

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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Ja-Nee

A gift to treasure

While in Lusaka recently, Keith Wattrus of IDASA remarked on a pair of cuff-links which Thabo Mbeki of the ANC was wearing. Came Thabo's tongue-in-cheek response: "You ought to see my favourite pair, emblazoned with the motif 'SAP : 75' — a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the South African Police!" And who would give him such a gift? "Why

none other than a South African MP while on safari through Lusaka."

— *Nice touch, Pierre!*

You have nothing, FW?

When the Chinese leadership held an emergency meeting at the height of the student protest on Tiananmen Square an astonishing exchange took place between the 84-year-old paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang, the relative moderate head of the Communist Party. Zhao argued for conciliation and dialogue but Deng was adamantly opposed. "I have three million troops behind me," a source quoted Deng as saying. "I have all the people

of China," answered Zhao. Deng dismissed him: "You have nothing."

— A few weeks later the new National Party leader F.W. de Klerk told the NP Federal Congress: "Menslik gesproke is die NP vandag die magtigste faktor in Suid-Afrika."

— *There was no one like Deng present to contradict him.*

A lesson from Gadaffi

"It is absolutely impossible to be straight in a world that is crooked," said Col Muammar Gadaffi when asked by an American journalist to describe the most important lesson he has learned.

EDITORIAL

Whites must look beyond the election

I am writing on the occasion of Mr Nelson Mandela's 71st birthday. Last year he celebrated a very special milestone when he reached three score years and ten and celebrated it in splendid isolation. Today, not very far from where I am writing, there is a birthday party and he, the oft described "terrorist and communist" is the guest of honour! Of course he remains a prisoner so that the occasion is a bitter-sweet one. And only a week ago this same prisoner had tea with the State President! The history of South Africa is replete with examples of the theatre of the absurd.

Most probably the fate of Nelson Mandela will have a more far-reaching effect than a further example of absurdity, namely the forthcoming general election on 6 September. For the umpteenth time whites, coloureds and Indians will vote to decide on the destiny of the overwhelming majority of South Africans; an election in which both the media and the bulk of the white voters almost totally ignore the centrality of the extra-parliamentary struggle. The government and their political opponents on the left and right all claim with breathtaking arrogance that each has the solution to the central conflict in South Africa. The National Party, despite years of vicious repression, has failed to smash the democratic movement and opts now for a five-year plan with refined racism as its cornerstone.

Little substance

The right-wing Conservative Party tries in vain to turn back the clock and beats the drum of antiquated bigotry and racial exclusivity. The Democratic Party, struggling to find an identity, seeks to position itself in the centre only to find that the National Party is stealing its clothes and fast taking possession of that space.

Despite the growing intensity of the election, and the strenuous efforts by all concerned, there is much fury and sound but little substance. It is difficult to avoid the impression that all three are playing games in the shallow waters of the seashore, building their castles of sand, apparently for the most part oblivious of the inexorable wave of black aspirations and

anger which continues to gather strength.

Whilst IDASA as an institute can have no "position" on the forthcoming election (some of our staff will vote, some will not and some cannot), we have a duty to remind white South Africans in particular that the unfolding pantomime cannot of itself resolve the fundamental conflict which has all of us in its grip.

Larger forces

There are larger forces at work and the growing shadow of Nelson Mandela and those whom he represents will not go away.

Inevitably, there will be those in the white community who will not vote because so many of their friends are disenfranchised. Many will condemn this stand but it is at least arguable that it is a stand of principle. However, many more will vote and those who do should weigh up very carefully how they exercise their privilege. Already there are those who argue "Let's give F.W. de Klerk a chance". It is my personal view that we simply cannot afford yet another "five-year plan" which will delay the inevitable re-shaping of the basic structures of our society. There is no doubt that there are many within the Democratic Party who are running for office and many more working for them who are painfully aware of the ambiguity of their position. For that reason alone (and there are many other reasons which come to mind), they deserve support from those who have decided to exercise their vote.

Statesmen needed

What is needed urgently therefore is not a frenzy of electioneering with its claims and counter-claims, but rather the creation of a climate which will enable the voteless to participate in genuine negotiations with the minority government of the day. In order for this to happen, South Africa deserves better than a five-year plan. It deserves statesmen who will take their courage in their hands and put into motion those conditions which are imperative for negotiation to become a possibility. South Africa's priorities lie in the direc-



tion of the unbanning of those political parties and organisations which are excluded from the forthcoming election; the release of prisoners not into the narrow confines of the State President's residence but into the wider spaces of South Africa; the lifting of the state of emergency which will allow all South Africans

free access into the constitutional and political process. It is to be hoped that in the midst of obsessive minority politics, the occasional voice of wisdom will be heard clearly and unambiguously.

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

ANC open to alternatives

Three of IDASA's regional directors were part of the 110-strong Five Freedoms Forum delegation who met with the ANC in Lusaka early in July. They were Paul Graham (Durban), Liesel Naudé (Johannesburg) and Keith Wattrus (Port Elizabeth). Lisa Seftel, also of IDASA's Johannesburg office, but wearing her Five Freedoms cap, was also present.

President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia hosted all the delegates at a garden-party at the State House and made a point of personally greeting every single person in the delegation.

The garden party, in the palatial floodlit gardens, was also the scene of the first meeting between the FFF delegation and the ANC delegation. The warmth and hospitality of the ANC delegation was surpassed only by their fervently expressed desire to return "home" as soon as possible.

Over the next three days commissions were held which explored and analysed, in-depth,

every aspect of our shared future and the means to that end. To be sure, there was not agreement on every aspect, with the strategies of sanctions and the armed struggle, in particular, causing dissension. Nevertheless what unfolded was a clear understanding of why such strategies were being used and why these strategies were considered to be so effective by the ANC.

The weekend became one of searching for and testing alternatives. On almost every front the ANC showed a preparedness to be openly objective about considering alternatives to current strategies. What became patently clear was the sincere appreciation by the ANC of the fact that their compatriots had travelled so far to raise the troubling issues with them. And their acknowledgement that it was only by being confronted with such issues that the ANC could focus their minds on the solutions.

Keith Wattrus
Co-director, Eastern Cape

— Could we hope for the same kind of honesty from our own politicians, or would they rather not follow the example set by the Libyan dictator?

Nuwe taal vir 'n nuwe era

Prof Sampie Terreblanche van Stellenbosch is nou reeds bekend vir sy kleurrike taalgebruik. Tydens die vorige wit verkiesing het hy reeds gesê dat die Nasionale Party sal moet verrbrokkel. Hy was baie lief om van die "Verwoerdiaanse" model van apartheid te praat. Deesdae praat die professor van FW se ideologie en noem dit die "Klerkiaanse" 1989 model van apartheid.

— Klink soos 'n term wat in die staatsdiens gebruik word.

Welcome to the club, PW

When the IDASA delegation returned from Dakar after meeting the executive of the ANC, the State President threatened to remove passports, to institute commissions of inquiry into the work of IDASA and to cut off its foreign funding. He also described the participants as "useful idiots".

— After his recent tea party with Mr Nelson Mandela, one can only say welcome to the club!

Letters

Address your letters to
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Meer standpunte moet nog gehoor word

Eerstens wil ek net begin deur u geluk te wens met die professionaliteit en deeglikheid van julle publikasie, **Democracy in Action**. Ek het die jongste uitgawe in die hande gekry en het ook met belangstelling die doelstellings van IDASA gelees wat op Bladsy 2 verskyn.

Een van die doelstellings is: "To provide forums and opportunities on a nationwide basis to find democratic solutions to South Africa's problems." Nou kom die vraag by my op: Wie kan almal by die forums optree?

IDASA hou gereeld toere na Lusaka en Harare waar gesprekke met die ANC en binnelandse Suid-Afrikaners dan plaasvind. En dit is goed dat dit geskied. Maar skeep hulle nie dalk gesprekke met mense binne Suid-Afrika af nie. So baie blanke Suid-Afrikaners weet nog nie eers wat die mense in die townships dink nie.

Ek wonder ook of daar nie 'n leemte bestaan om gesprekke met byvoorbeeld die PAC in ballingskap en plaaslike Black Consciousness-ondersteuners te hou nie. Moet ons nie miskien ook uitvind wat die nie-Charterists te sê het nie? Al stem ons hoegenaamd nie met hulle saam nie. Ek vermoed dat ek ook nie met die PAC sal saamstem nie. Maar net soos 'n Nasionalis wat weier om met die ANC in gesprek te tree, kan ons dalk ook, weens ons ongeliktheid oor die organisasies, nie saampraat as daar oor hulle beleid gesels word nie.

IDASA doen goeie werk, maar daar is soveel meer wat nog gedoen kan word om ons arme onkundige witmense aan nuwe standpunte bloot te stel, wat dalk 'n invloed op ons toekoms gaan hê.

Ek hoop dat IDASA ook in dié verband 'n positiewe rol sal kan speel.

Joan van Staden
Kaapstad

IDASA is bereid om gesprek te voer met enigiemand wat hom of haarself tot die soeke na 'n nie-rassige demokrasie verbind het. Ons reël inderdaad gereeld werksinkels, seminare en konferensies dwarsoor die land waaraan almal mag deelneem. Verder het ons ook op 'n gereelde grondslag privaat gesprekke met 'n wye verskeidenheid van individue en organisasies. Laastens, reël IDASA ook gereeld besoeke aan die townships vir blankes in die meeste van ons groter sentrums in die land — Alex Boraine

ARTICLES IN DEMOCRACY IN ACTION REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF THE WRITERS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY CORRESPOND WITH THE VIEWPOINTS HELD BY IDASA.