

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

Strong hearts and cool heads needed

THE SPATE of violence which has followed the historic announcements made by President F W de Klerk on 2 February has brought many of us down from the euphoric heights to the plains of reality. South Africans across the spectrum have come to realise in truth that there is no "easy road" to freedom.

Despite many warnings that the road ahead was going to be bumpy and that there would be many hiccups leading towards the negotiating table, the ferocity of the violence and the accompanying widespread looting and arson have come as a great shock to many. The publicly stated view of officials from the UDF that those who resort to violence should be identified and rejected has certainly brought a measure of relief and calm in many parts of the country. It is a call which should be taken up by all South Africans who are committed to peaceful negotiations.

One of the ways in which some of the violence could be prevented would be for the ANC to move beyond being a liberation movement to becoming a normal political party. In other words, it would be in their own self-interest to establish their headquarters inside South Africa and more especially to open branches in all the major centres of South Africa. This would not only give them a visible face and base which is essential for any successful political party, but it would also enable them to use their quite considerable clout to lead people away from violent confrontation towards discussion, debate and argument.

There can be no doubt that the convulsions experienced in the newly emerging South Africa have become fertile ground for right-wing forces as far as white South Africans are concerned. There has been a backlash and a lot of education is going to be necessary.

Whites have to come to terms with the consequences of the long legacy of apartheid. An example of this is the popular uprisings in the Ciskei and other so-called homelands which were tragically accompanied by widespread arson and looting.

It is inevitable that a society which has been repressed for so long will demonstrate in an exuberant manner. This can so often be capitalised on by a minority who desire to seek material and personal gain from the downfall of dictators and the joy and celebration of the oppressed.

What white South Africans sometimes forget is that the homelands were a direct result of National Party policy of divide and rule. Despite the wishes of the vast majority, blacks were compelled to forsake their South African citizenship. The history of the leadership in the homelands was there for all to see and in particular was experienced as a repression and an impoverishment by the vast majority of those who were forced to live as citizens of that particular homeland. If anyone has to receive blame therefore for what has happened in the homelands in the last few weeks, it is the National Party itself.

What we all have to learn is that political changes and reform have to be reflected in the improvement of the quality of life if they are going to have any impact on the attitudes and mood of the vast majority of black South Africans. This is particularly true of the legitimate black grievances regarding the present economic system. It is unhelpful for the business community to simply denounce nationalisation and redistribution without clearly acknowledging that these genuine grievances exist and that demands made by the black community for a restructuring of the economic system are justified.

JA-NEE

The man has taste

Rumour has it that President F W de Klerk is an avid reader of this humble newsletter.
- *Makes you pink, doesn't it?*

Simply Sash

An eminent member of the Black Sash, invited by a youth organisation to help celebrate the ANC's birthday in January while other Sashers were sensibly on hols by the sea, found herself with a friend in her hus-

band's Porsche bringing up the rear of a green-black-and-gold motorcade through the townships with a yellow van in hot pursuit. The Porsche, with yellow van glued to its tail, got separated from the rest of the procession at a robot. As the duet continued astray the Sashers replaced doubts about their mandate (and their Porsche) with the observation: "We're in the right role - behind the youth and taking off the heat."

- *Not a Porsche show!*

Die onskuld self

Oornag bevaagteken al wat NP-koerant en SAUK-diens is nou die ou wee van hul po-

litieke meesters so doodluiters dat 'n mens net jou kop kan skud. Sommige van die joernaliste verlustig hulle in hul nuwe beweegruimte. Eerste prys gaan aan Rapport se rubriekskrywer, Pollux, wat hoogheilig na die SAUK se pas-afgeskaafte oggend-kommentaar verwys as "daardie daaglikse stukkie blatante radiopropaganda" wat nie in pas is met die "nuwe politiek" nie.

- *'n Geval van die pot wat die ketel verwoyt? Of is die lewe nou maar net 'n bietjie saai met minder propaganda?*

Call for bold action

Adding a small - and rather nude - twist to



If one can find common agreement that the restructuring of the economic system is necessary then the debate can start as to whether nationalisation will bring this about or whether there are any other ways and means of restoring a just economic system in South Africa. The painful reality is that we have a vast chasm between a minority who are well fed and well clothed and have these basic requirements as a result of maximum opportunity, and the vast majority who are not only very often poorly clad, badly housed and unemployed, but in many of the rural areas actually face starvation.

South Africa has certainly scaled the heights and has as often been plunged into gloom and despair over the last weeks and months. There is nothing which suggests that we are not going to continue to have the same amount of fluidity and rapid change of mood in the future. What is required is a great deal of understanding, decisive action, strong hearts and cool heads.

- Alex Boraine
Executive Director

ATTENTION DEMOCRACY IN ACTION READERS

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- Receiving more than one copy of the newsletter.
- Want to change your address
- or
- Put a friend on the mailing list

PLEASE NOTIFY US AT:

1 Penzance Road, Mowbray,
Cape Town 7700.
Or phone Veronica or
Minnie at (021) 473127

LETTERS

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

Environment neglected

I HAVE read your December newsletter but I am alarmed that there is not even a mention of the environment.

The total obsession with political matters in South Africa shows an immaturity of understanding of some of the real issues that we will have to face in the new South Africa - water, food, air, recreation, nature conservation. These are going to have to be addressed if we are to survive as a reasonably civilised country.

I would strongly recommend that Idasa looks into the multinational company which proposes to rip the guts out of the dunes at Lake St Lucia, just having successfully done so north of Richards Bay.

The international conservation community will eventually turn on us if we do not behave responsibly and the repercussions will be felt for a long time.

Ian Player
Wilderness Leadership School, Natal

Idasa shares your concern about the environment. We have run a number of projects which included such focuses - and there are more to come. The December issue of Democracy in Action had a comprehensive report on a "green" forum hosted by Idasa in Pretoria.

Editor

Uprooted and abandoned

I AM very grateful to Paul Zondo of Idasa for his thoughtfulness and kindness in organising our visit to Winterveld. What we saw was a graphic illustration of the poverty and squalor that results directly from apartheid policies. We witnessed a people who had been uprooted, forcibly moved into a desolate place and given virtually no material assistance. In this environment the work of the Sisters of Mercy is an inspiration and the Australian Embassy is pleased to be able to help them.

It is important that foreign representatives be aware of places like Winterveld and the suffering of the people living there and we are very grateful to you for your very excellent organisation of the visit.

D Sprott
Australian Embassy, Pretoria

Opinions expressed in Democracy in Action are not necessarily those of Idasa

a popular conservation slogan, a bumper sticker articulates the fears and frustrations of some South Africans about their future. "F--k the rhino. Save the whites", it exhorts passing motorists.

- Go along, do your little bit to rescue the white rhino from extinction!

Viva Randburg!

Die ANC sal binne enkele maande in ons midde wees - met kantore, koerante en al - in al die groot sentrums van Johannesburg tot Kaapstad. Daar is blykbaar 'n behoefte om hul ondersteuning in die blanke gemeenskap uit te brei. En dit kan natuurlik vir sommige politici voor 'n moeilike keuse

stel. Soos 'n UDF-leier onlangs opgemerk het: "Dan sal ons sien of Wynand Malan by die ANC gaan aansluit - en of Denis Worrall teruggaan na die Nasionale Party toe." - Moeilike tye.

Come home Mr Mandela, all is forgiven

When the hunger strike and homelands crises were assuming alarming proportions in March, Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee made an emergency call to Harare to request Nelson Mandela's early return so he could deal with the deteriorating situation. - We're growing up fast now.