

# Tragic period with no

**DESPITE** the hope generated by political developments earlier this year, 1990 has also marked the most tragic time in the history of South Africa following the deaths of hundreds of people countrywide.

This was the message delivered by the Director of the Project for the Study of Violence at the University of the Witwatersrand, Lloyd Vogelman, at a recent Idasa seminar in East London.

The seminar, which focused on ways of addressing the violence, was attended by a small but diverse group of people ranging from the Pan Africanist Congress to the South African Police – a “first” for East London! The education officer of the ANC branch in King William’s Town, Peter King, also addressed the meeting.

Both speakers agreed that one of the biggest problems in dealing with the violence was that no one person or organisation could be held solely responsible. All the allegations flying around only served to aggravate the situation.

Vogelman argued that therefore, one had to identify those parties who would benefit from such seemingly mindless destruction.

He singled out Inkatha, whom he believed had, over the past months, been elevated from a regional to a national organisation. According to Vogelmann, it was imperative to come to terms with Inkatha if one hoped to resolve the conflict on the Reef, and the country as a whole.

Looking to possible solutions, Vogelmann

stressed that the sectors of society were affected locally:

● It was a tragedy that must be recognised and would open up new possibilities.



Lloyd Vogelmann

● Further comprehensive socio-economic development and a high rate of economic growth are essential for the Business South Africa programme in establishing a new economic order. This will require a massive infusion of aid from the international community and a return to political stability.

Vogelman stressed that violence in South Africa for as long as ever, that we had the power

through, but their lack of applicability to South African conditions was perhaps one of the shortcomings of the week’s proceedings. Certainly, the Harvard staff took home with them the advice of the local co-facilitators, that the “de-americanisation” of the curriculum would make the concept of principled negotiation more easily understood by South Africans, and also more palatable.

So by the end of an exhausting week, the theory gained was seen as invaluable, though practice would be required to make it perfect. Yet more than a little trepidation was evident among the departing participants as they thought of re-entering their highly-charged spheres of negotiation, armed with skills which might be ridiculed for their good-mannerliness, consideration and objectivity.

“Now if only we could get everyone to do this course,” might have been the wish on their minds. If the Harvard-based rumours are to be believed, that wish may yet be realised. □

**Liesel Naudé and Keith Wattus**  
Regional Directors

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Democratic Gazette, was an absolute gem. He spoke for only about five minutes but every word counted. He reminded all of us that democracy was not yet another political tool to increase power but was a system and a way of life which set out to limit power.

It came as no real surprise to learn later that Malwal was in exile in England and that his Gazette was published in England. He dare not go back under the present regime in Sudan.

We also met very brave men and women from Kenya who, at great risk, opposed the one-party state in their country. Others we talked to told of corruption and dictatorship and their determination to work for a new democratic dispensation in their countries.

One could not help but get the impression that a lot of lip-service was being paid to democratic values and sometimes we wondered whether speakers were suddenly

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*Edited by Hugh Corser*

