

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE FOR A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

AUGUST 1987

THE birth of IDASA was brought to fruition within a year of Drs. Slabbert and Boraine leaving Parliament. It took the shape of a national conference over two days (8 and 9 May 1987) which effectively launched the organisation as a facilitating institute.

Over 400 delegates from all over South Africa met in Port Elizabeth for a programme of lectures, workshops, reportbacks and general discussion.

One of the most striking features of the conference was the large component of delegates from the Black community, at times constituting a definite majority amongst the participants. This gave the conference a concrete sense of *reality* in a society plagued by the illusions of "wit baaskap". Another unusual feature for many participants was the strict democratic basis on which it was run — effectively and fairly!

Structurally the conference devoted

Idasa launched nationally

its time to the issue of *democracy*. It examined the implications of democracy in seven major areas of society: government, labour, business, education, law, media and the church.

A keynote lecture on each area was immediately followed by a formal response. An equal amount of time was devoted to the "workshopping" of each area followed by reportbacks and general discussion in plenary session at the end of each day.

As a communications system this structure worked more than satisfactorily, and at times most rewardingly. Highlights included: Advocate Arthur Chaskalson, national director of the Legal Resources Centre on democracy and the law; Mr Joe Latagoma, editor of *The Sowetan*, on democracy and the media; Mr. Mvuyo Ralawe of NEUSA on democracy and education; Mr. Andrew Boraine of the UDF who read a paper on behalf of the organisation on democracy and government. A good deal of stimulating discussion also followed controversial papers presented by Mr. Leon Louw, director of the Free Market Foundation, on democracy and business, and Dr. Charles Simkins of SALDRU at UCT, on democracy and government.

Amongst respondents who touched off wide-spread responses amongst delegates were Prof. Heribert Adam, the brilliant sociologist, analyst and author (currently at UCT), and Dr.

continued on page 2

The top table at the IDASA national conference in Port Elizabeth. Note Mr. George Peffer on the extreme right, who is the regional director of the Southern Transvaal — and next to him the regional director for the Eastern Cape, Mr. Max Mamase. On Dr. Boraine's right we have Mr. Wayne Mitchell (national co-ordinator), who also co-ordinated the entire conference.

INSTITUTE FOR A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE FOR S.A.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE



THIS is the first issue of *Democracy In Action* and serves as a reminder of our infancy and of our growth. Little more than a year ago, we started to dream of the possibility of an Institute which would focus on Democracy. Since then, we have established our head office in Cape Town and have regional offices in Port Elizabeth, East London, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Stellenbosch.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our many sponsors who have assisted us so generously during the last few months. It would have been impossible to have grown and developed as we have done without their support.

The emphasis throughout is on *action* and all our branches are developing, planning and executing projects which are described elsewhere. Essentially, IDASA is trying to promote a culture, or a climate, of democracy in a time when almost every vestige of democracy has disappeared.

From the Executive Director

Some of the highlights of our activities up till now include our national conference in Port Elizabeth and our Student Leadership conference in Stellenbosch. The widespread representation at both these events was encouraging and will provide scope for the future.

I am writing this message on the eve of our departure for West Africa. I want to stress that our decision to take a group of South Africans to meet with representatives of the ANC falls squarely within the object-

ives of IDASA. We have been meeting a wide cross-section of people . . . but there are South Africans *outside* of our country who are not able to return. We believe it is important to meet with them as well, particularly as these same people have considerable support inside South Africa.

If IDASA can make a contribution towards the resolution of our present conflict, our efforts will have been worthwhile. Negotiation is always preferable to violence and confrontation.

Essentially democracy is not about voting every five years (and I am aware that the majority of South Africans do not enjoy that privilege). Democracy means having control of one's life and participating in the decisions which affect us. IDASA seeks to facilitate this goal. A non-racial democracy is a worthy and difficult objective. We are determined to make the effort and to ensure that the *process* towards that goal is itself democratic.

Idasa launched nationally

continued from page 1

André Odendaal, the historian from UWC.

But it was participation from the floor which added unusual zest and sparkle to the discussions, primarily from the Black delegates. Prominent amongst the White delegates were Afrikaners such as Dr. Christo Nel and English-speakers such as the Watson brothers from Port Elizabeth. The latter's theories startled many, but appear to hold more truth than was at first apparent!

There is no doubt that the conference, given the limitations of time and size, was most successful. What made it unique was the degree of consensus amongst the vast majority of delegates. This became evident on issues such as the irreversible commitment to democracy in full, the unquestioned acceptance of non-racialism as integral to that process, and the reward of increasing solidarity amongst the many who embraced these principles in their search for a lasting peace with justice in South Africa!

These fine achievements were largely brought about by the confident guidance of both Drs. Slabbert

and Boraine as they took turns in chairing the sessions.

Needless to say, the birth of IDASA and the consequent visit to Dakar provide a clear signal to the Nationalist government that these two men

are committed to strategies which are innovative, relevant and supported by a much wider cross-section of South Africans than *they* could ever muster! No wonder the conference ended with cries of "Viva IDASA".



Dr. Nthato Motlana debates the issues with local New Brighton comrades during the national launch of IDASA.

DAKAR DELEGATION — TH

Dakar Press Statement

WE met with representatives of the ANC in Dakar because of our deep concern at the escalating violence and a drift towards authoritarianism in South Africa.

The conference in Dakar was planned by IDASA but the group consists of people from many walks of life, including academics, teachers, politicians, churchmen, farmers, architects, lawyers, writers, artists, journalists, students and businessmen. Most, but not all, are Afrikaners. What unites us is our total rejection of apartheid and minority domination and our commitment to a multi-party, non-racial democracy.

We never imagined that we could negotiate with the ANC. We do not have the power, nor do we have a mandate to do so. We did not try to speak on anyone's behalf excepting our own. Indeed, we differed among ourselves on many key issues. What we do share, however, is a common belief that serious discussions with the ANC must form part of the search for the resolution of conflict and the transition towards a peaceful and just future.

We believe that as a result of our conference in Dakar, we have demonstrated that such discussions can take place and that they can be constructive. We hope that what began in Dakar will continue inside and outside of South Africa and will eventually involve the South African government itself.

In our discussions, we found it was possible for South Africans, who are in many ways far apart, to have frank and cordial exchanges on crucial issues facing our country. We agreed that we are all South Africans, that

we share one country with a common history and a common destiny and that our commitment was to work towards a non-racial democracy which offers hope and opportunity for all.

In fact, there were many differences between ourselves and the ANC, particularly in terms of strategies towards change. Amongst the issues addressed and explored were the following:

- The ANC's historical commitment to the armed struggle as a response to State repression;
- The dangers posed by the proliferation of uncontrolled political violence from whatever source;
- The problem of White fears and Afrikaner cultural and language concern;
- The serious obstacles to national unity as a consequence of entrenched ethnic, racial, economic and ideological cleavages;
- The importance of a Bill of Rights, an independent judiciary and a multiple party system to safeguard human and civil rights and to ensure a future political democracy;
- The need for distributive justice, the redistribution of wealth and concretely righting the historical injustices which have scarred our nation;
- The importance of economic growth as a determinant in planning a truly liberated economy.

We did not expect to find consensus on all these issues, nor did we. But the importance of these discussions cannot be underestimated.

We realised from the beginning that this initiative would be misunderstood by many. Also that the government would be highly critical and that our objectives would be misrepresented by some of the South African media. However our con-

cern for our country, facing as it does a grave political crisis, outweighs the risks involved. We firmly believe that it is our duty and that of every concerned South African to explore every possibility to find a way out of the ever-deepening conflict in our country.

Finally, we were greatly encouraged by the enthusiastic and warm reception we received from the President and government of Senegal. President Diouf's welcome and encouragement illustrate the readiness of Black Africa to Assist Black and White South Africans in their common search for a non-racial democratic alternative to the system of apartheid.

In the same way the support given by Madame Danielle Mitterand, the wife of the President of France, demonstrates the eagerness of the international community to assist in moving South Africa away from the abyss of violence.

The fact that the ANC was prepared to meet with a group of predominantly White Afrikaners is also a cause for hope. The prevailing myth is that the ANC and the Afrikaners are sworn enemies and can never meet except in conflict and on the battle field.

We have experienced an openness and a readiness to talk and this will redouble our efforts towards a negotiated settlement rather than the inevitability of inconclusive and escalating violence.

FURTHER TRAVEL IN AFRICA

Following the conference in Dakar, the majority of participants visited Burkina Fasso and Ghana. Once again, we were struck by the warm reception we received from the Presidents of those countries and the wide cross-section of people we met during our stay.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION:

What it's all about

AS the official news bulletin of IDASA this publication will appear on a bi-monthly basis. It will be mailed, free of charge, to all our donors, associate

members and our entire mailing list. Copies will also be available from our national and regional offices.

This first issue focusses on news about recent IDASA activities, staffing and pertinent issues related to the Dakar delegation. The next (bumper) issue will be devoted to full coverage of the Dakar encounter. Don't miss it. Should you want to receive it, and further copies, kindly send your name, full address and telephone number to the national office address reflected below. Given that our mailing list is growing to a "ceiling-level",

it is advisable to get onto it while there is still space.

Please note that any letters to the editor, intended for publication, are most welcome. They should be addressed to the editor at our national office, 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray, 7700. We trust you will find this bulletin informative. We launch it in the hope that we can publish — sooner than later — the news about a new dawn in SA, that is a dawn heralding a non-racial, fully democratic society for all!

The Editor

Dakar Communique

1. A conference organised by IDASA took place in Dakar, Senegal, from 9 to 12 July 1987. Participants were made up of 61 South Africans of which the majority were Afrikaans-speaking persons who had come from South Africa and a 17 person delegation from the ANC.
2. His Excellency President Abdou Diouf, welcomed the participants and gave them exceptional hospitality.
3. The participants from South Africa took part in their individual capacities. They shared a common commitment of having rejected both the ideology and practice of the apartheid system. They were drawn from the academic, professional, cultural, religious and business fields.
4. Although the group represented no organised formation within South Africa, their place within particularly the Afrikaans-speaking communities and the fact that that they were meeting with the ANC, invested the conference with an overwhelming atmosphere that this was part of the process of the South African people making history. In similar manner, the international community focussed its attention on the conference. Participants could not but be aware that some of the adherents of apartheid regarded the participation of the group as an act of betrayal, not only to the apartheid state, but also to the community of Afrikanerdom.
5. The conference was organised around four principal topics:
 - (a) Strategies for bringing about fundamental change in South Africa;
 - (b) The building of national unity;
 - (c) Perspectives with regard to the structures of the government of a free South Africa; and
 - (d) The economy of a liberated South Africa.
6. The discussions took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and



Drs. Boraine and Slabbert with Breyten Breytenbach and the President of Burkina Fasso - Thomas Sankara.

7. The group listened to and closely questioned the perspectives, goals, strategy and tactics of the ANC. The main areas of concern arose over the ANC's resolve to maintain and intensify the armed struggle. While the group accepted the historical reality of the armed struggle, although not all could support it, they were deeply concerned over the proliferation of uncontrolled violence. However, all participants recognised that the source of violence in South Africa derives from the fact that the use of force is fundamental to the existence and practise of racial domination. The group developed an understanding of the conditions which have generated a widespread revolt of the Black people and the deep resolve of the ANC.
8. Conference unanimously expressed preference for a negotiated resolution of the South African question. Participants recognised that the attitude of those in power in South Africa is the principle obstacle to progress in this regard. It was further accepted that the unconditional release of all political prisoners and the unbanning of organisations is a fundamental prerequisite for such negotiations to take place.
9. Proceeding from the common basis that there is an urgent necessity to realise the goal of a non-racial democracy, participants agreed that they all have an obligation to act for the achievement of this objective. They accepted that different strategies must be used in accordance with the possibilities available to the various forces opposed to the system of apartheid. They accepted that in its conduct, this struggle must assist in the furtherance both of democratic practice and in the building of a nation of all South Africa, Black and White.
10. It was accepted between the two delegations that further contacts of this nature were necessary. Equally, it was important that such contacts should involve more and wider sections of the South African people in order to dispel misunderstanding and fear and to reinforce the broad democratic movement.
11. Conference expressed profound appreciation to his excellency President Abdou Diouf, the government and people of Senegal, for the warm welcome extended to the delegates as well as the assistance afforded to them to ensure the success of the conference. It further expressed gratitude to Madame Danielle Mitterrand for her assistance in organising the conference and extended thanks to all other governments and individuals who contributed material resources to make the conference possible.

National Student Conference

IDASA, Stellenbosch, presented a student conference during the weekend of 26 to 28 June at the Wine Route Hotel near Stellenbosch. The title of the conference was: Students and Democracy.

The conference brought together 173 students from different orientations nationwide and all were involved in discussions focussing on the problems and process of democratization in S.A.

This conference must be seen as a first attempt. Mistakes made will be rectified in future activities. One point of critique was that the conference, according to Dr. Boraine, was a bit top heavy. More student speakers will be used in future. However many positive reports have been received. Students welcomed the unique opportunity to meet and talk to many others. The value of the conference therefore lay in the knowledge acquired from the speakers,



Prof. Abraham Viljoen, regional director for the Northern Transvaal, in conversation with Mr. James Selfe at the recent Students Conference in Stellenbosch.

the new friends made, the richness of discussion and the deepening of commitment to a non-racial, democratic future!

The following groups were represented:

From the SRC's of the following Universities:

WITS, UCT, UOVS, Namibia Academy, RAU, Stellenbosch, UPE, University of Pretoria.

Representatives from:

NUSAS, SANSCO, Concerned Students, PESCO, East London Youth Congress, Namibia National Students Organisation, Anglican Students Federation, Youth for S.A., PEYCO, Stellenbosch Studente Gesprek, Belydende Groep.

Many people attended in their personal capacity as well.

ERIC MNTONGA was murdered on Friday 24 July in the East London-King Williamstown area. The circumstances of his death, and at such a young age, came as a brutal shock to his family, colleagues and many friends throughout the Border region and beyond.

Dr. Alex Boraine, executive director of IDASA made this statement to the press: "It was with shock and great distress that I learnt of the death of Eric Mntonga over the weekend. Eric joined us earlier this year as co-ordinator of our East London office and has been a hard-working and dedicated colleague. We were all horrified at his brutal murder. This killing has all the hallmarks of an execution and is the most recent of a number of apparently unsolved deaths of activists in the Border area.

We are all deeply shocked at the loss of Eric as a colleague and a friend and condemn in the strongest terms the killing of a man who was committed to a non-racial democracy in our country. Our sincere condolences go to Eric's wife and children in their bereavement."

In our next issue a full tribute will be paid to him by

Mxolisi Eric Mntonga

his colleagues, but we share this brief obituary with you as we mourn his loss.

Eric was born in Duncan Village, East London and matriculated there in 1972. He soon became active in worker's committees, first at Pick and Pay where he was elected chairman, and later at Wilson Rowntree. In 1980 he joined the SA Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and served as the local branch chairman from 1981-1983. He then joined Elegant Dining as Sales Manager from 1983-1986, joining IDASA in March 1987. He was appointed as IDASA co-director for the Border Region. His leadership ability and widespread social concerns were further expressed in a range of other areas; he was a chairman of the Committee of Ten, a form-



er member of the U.D.F. field work committee and a member of the Mdantsane Residence Association.

He also distinguished himself in the sporting area: as a member of the non-racial Tembu Rugby Football Club and their representative to the E.L. Rugby Union — thereafter serving on several committees of the union. He was also active as manager of the Amateur Boxing club, and later as adviser and policy consultant to the non-racial Mdantsane Amateur Boxing Council.

In the soccer world Eric was the founder and Vice-President of the Mdantsane non-racial Soccer Board. He was elected as a delegate to both the Border Soccer Board and the S.A. Soccer Federation.

Eric was clearly a man of the

community, both in a leadership and service capacity. In his brief thirty-five years he contributed more than most men do in a life-time. He was a deeply respected community leader and a trusted friend. He leaves his wife Fikiswa Bukani and two children. Our deepest sympathy is extended to them, their wider family and friends, and we commit ourselves to maintain the fine work he started as a living memorial to his spirit.

As we went to print tributes were pouring in . . . one of them from Mr. Theo Heffer of the Premier Group (Human Resources):

"It is with deep sadness that I have learnt of the tragic death of Mxolisi Eric Mntonga. I first came to know and respect Eric as a SAAWU unionist during the height of the workers' struggle in East London in the early eighties. I will always remember his cheerfulness and his unselfish dedication to the service of his fellow-man. I mourn the untimely loss of a gentleman whom it was a privilege to know. Please convey my deepest sympathy to Mrs. Mntonga, her children and family. Yours sincerely, Theo Heffer."

Staff News

RECENT staff appointments have been made and IDASA wishes the following all the very best in their new appointments:

- Prof. Abraham Viljoen
— Regional Director, N. Tvl.
- Mr. George Peffer
— Regional Director, S. Tvl.
- Mr. Thaabit Albertus
— Regional Director, W. Cape
- Mr. "Pro" Jack
— Regional Co-Ordinator, W. Cape
- Mr. James Polley
— Media and Publications Consultant, National Office

Mr. Peffer and Prof. Viljoen will be involved in groundwork and the setting up of their offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria respectively. Thereafter further staffing requirements will be met.



Mr. Keith Watrus, recently appointed co-regional director in the Eastern Cape Region.

In the interim we take pleasure in introducing some of our staff to you pictorially. Further such "introductions" will appear in subsequent issues as well as news regarding staff activities in the various regions. Given



Eastern Cape Staff. Front (left to right): Mr. Wayne Mitchell (national co-ordinator, now based in Cape Town); Mrs. Sylvia Mitchell (regional bookkeeper). Back (left to right): Mrs. Vivian Sontsonga; Mrs. Elizabeth Mtsatse (regional secretary); Mr. Monde Mtanga (regional co-ordinator); Mr. Kevin Wakeford (regional co-ordinator); Mr. Gavin Bradshaw (research) and editorial consultant; Mr. Max Mamase (regional director).

the importance of the Dakar Conference we have given space to pertinent documents related to that event. Consequently we have had to delay our regional news column for another month.

IDASA grown beyond initial intentions

by WAYNE MITCHELL
(NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR)

WHEN IDASA began with its plans and budgets for 1987 it was never envisaged that the organisation would grow at the rate at which it has done.

The initial idea was to open three regional offices in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Border as well as a National Headquarters in Cape Town. Staffing for the regional offices was to consist of two directors and a secretary per region.

The first priority before setting up regional offices was to consult with the local civic organisations as to whether IDASA did in fact have a role to play in the regions concerned. Lengthy consultation also occurred at the national level as the political problem facing South Africa is one of a national nature.

The first official IDASA office was opened in Port Elizabeth during December 1986 and due to the headstart which this office has had over the other regional offices, it is to date the most advanced with regards to project identification and implementation. The office has grown in

proportion to its workload and now has a staff of seven. As a result of its success and achievements as well as its sound relationship between the Eastern Cape Office and the local community organisations, this office serves as an example of how, with time, IDASA would like to see all of its regional offices operate.

The second office to be opened, was in East London. An incredible amount of groundwork was initially needed so that sound relationships were built up between IDASA and the community in the Border Region. This Regional office is still comparatively new and has only been fully operational since May 1987.

With the Border and Eastern Cape offices fully established, it was decided to consolidate and tie the organisation together at the national level and hence the headquarters were established in Cape Town under the directorship of Dr's Slabbert and Boraine. The headquarters are occupied by the National Co-ordinator and administrative staff, together

with a full-time media and publications consultant.

During May, appointments were made in the Southern Transvaal and Northern Transvaal. Initially, the appointees will do the usual groundwork and make the necessary staff appointments before setting up offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria respectively. IDASA foresees that the two regional offices in these regions should be fully operational by mid-August 1987.

As from the 1st June, IDASA recruited staff to perform the regional work in the Western Cape and hopefully by mid-August we shall also find the Western Cape region fully functional.

Requests have been made for IDASA to establish regional offices in Natal and the Orange Free State. After careful consideration, the national office has decided that during its first year IDASA has expanded beyond its original intentions and therefore it is felt that only during the first half of 1988 will careful consideration be given to the expansion into Natal and the Orange Free State.