

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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

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Options debate gets under way

THE QUESTION facing South Africans was not whether negotiations over power sharing will eventually take place, that would inevitably happen. "The real question facing South Africa today is: Do we reach the negotiation table before war, thus preventing a war, or do we have to go there after a civil war?"

This was one of the important points made by Dr Alex Boraine, executive director of IDASA, in Durban this month when he formally launched the "Options for the Future" debate series on constitutional proposals for South Africa which are being hosted by the institute at forums and workshops throughout the country.

Dr Boraine said the South African state had the key to the process of negotiations, and the ANC was an important force in the negotiation process — whether its adversaries like it or not. IDASA, he pointed out, stood squarely in the arena of negotiation politics and wanted to urge people to "negotiate away from apartheid" towards a democratic society with real power sharing. It hoped to put across this message at the "options" workshops.

One of the speakers at the workshop, Prof Dawid van Wyk, echoed the sentiment expressed by Dr Boraine, saying that a need existed for a "massive educational process" to convince whites that they are needed and wanted in a "non-apartheid" South Africa.

The publication of a set of constitutional guidelines by the African National Congress last year presented South Africans of all convictions with yet another constitutional option for their future. This has also provided IDASA with an ideal opportunity to develop a debate around all available constitutional options for the future. The workshops will culminate in a conference on constitutional options in Johannesburg in May.

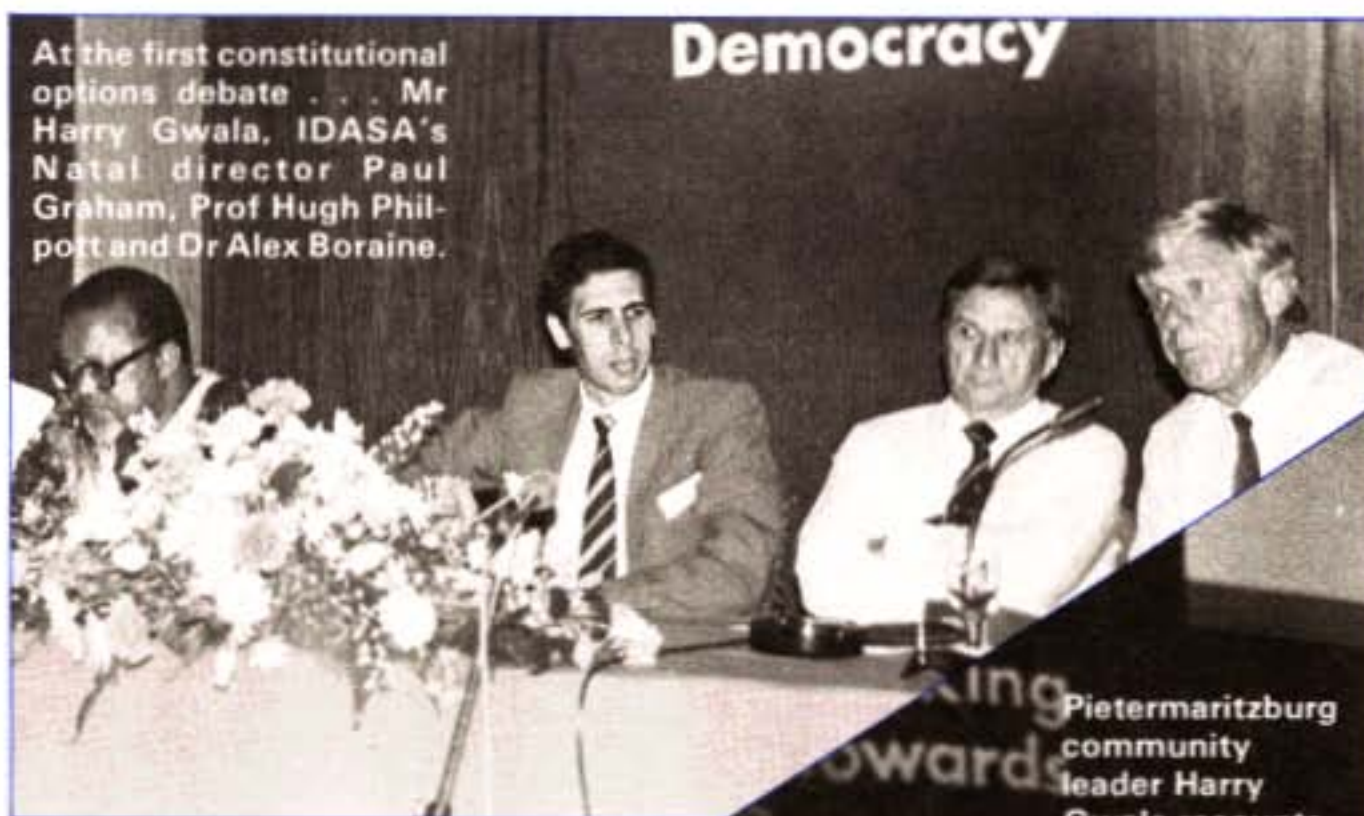
Some 200 people, representing a wide range of organisations including the

Natal Indian Congress, Inkatha Institute, the Democratic Party, Housewives League and the Durban Chamber of Commerce, attended the Durban forum and joined in the lively debate which followed the formal addresses.

Among the speakers who shared the platform with Dr Boraine at the launch-

Constitutional proposals for SA assessed in workshops around country

At the first constitutional options debate . . . Mr Harry Gwala, IDASA's Natal director Paul Graham, Prof Hugh Philpott and Dr Alex Boraine.



Call for nationwide campaign to convince whites they're wanted and needed in a 'non-apartheid' SA

ing event in Durban was Pietermaritzburg community leader Mr Harry Gwala, a former senior political prisoner who was released last year. Mr Gwala is a listed person and may not be quoted. Listening to his address, however, one realised again that the history of the black experience of Western democracy and Christian values in South Africa made their rejection of these values almost inevitable. The South African Act of 1909, for example, entrenched white privilege, and the 1913 Land Act robbed millions of black people of their land.

Prof Van Wyk, professor of constitutional law at Unisa and director of the Kwazulu Natal Indaba, said the time was

Pietermaritzburg community leader Harry Gwala recounts the history of black resistance.



ripe like never before to change ideas and motivate people to become involved in things that influence their everyday lives.

He said the ANC's constitutional guide-

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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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Konstruktiewe gespreksvoering

GEDURENDE 1988 het ek die voorreg gehad om by verskeie geleenthede betrokke te wees by aktiwiteite wat IDASA op Stellenbosch aangebied het. Die treffendste voorbeeld van die waarde van die soeke na 'n demokratiese alternatief vir Suid-Afrika, is myns insiens die paranoïese optrede van die universiteits-administrasie, naamlik om IDASA toegang te belet tot enige fasiliteite op die kampus. Die enigste ander organisasie wat nog onder dieselfde beperkings moes deurloop, was die ECC. 'n Mens kan nie anders as om te wonder wie se

belange betrokke is by die neem van sulke besluite nie. Dit is ook nie baie moeilik om te bespiegel oor wie die besluite neem nie.

Die rol van 'n fasiliterende liggaam was nog nooit in die geskiedenis van die land so belangrik as juis nou nie. Die goeie verhouding wat bestaan tussen Idasa en SAAK (Stellenbosse Aktuele Aangeleenthedskring) is daarom verblydend. SAAK is 'n kampus. organisasie wat studente aanmoedig tot kritiese denke d.m.v. die reël van openbare vergaderings wat 'n wye politieke spektrum dek. Gedurende 1988 is twee SAAK-konferensies ('n fokus op die "onpartydigheid" van die regstelsel asook 'n bespreking oor die vryheids-ideaal in S.A.), wat deur IDASA geborg is, sowel

EDITORIAL

Reform euphoria ignores growing state control

THE opening of the parliamentary session in South Africa has focused on the crisis in the National Party surrounding the State President's decision to, on the one hand, shed his responsibility as political leader but on the other to retain his position as State President. Arising from the speeches made by the Acting State President, Mr Chris Heunis, and the new political head of the National Party, Mr F.W. de Klerk, we have been treated yet again to euphoric statements in most of the newspapers as though yet again the advent of reform is about to begin!

This euphoria however should be seen against the background of the ever-increasing controls instituted by the state on any individual or organisation which seeks to oppose the state's management of the country as a whole. A few examples will suffice: the state of emergency remains in force and has the security arm of the state in tight control, particularly of the black townships. This month, a bill, the Disclosure of Foreign Funding Bill, was passed which will further impede and harass organisations which strongly oppose the status quo and are seeking to bring about a new spirit of democracy in South Africa. It is well known that educational institutions for black children and students have been severely in the grip of bureaucracy and often the police and the army as well.

Authoritarian Approach

What is not so well known is the authoritarian approach of government officials in so-called white education. The Trans-

vaal Education Department has recently sent a circular to all schools under its jurisdiction banning the distribution of literature from, among other organisations, IDASA, the Black Sash and Five Freedoms Forum.

In the Cape education system, the situation is not much better. I was recently asked to address a school assembly but this was cancelled at the last moment; not because the headmaster or any of his staff or students didn't wish me to speak, but because there is a new regulation which states that no people may be invited to a full assembly of the school without the prior permission of the Department of Education. It is possible for an outside speaker to address one or more of the societies within the school system, but it must be absolutely voluntary and the parents of the children should be informed ahead of time that their children have been invited to attend such a meeting! The name of the game is coercion and control.

Nothing to Hide

A further example of the state's intention to control organisations who dare to dissent against its policies is via the Fund Raising Act. Earlier this month, IDASA received two visitors from the Department of National Health and Population Development, under whose auspices the Fund Raising Act is managed. They demanded that they have access to IDASA's list of donors and correspondence with donors, cash book, cheque book, audited statements, etc, etc. We have nothing to hide and we will make

LETTERS

as 'n gesamentlike media-werkswinkel, aangebied.

Hierdie samewerking het die potensiaal om konstruktiewe gespreksvoering op Stellenbosch werklik te laat vlamvat. Daar is ook heelwat nuwe moontlikhede wat definitief in die toekoms ondersoek behoort te word. 'n Goeie beginpunt sou miskien wees om weer die IDASA-takkantoor op Stellenbosch te open.

Ek wens IDASA alle sukses toe met al die belangrike en noodsaaklike werk waarmee hulle besig is.

Daniël Malan
SAAK-voorsitter

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



all this information available, despite the fact that from the very beginning IDASA has appointed auditors of the highest repute and has at every level instituted very careful controls of its own to ensure that every cent received is accounted for.

Following the hunger strike by a number of detainees, I made specific representation to the Minister of Law and Order on behalf of Monde Mtanga, a member of our staff, who has now been in detention without trial for nearly 15 months. Monde was part of the hunger strike and as his friends and colleagues, we were extremely concerned. Despite the promises by the minister to release a substantial number of detainees, Monde Mtanga still languishes in jail without any recourse to the courts. Detention without trial is one of the most powerful weapons the state uses to control its opponents.

Tragic Commentary

It is clear that adjoining so-called independent countries like Ciskei have learnt their lessons well. During the last few weeks, six prominent members of the security forces and police in Ciskei have been on trial for the brutal death of a former IDASA staff member, Eric Mntonga. Details of the case and the sentences imposed upon those charged

appear elsewhere in this edition of Democracy in Action. What is clear is that those unfortunate enough to be detained without trial seem to be without any protection whatsoever. In his summing up, the judge stated that "the police, who are called upon to protect society, enjoy many privileges, being protected by the law. Security police are more privileged than other policemen in that they have a right to detain people without trial and cannot be overruled by courts". This is a tragic commentary and should surely effectively burst the bubble of euphoria which has yet again emerged as a result of further statements of intent by Heunis, de Klerk et al.

The harsh fact of the matter is that the areas open for dissent continue to shrink and democracy seems further away than ever before. This could very easily lead us into a situation of despair and thus paralysis. As far as the staff of IDASA is concerned, it will only lead us to a greater determination and to further extend and deepen our resolve and our efforts to strive for a new society where justice and the rule of law shall prevail, where there is a future for all South Africans, irrespective of race or colour or creed.

ALEX BORAINÉ,
Executive Director

IDASA se bydrae

OP 'n kongres vir vroue op Mosselbaai 'n jaar of wat gelede het 'n swart vrou opgestaan en by haar wit medekongresgangers gepleit: "Moenie julle seuns in die townships instuur om ons seuns te kom doodskiet nie."

Daar was 'n doodse stilte in die saal. Gewone Afrikaanse vroue het die swart ma geskok aangekyk. Na 'n

lang bespreking het van die vroue begin huil.

Baie wit vroue het vir die eerste keer besef: Hulle is ook mense. Ons swart susters voel dieselfde, koester dieselfde ideale vir hulle kinders en dink oor so baie dinge presies dieselfde.

Dit, sê dr Alex Borainé, is wat IDASA die afgelope twee jaar bereik het. Agter die wyd gepubliseerde

ontmoetings met die ANC en reise na Rusland het hulle bitter hard gewerk om wit en swart bymekaar uit te bring.

"Min mense besef dit vandag, maar IDASA werk hoofsaaklik met Afrikaners. Hulle is die mense met invloed in die gesagstrukture van die staat," sê Borainé, uitvoerende direkteur van IDASA.

(Met erkenning aan Vrye Weekblad)

Constitutional proposals debate

From Page 1

lines formed a good starting point in negotiation politics and should be seen as a "serious, sincere contribution to the constitutional debate". It puts forward proposals around which a process of bargaining can begin, and the availability of such negotiables and non-negotiables can create a favourable situation for serious talks about fundamental political issues. Even non-negotiables may become the subject of negotiations in such a process of mutual understanding, said Prof van Wyk.

Stressing that he did not necessarily represent "white opinion" (something which was also not easily universalised), Prof Van Wyk said most whites would accept that white domination would inevitably come to an end. However, he felt further clarity was still needed around several issues in the ANC's guidelines. These included the implications of a "unitary" system, the status and structure of governing bodies, the implications and range of an envisaged Bill of Rights, the redistribution of wealth and land reforms as well as the impact of affirmative action and the way it is to be tackled.

These reservations apart, Professor Van Wyk, described the guidelines as a serious contribution to the political dialogue. He also stressed that, given the relative isolation of the white community, a large-scale education campaign was called for, not only to reassure whites of their place in a post-apartheid society, but also to show the other side of the coin of government propaganda that the ANC was a "violent and non-negotiating organisation bent on revolutionary takeover". Prof Van Wyk suggested that the guidelines be translated and distributed in Afrikaans to give more people access to the document. Hopefully this will in the long run contribute to the purposeful search for a lasting political solution for South Africa.

Another speaker, Prof Hugh Philpott, director of student support services at the University of Natal, contextualised the problems of a university caught up in the transition of a society such as South Africa. He pointed out that universities had the opportunity to "lead a process of change by example." This could be done by the democratisation of curricula, university structure and leaders, and by the promotion of community oriented outreach programmes.

Ian Liebenberg
IDASA Research Consultant

OPINION

ANC guidelines must be debated by all

By DULLAH OMAR

THE great merit of the publication of the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines lies also in the specific proposals themselves — but it lies primarily in the fact that it has placed the issue before the people of South Africa for debate. My point of departure would be this: that an environment must be created in which the people of South Africa would be able to exercise their right of self determination.

We cannot close our eyes to the reality of continued imperialist domination and exploitation of Southern Africa and its people, and the unwillingness of the Western powers to allow the people of Southern Africa to determine their own destiny and free themselves from such domination. The situation in which the guidelines have been published is one in which those powers and interests which have exploited Southern Africa for so long, seek to impose on our people a neo-colonialist solution which would leave the present economic structure and economic inequalities basically intact.

In pursuance of that aim, models of constitutions are being worked out in drawing and board rooms of Western capitals. It seems to me also that in today's complex world situation, the Soviet Union, despite its historical support for the liberation movement in South Africa, cannot and will not intervene to prevent the imposition of a neo-colonialist solution.

Crucial Lesson

The crucial lesson which must be learnt by the oppressed and exploited people in South Africa is that only their own mass struggles will make it possible for them to win for themselves the *right* to self determination, the *right* to govern the country in the best interests of all its people and the *right and duty* to produce, appropriate and distribute the wealth of the country for the benefit of all its people.

Speaking for myself and many others in our organisations, the danger of the imposition of a neo-colonialist solution upon our people is a very real danger.

The merit of the Constitutional Guidelines of the ANC lies in the recognition and on the insistence that it is the people of South Africa who must work out a new constitution. The guidelines are not intended to be the final word on

the subject. The intention is that the issue be placed before the people of our country, to be debated in their organisations and platforms and for them to come up with ideals and proposals which represent their aspirations. Because there are conflicting class and social interests involved, these ideas and proposals can only be decided and brought forth in the cauldron of actual struggle. It is the balance of forces which will ultimately determine the kind of proposals which our struggle will be able to implement.

Role of ANC

It is, therefore, essential that discussion on the Constitutional Guidelines *not* be confined to academics and "experts" but that they be taken up in all people's organisations, including the trade

The guidelines reject the concept of 'group rights'

unions. It is also necessary to assert that the oppressed people have never been consulted about the banning of the ANC. They were not a party to the banning and have never accepted such banning. The ANC is an indigenous, internal and legitimate organization. The same applies to all other people's organisations which have been banned or restricted. Which organisation or movement speaks for the people is determined by actual struggle. Today, it is quite evident that the ANC is recognized by the vast majority as the authentic voice of the oppressed.

The ANC, therefore, forms an integral part of the people of South Africa who must, as the struggle unfolds, work out a constitution for the country. There is need to work towards the establishment or convening of a "congress of the people" in the form of a "constituent assembly" to formulate such a constitution.

Concrete Vision

In my view, the publication of the Constitutional Guidelines must be seen in this context. It helps to give direction to the people's struggles so that our aspirations and vision do not remain vague and unformed but begin to take on con-