people from the churches, Untag, Swapo and the DTA.

Fellow delegate from the Durban Democratic Association Ms Jackie Leach, spoke of the contrast in atmosphere between the south which is relaxed and the north which is seized by the tension of a bitter and recently suspended war. In this region it seemed obvious that Swapo had won the political battle through the course of the war. By contrast the south, which witnessed one of history's most vicious pacification campaigns around the turn of the century in which some 70 percent of the Nama and Herero people were annihilated, is stronger DTA territory.

The overall impression of the delegation was a feeling of unease about whether the process between the elections and the eventual independence would be successful.

The Constituent Assembly is set the task of agreeing on a constitution by 1 April 1990. Resolution 435 makes provision to extend the transitional period beyond that date. However, there is widespread concern that the United Nations may pull out unilaterally on 1 April. The massive cost of the Untag operation, estimated at some R5-million a day, places tremendous pressure on Mr Ahtisaari to get out at the first deadline, come what may.

There is also dissatisfaction about the limited role of Untag in that it is purely a monitoring force and not there to keep the peace. Swapo members in particular feel vulnerable.

They are concerned about three possible sources of destabilising violence. Least mentioned was militant ultra-right whites who have stated their determination to fight. The second threat emanates from South Africa in the form of Unita troops who are allegedly now being based at Upington, a stones throw from the southern border where the terrain is sparsely inhabited and where Swapo support is the least substantial.

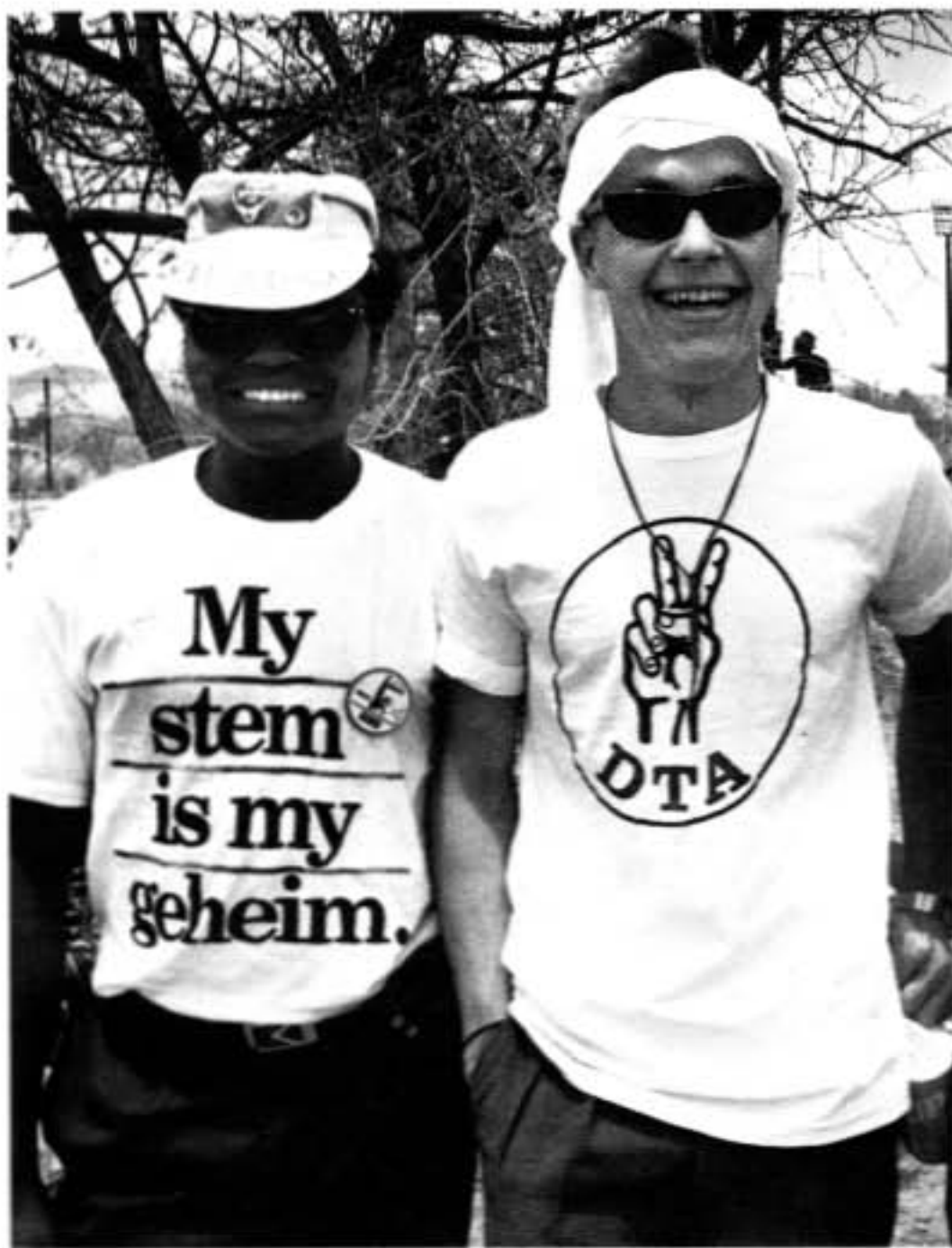
The biggest threat, according to Ms Irish, comes from former Koevoet members whom they met in the bars of Oshakati. Their outlook was expressed by one of their T-shirts: "Our business is War . . . and business is Good!" These men are adamant that they will be fighting on. They had said that the half of Koevoet's ap-

election in Namibia

some comfort in the fact that the election process in Namibia was substantially peaceful and – as was later certified by the UN special representative Martti Ahtisaari – also free and fair. The almost festive mood that prevailed in Windhoek and Katutura during the election week might come as a surprise to white South Africans who dread the day of an ANC take-over. Even more surprising might be the fact that the party mood transcended party lines with both DTA and Swapo supporters apparently being swept away in the euphoria.

In Keetmanshoop, a town situated near the South African border, we spoke to conservative white farmers of the district. It was clear that they were the ones who really felt threatened by the decolonisation of the territory. They were deeply suspicious of Swapo and talked about all the intimidation taking place "up north". They nevertheless stated that they were prepared to wait and see what the new government has in store for them. They were all prepared to at least give the new government a chance before casting their eyes to their southern neighbour.

Some of the well-educated



Rubbing shoulders in the street . . . A Swapo and DTA supporter during election week in Namibia.

whites who live in Windhoek were more cynical about the election. A well-to-do medical doctor told us that the election was "the greatest non-event in the history of Namibia". "In the end," he said, "one tends to vote for the party with the least unattractive white in it."

RETURNING to South Africa after a stimulating few days in "the last colony in Africa", the irony of the friendliness and the peacefulness of the election after 20 years of civil war does not escape one. Then one realises that the election may be a non-event in a way not thought of by the cynical doctor in Windhoek. For there are lessons to be learnt from the Namibian experience. And one of them may be that we in South Africa should become involved in a humanising struggle for liberation by opting for a country in which we could have non-racial, free and fair elections and social transformation by means other than violence and coercion; by means other than a civil war.

Ian Liebenberg is Director of Research with Idasa; Daniël Malan is a post-graduate student in political philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch.

orations

proximately 5 000 members who had been demobilised were the ones who were tired of the war. But many of them enjoyed the business and they were amongst those who had found their way into the SWA Police.

They also claimed that many of the demobilised troops had "lost" their weapons. Three hundred Koevoet troops were also Awol at the time of demobilisation, according to Untag figures. The delegation encountered deep suspicions about the likelihood of such inefficiencies in a crack unit like Koevoet.

This fear is heightened by current disputes with the South African Administrator-General, Mr Louis Pienaar. Ms Irish said that people they met were unhappy about Mr Pienaar, for years the implementor of South African policy in Namibia, projecting his office as an independent Namibian administration during the independence process.

The message being brought home by the fact-finding mission was that South Africans need to learn from the Namibian 435 process. Most importantly that whatever political settlement we end up with, it is a South African product designed for South Africa. The fundamental weakness of Resolution 435 is that it is a product of the UN designed to meet its international responsibility. Namibians have not shaped the process in terms of which they will need to build their nation in the future.

Gary Cullen is Regional Co-ordinator of Idasa in Natal.

Foreigners voted in droves

By Gary Cullen

WHITE South Africans who travelled to Namibia in their thousands to vote in the territory's first election were able to exploit the clause in Resolution 435 designed to ensure that refugees and their descendants are entitled to vote.

Prior to the election Swapo officials said that while some people covered by the clause had fought for independence and the right to vote, the majority have spent their whole voting lives opposing free and fair elections, whether in South Africa or in Namibia.

In order to vote a person had to be born in Namibia or be descendent from such a person. Present, or intended future place of residence was not a requirement. This drew between 10 000 and 12 000 South African residents into the election, the vast majority of them having no intention of living in the country, but who were happy to take advantage of the many charter flights laid on to ferry voters.

The voting contingent was also strengthened by seconded members of the administration and security forces who could vote if they had spent a continuous period of four years in the territory and pledged their intention to remain in Namibia. There is, however, little to bind them to their pledge now that the votes are cast.

In the opinion of a West German Untag member, Namibia should qualify for the Guinness Book of Records as the country in which the greatest proportion of foreigners have ever been permitted to vote in an election.

Going green in Pretoria

URSULA EID, West-German Member of Parliament and well-known member of the Green Party, addressed Idasa's Pretoria forum in November on "The Ecological Transformation of Society". The talk drew a lot of attention from a very wide range of people.

Participants in the evening of discussion included activists, realising that environmental issues should be addressed by progressive organisations, and environmentalists, interested in how their ecological work can be linked to a political struggle. The topic was thus approached from different angles which led to very interesting and sometimes heated discussions.

Ms Eid, who has been a member of the Green Party since its inception in 1980, started her speech with an overview of the ecological situation in the world

and identified four main problem areas in Europe: The dying of the forests, water pollution, air pollution and soil pollution.

She explained that the four guiding principles of Green policy are: Ecology, social justice, grassroots democracy and non-violence.

She stated that to solve these problems an ecological, social and grassroots economy has to be developed. The guiding principle of such an economy is the belief that wealth and well-being cannot be gained through economic growth only, nature also has to be protected. Ms Eid identified three other principles of an ecological economy, namely pollutants pay, the avoidance principle and the principle of recycling.

Strategies, based on these principles, include:

- the designing of production processes and products so as

not to destroy natural cycles and ecosystems;

- the transformation of the agriculture and chemical industries;

- the development of production techniques which favour decentralised and small production units;

- the closing down or reduction of industries that threaten the environment, eg the nuclear industry;

- the studying of the effects of simple products on people and the environment.

Ms Eid is also the Green Party's spokesperson on Southern African issues and focussed briefly on her party's policy on South Africa. She said that as one of the four guiding principles of her party is social justice, the party supports the struggle for freedom in South Africa. The Greens advocate sanctions as a way in which the South African government can be forced to real negotiations.

She also contextualised the Green principle of non-violence. This principle is valid in Germany, but the use of violence in the South African freedom struggle can be understood, as all other means to changing the society have failed, she said. The principle of non-violence means, however, that the Green Party will not fund weapons for the ANC or Swapo even though it supports their struggle, Ms Eid said.

When asked about an environmental policy for South Africa, Ms Eid said that she, as a foreigner, cannot prescribe to South Africans how they should approach their ecological problems. She stressed that an environmental policy for South Africa should be designed by South Africans with factors unique to the South African situation taken into account.

Although most people in the audience agreed that the ecological issue is of prime importance for South Africa, there were many different views about how the issue should be addressed. What became very clear, however, was that activists working for a democratic South Africa will have to seriously take up the environmental issue, while environmentalists can no longer raise ecological issues from an apolitical position.

Lou-Marié Kruger
Regional Co-ordinator, Pretoria

Nicolaas Vergunst



Ursula Eid . . . cannot prescribe to South Africans.

Konka-dag vir Kaapse kunstenaars

SOWAT 100 afgevaardigdes van verskeie kunsinstellings en kulturele organisasies het op 25 November by die Daljosafat-kunststiging buite Paarl byeengekom om die teoretiese en praktiese probleme aan te spreek waarmee skrywers, akteurs, kunstenaars, musikante en kulturele werkers te kampe het.

Die werkwinkel is deur Idasa gefasiliteer en deur die pas gestigde Kaapse kultuurgroep, Konka, gekoördineer.

Konka bestaan uit individue werksaam in die kunste wat saamgesnoer is deur die behoefte om oor institusionele en organisatoriese grense heen te werk vir 'n nie-rassige, verenigende Suid-Afrikaanse kultuur. Konka beywer hom: vir die afbreek van verdelende staatsstrukture; om die geleentheid te skep vir die uitruil van idees, vaardighede en menings; en om deursettingsvermoë te kweek in die stryd vir 'n verenigende kulturele geskiedenis en toekoms.

Prof Ampie Coetzee, dosent in Afrikaans by die Universiteit van Wes Kaapland, het namens Konka opgetree en die diep verdeeldheid tussen "heersersklas-kultuur" en "peoples culture", tussen "reaksiënere" en "progressiewe" agendas binne die apartheidsamelewing bevestig.

Coetzee het gepleit vir kulturele eenheid om uit die klaarblyklik aparte tradisies van kulturele dominasie aan die een kant, en verset teen onderdrukking aan die ander kant, voort te spruit.

Ian Steadman, dosent in drama by die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand, het voorgestel dat die aanvaarding van die opposisionele dualiteit van "elite-" versus "volkskultuur" die derde formasie tussen die twee pole misken. Hierdie middeweg is die populêre kultuur. Dit is hier waar kuns teoretici en kunstenaars in wisselwerking met mekaar tree om 'n verenigende kultuur te skep.

Marlene van Niekerk, dosent in Afrikaans en Nederlands by Wits, het Konka uitgedaag om die gemaklike verhouding tussen die ekonomiese onderbou en die bowebou te problematiseer. Sy het gesê dat die bou van 'n gemeenskaplike verenigende kultuur veel kompleks is as om net die tegniek van hoër kuns op die versetkultuur oor te plant.

Van Niekerk het gevra waarom 'n populêre dominante kultuur in 'n post-apartheid Suid-Afrika steeds 'n kultuur van verset sal moet wees. "As ons relevansie in 'n post-protes era herdefinieer," het sy gesê, "mag ons dalk met Njabulo Ndebele saamstem dat daar 'n verandering moet kom van die

produkte van onderdrukking na die proses van ontdekking."

Hiermee saam sal daar dan gewerk moet word na 'n radikale vervanging van die onderdrukker as die aktiewe, dominante speler in die verbeelding van die onderdrukte.

Tydens die middagsessie het die deelnemers na praktiese doelstellings gekyk waarna gewerk kan word. Daar is gepraat oor die gemeenskaplike gebruik van fasiliteite en bronne. Professionele kunstenaars wat in institusionele strukture werk het hul bereidwilligheid verklaar om in die stryd vir demokrasie deel te hê terwyl kulturele werkers in georganiseerde strukture eiesinnig klem gelê het op die mobilisering vir 'n vrye en demokratiese Suid-Afrika.

Uit die werkwinkel het dit dus geblyk dat sommige kunstenaars op soek is na 'n politieke tuiste terwyl sekere aktiviste weer politieke voogde van die kunste wil wees.

Een spreker van 'n establishment organisasie wat homself beskryf het as "a comrade at heart" het gepleit dat mense wat in staatsgesubsidieerde instellings werk, nie uitgesluit moet word nie. "Moenie die onvolmaakte 'n vyande maak van die goeie nie," het hy gesê.

Gilde vermy besluit oor kultuurboikot

Deur Welma Odendaal

SOWAT 120 skrywers, letterkundiges en belangstellendes het van 30 November tot 2 Desember by Broederstroom buite Johannesburg vir die Afrikaanse Skrywersgilde se algemene vergadering byeengekom. Die beraad, wat sedert die Gilde in 1975 gestig is 'n jaarlikse instelling geword het, het dié jaar besondere belangstelling uitgelok nadat Idasa in Julie vanjaar 46 Afrikaanse skrywers geneem het om met ANC-lede in Zimbabwe samesprekings te voer. Die 46 het onder meer die ANC se nuwe beleidsdokument oor die kultuurboikot in 'n verklaring "verwelkom" en sodoende die woede van ander binnelandse skrywers op die hals gehaal.

Voor vanjaar se Broederstroom-vergadering waar die kultuurboikot sterk op die agenda verskyn het, was daar heelwat bespiegeling oor die toekoms van die Gilde. Buitestaanders sowel as skrywers het gevoel dat indien daar besluit moet word oor waar Afrikaanse skrywers staan ten opsigte daarvan, dit die Gilde sou laat skeur.

Op 'n warm Saterdagoggend het die kultuurboikot toe eindelijk ter sprake gekom met 'n mosie van die Kaapse skrywer Abraham de Vries (wat nie by vanjaar se beraad teenwoordig was nie) dat die Gilde "duidelik standpunt inneem tov die kulturele boikot". Dit was trouens 'n groot probleem in hierdie debat dat die skrywers wat hul tot dusver die sterkste teen die saak uitgespreek het nie op Broederstroom was nie.

Na hewige bespreking van die vloer af is De Vries se mosie geamendeer om te lui: "Die Gilde moet by die volgende jaarvergadering duidelik standpunt inneem tov die kultuurboikot nadat 'n behoorlike studiestuk opgestel en aan lede gestuur is en streeksbyeenkomste gehou is." Daar is besluit om die jaarvergadering so gou as moontlik te hou - April is as 'n voorlopige datum gestel - sodat die saak spoedig afgehandel kan word.

Hoewel sommige mense gevoel het dat die Gilde maar net weer die saak uitstel as vermyingstaktiek, het die voorstanders van die mosie aangevoer dat lede nog te min inligting oor die volle implikasies van die boikot het, en dat dit polities nie wys is om 'n skeuring onder skrywers teweeg te bring nie. Die Gilde het hom ook nou duidelik in sy nuwe grondwet verbind tot die nastrewe van 'n nie-rassige, nie-seksistiese, demokratiese en verenigde Suid-Afrika, en die kultuurboikot as strategie van die bevrydingsbeweging sal in dié verband aangespreek moet word.

Die mosie is met 'n oorgrote meerderheid aanvaar - en vir 'n kort tydperk het Afrikaanse skrywers beweegruimte om hul politieke selfbegrip te ondersoek - voordat elkeen in April 1990 besluit waar sy of hy staan tov die rol wat skrywers kan speel in die bevrydingstryd in die land.

Welma Odendaal is op die redaksie van *Die Suid-Afrikaan*.

BOOK REVIEW

Church as site of struggle

By Bobby Nel

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. KAIROS AND CONVERSION, Skotaville Publishers, P O Box 32483, Braamfontein.

THE Road to Damascus is more a document than a book. It is unique in the sense that it has been signed by Christians in seven Third World countries - South Africa, Namibia, South Korea, Philippines, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. It is noted in the preamble that the churches in these countries have much in common, namely a situation of violent political conflict, Christians on both sides of the conflict and the emergence of Christian theologies that sides with the poor and the oppressed.

The 36-page document starts with an analysis of the roots of the conflict in these countries. Colonialism and imperialism are described as the main features of the oppressors. Imperial powers make use of economic control, the technology, the educational system, mass media, cultural institutions and religion to create a subservient colonial mentality.

In many countries ordinary people have started to take responsibility for proposing an alternative to the present systems. The different systems reacted to the resistance of the people by devising counter-insurgency programmes with the support of the colonial and imperial powers. The economic powers supported these governments in the establishment of national security states.

Many Christians are involved in the struggle against the system of domination with the result that both the oppressor and the oppressed use religion as part of their legitimization for their ideas. The church itself has thus become a site of struggle.

The second chapter looks at the content of the faith of the poor. It notes that the oppressed began to read the Bible from their position and were no longer dependent on the oppressors' interpretation of the Bible.

The document continues by discussing the prophetic mission of Christians who believe in the theology of the poor. There are specific sins the document wants to expose. This must be seen in the light of the next chapter (and the title), which call for a conversion.

The great sin of the powerful world according to *The Road to Damascus* is the sin of idolatry. Some of the features of idolatry mentioned in the document are that it is fanatical, denies all hope for the future, demands absolute submission and blind obedience, demands a scapegoat, and demands human sacrifices - it is thus anti-

people. Power, money and property become more important than people. Other sins mentioned by *The Road to Damascus* are heresy, apostasy, hypocrisy and blasphemy.

The conversion of Paul is taken as an example of the possibility for people to change their frame of mind completely. The challenge is directed at those Christians who make use of Christianity to defend and support the imperialists, the oppressors and the exploiters. They are urged to turn around and support the true meaning of the Christian faith. It is also a challenge to all who profess to be followers of Jesus to examine them-

selves for remnants of above-mentioned sins and to see if there are no signs of triumphalism, self-righteousness, dogmatism, rigidity, intolerance and sectarianism in their hearts.

The reader should bear in mind that

the document was written against the background of conflict situations in seven countries. The point of departure is that there are Christians on both sides of the conflict, not only on the side of the oppressed but also on the side of the oppressor. The authors of *The Road to Damascus* emphasise their own belief that there is a line of division in the church in these countries and invite Christians on the other side of the conflict to cross the line.

Perspective

The document attempts to identify the reasons for the conflict and the point of division. The reasons for the conflict have an international character, according to *The Road to Damascus*. This puts the South African conflict in a broader perspective.

At the beginning of this century the Afrikaner was caught up in a struggle against the colonists (the Boer War); after 1910 the Afrikaner joined the colonists and became part of the colonists' regime in South Africa. With the help of imperialist power, money, technology and religion, the South African minority government stays in power. State security, the co-option of certain groups and the religious support of many churches help the rulers to hold their position.

The Road to Damascus will form a good basis for discussion in groups and in churches. But for people who are not familiar with the theories of the influence of colonialism, new-colonialism and imperialism in Third World countries, additional reading material might be necessary to fully grasp all the arguments in this document.

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Both the oppressor and the oppressed use religion as part of their legitimization for their ideas.

By Keith Wattrus

AS South Africa moves irrevocably along the path towards a negotiated future, "non-racialism" and "democracy" are two concepts set to generate much discussion. Indeed, they are central to the debates which must permeate every level of South African society before that future can, successfully, become a reality.

These two concepts are already the focus of attention in the sporting arena, where administrators of several codes of sport have begun to grapple with the obstacles which prevent them from uniting under one non-racial umbrella. When administrators of a particular sport believe they have always run their sport along non-racial and democratic lines, it comes somewhat as an affront to discover that the same perception is not shared by the disenfranchised majority.

This is a problem which has not only been encountered by "establishment" sporting bodies, but has also in a certain sense been encountered by the South African Council of Sport (Sacos). Consequently, careful unpacking of the concepts is required before the foundation is reached, upon which unification talks can thereafter be built.

Largely because of entrenched positions, little has been achieved in the past decade towards uniting sport in South Africa. The sport moratorium, which effectively isolated South African sport from international sport, was the axis around which all sport policy turned. "No normal sport in an abnormal society" was the cry of the disenfranchised, while establishment codes responded with: "We'll do what's best for our sportspersons." And so it seemed that exploration of neutral territory would remain impossible as long as semblances of apartheid existed in South African society.

"An idea whose time has come" could be a way of describing the emergence of the National Sports Congress (NSC). Set up primarily to address the stalemate referred to above, the NSC however remains committed to the development of sport, particularly in underprivileged areas. Its more flexible approach has seen the initiation of talks between sports bodies along a wide range of fronts; talks which are already beginning to bear fruit insofar as progress towards unification of certain sporting codes is concerned.

The National Sports Congress has never believed that to achieve its task it has to turn sportspersons into politicians; in fact, it respects the real political limitations of most South African sportspersons. The NSC does however suggest that most sportspersons underestimate the impact which they can have by simply standing out publicly for non-racialism; that they place too many constraints on themselves, believing that

their limitations curb them more than they in fact do.

Naturally, therefore, "white" sporting bodies entering into their first discussions with the National Sports Congress are bound to find the level of political discussion more dominant than in their own organisations. Similarly, they will find that the concepts of non-racialism and democracy take on a far more politically-active connotation than the passive apolitical meaning which they have grown accustomed to.

Unity talks: NSC might get the ball rolling

But they will also find that commonalities with majority-thinking are not too difficult to find; and they will find the mere symbolical gesture of recognising the need of talking to "the other side" induces a warmer response than they might have anticipated. Above all, they will encounter a process which, although never deviating from firm established principles, will prove to be pragmatic and constructive, always having the best interests of the particular sport in mind.

This has been the experience of administrators in the fields of soccer, road-running, cricket and, latterly, hockey. That each code of sport is emerging from the process with different results, is often indicative of the differing expectations with which they entered it; and always indicative of the peculiar problems which each sport faces.

While in most instances obstacles have been surmounted, "rebel" tours remain the major stumbling-block. In whatever code of sport, a refusal to distance one's body from such tours is the ingredient for certain failure of the recipe; these tours are seen to be no more than defiant acts in contravention of the sports moratorium.

The progress which soccer unification talks have made has been well documented in the press, and little more will be said here. Suffice however to say that by April 1990 there is every chance that South African soccer will be organised by one non-racial controlling body.

Road running's series of meetings with the National Sports Congress have, to date, followed a programme of exposing as many as possible of the South African Road Running Association's (Sarra) senior administrators to the ideals of the National Sports Congress. Talks have now advanced to the stage where serious negotiations about unification are set to begin and Sarra is currently establishing a committee which will be mandated to explore this avenue.

Road running has recently become a sport which has shown a distinctly non-racial face and, with enlightened administrators at the helm of Sarra, there are promising indications that progress towards unification will continue at a steady pace. Sarra, to its credit, has resolved not to be involved in any further "rebel" tours, such as the Stellenbosch 100km race which took place this year.

A further benefit of the talks between the NSC and Sarra is that certain administrators of road-running also play an active role in athletics (which, like road running, is autonomous), and this augurs well for later talks in this field of sport.

An entirely different set of circumstances finally compelled the SA Cricket Union (Sacu) and the NSC to meet one another. When they met, early in November, only one item was on the agenda and that was the cancellation of the proposed "rebel" tour by English cricketers in 1990.

Sadly, despite the meeting, Sacu refused to call off the tour even though very imaginative suggestions were made which would have facilitated this. Unity talks can unfortunately not even get out of the starting blocks while one party is defying the very instrument designed to hasten such talks.

Cricket unity talks are thus deadlocked around the issue of the rebel tour and one fears that, by the time the tour has run its course, much goodwill will have been lost; goodwill which might have become the essential catalyst in ensuring a successful outcome.

HOCKEY and tennis are two further codes of sport which are currently the subject of exploratory talks with the National Sports Congress. Executive members of the Eastern Cape and Border regions of the SA Men's Hockey Association recently met with the NSC and resolved to press for talks at a national level between their body and the National Sports Congress.

All in all, sport appears to be paving the way as far as the question of national unity is concerned. Goodwill is much in evidence and the foundation for an apartheid-free sporting society in the near future is very clearly being laid right now. We trust that all other sporting bodies will see the wisdom of following the same route.

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