

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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THERE probably had not been so much talk and exchange of ideas on the Freedom Charter since the Congress of the People at Kliptown 33 years ago.

On July 15 and 16, the 2A Lecture Theatre at the University of Cape Town's Robert Leslie Building was transformed with brown and gold banners proclaiming the ideals of IDASA — "Working Towards Democracy" and "Working Towards Non-Racialism".

The event — IDASA's national conference on the Freedom Charter. More than 400 delegates arrived on Friday morning at the start of the two-day conference; by late Saturday afternoon well over 500 were attentively listening to Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert's closing speech.

The overriding impression of that conference was the enthusiastic and optimistic spirit that prevailed throughout, and the deep desire to comprehend what lay ahead.

But there were smaller details

## Historic IDASA Conference - Freedom Charter Emerges as Alive and Relevant As Ever

BY MARC DOBSON

which gave it a distinctive character; the freedom song sung before Rev. Xundu's speech; Dr. Motlana's leaping from the speakers' table to assist the elderly woman who had fainted; and the delegate who demanded to know from the religious

panel: "How ARE we going to solve all these problems?" (Perhaps he thought they had access to an omniscient source.)

Then there was the sharp criticism levelled by Moulana Faried Essack that no woman had been selected as either a panelist or a chairperson (a sexist oversight which Dr. Boraine later apologised for on behalf of IDASA), and the criticism privately expressed by several delegates during tea breaks that someone representing big business should have been invited onto a panel.

But what exactly was this Freedom Charter that had drawn a cross-section of South African society intent on hearing its clauses interpreted by prominent individuals from the worlds of law, politics, academia and the trade union movement?

The conference heard that the Charter was not a constitutional

*Continued overleaf*

Mr. Wynand Malan MP, Dr. Nthato Motlana and Prof. Hermann Giliomee at the first panel discussion.



blueprint but a guide for policy formulation. It was a potent symbol which, as Prof. Hermann Giliomee of UCT's Department of Political Studies put it, "reflected the existential anguish of blacks under apartheid".

Prof. Giliomee said the Freedom Charter had become a pivotal document in South Africa's political debate but the greatest danger would be if the Charter's adherents elevated it to the status of the sole authentic statement of all the peoples and classes.

"We are too diverse a nation to be bound by one Charter," he said, adding that the Freedom Charter should be put on the negotiating table along with others.

***"If any national group in South Africa today could understand the language of the Freedom Charter, it should be the Afrikaner"***

Misinformation about the Charter abounded, said Rev. Xundu, and those who considered it a Marxist document should bear in mind that it had been drafted by people operating from a Christian standpoint, many of whom had gone through mission schools and colleges.

Wynand Malan said he hoped the day would dawn when the Charter would be discussed in the medium of Afrikaans in the same positive way it was being done at the conference. The Afrikaner history offered a parallel of what was happening at present in liberation politics.

"If any national group in South Africa today could understand the language of the Freedom Charter, it should be the Afrikaner," said Mr. Malan.

Dr. Farouk Meer, secretary of the Natal Indian Congress, said South Africa's people — black and white — could use the Freedom Charter as a beacon to create a safe future for all their children.

Soweto community leader Dr. Nthato Motlana told the conference the African National Congress had begun an exhaustive re-examination of the Charter and was engaged in drafting a constitution for a post-apartheid South Africa.

Wits political scientist Mr Mark

Swilling said whites were constantly bombarded by State propaganda which sought to demonise the black opposition movements and therefore, by implication, the Freedom Charter.

He warned that this demonisation of all alternatives except the Government's would have tragic consequences — as white Zimbabweans could well relate.

"During the war, the entire white minority was mobilised for war behind a myth," said Mr. Swilling. "Proof that it was a myth came when President Robert Mugabe came into power and did exactly the opposite to what Ian Smith said he would do."

One of the most intensely discussed issues at the conference was the controversial clause in the Char-

ter reading, "All national groups shall have equal rights".

The term "national groups" could be misleading when read in the light of present history, said Rev. Canon Mcebisi Xundu, director of the Justice and Reconciliation Programme of the Diocese of Port Elizabeth.

The term referred to the people of the then protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, he said, and bore no relation to the present divisive concept propagated by the government.

"We must move away from ethnicity. If the world is becoming a global village, how much more for us to become a global household," he said.

However, Professor Lourens du Plessis, from the Department of Public Law at the University of Stel-



Prof. Colin Bundy and Dr. Neil McGurk on "Equality in Education".



Ms. Cathy Cook (centre) from the Cook Foundation in California who made a special visit to Cape Town to attend the conference . . . in conversation with delegates.

lenbosch, felt the clause recognised the political relevance of ethnic and tribal affiliations "to emphasise the need for the equal protection of the rights of . . . every member of the nation as a unity".

National Democratic Movement leader Mr. Wynand Malan said the clause was a reference to a "sub-nationalism" which existed in the country and which would continue to exist in a post-apartheid South Africa.

*The possible nature of land redistribution and compensation, and the future form of the economy, were perhaps the two issues which sustained the most interest during the conference. Land would certainly be redistributed, said Dr. Motlana, but the proposed land reform would benefit non-Africans*

*as well. Those who worked the land would not be dispossessed without adequate compensation. A Port Elizabeth delegate, referring to the abject poverty of the rural areas, argued that there should be no compensation and no compromise.*

But Dr. Motlana disagreed. "If we are genuine in our offer to our non-African citizens, we must admit that there are those who will be entitled to a fair and square deal. There must be justice," he said.

Prof. Giliomee then dryly commented that the State was already so impoverished there would not be much money left over for compensation.

*Thought-provoking facts emerged during the debate on how the Freedom Charter envisaged a post-apartheid economy.*

The conference heard:

- \* At present about six per cent of the population owned about 80 per cent of the country's wealth.
- \* It would cost about R75-billion to nationalise the four major conglomerates (Anglo American Corporation, SA Mutual, Sanlam and the Rembrandt Group) or R106 000 billion to purchase these organisations. (The entire South African Government budget expenditure for 1987 was R46 318 million.)
- \* The South African economy was massively concentrated, with four corporations controlling 83% of all JSE listed companies.

Mr. Rory Riordan, director of the Human Rights Trust, who presented a paper concentrating on the issue of the nationalisation of in-

### ***Land would certainly be redistributed, but the proposed land reform would benefit non-Africans as well***

dustrial, said the International Monetary Fund was unlikely to rush to the aid of a socialist country which had nationalised industry.

"Both emotional and economic issues will probably make land-redistribution inevitable, and in fact desirable," he said. "It may not be the same for the nationalisation of industry."

Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, said workers understood that the productivity of their labour would have to rise tremendously if enough economic surplus was to be generated. This understanding was crucial for the future of South Africa because many prophets of doom predicted a bleak future where people would want to share but there would be nothing to share. Whites visualised a future where expropriation would be the order of the day but, "nothing could be further from the truth". However, in a South Africa based on the Freedom Charter there would be no room for the idle, added Mr. Ramaphosa.

Mr. Bheki Sibiyi of the Black Management Forum said South Africa did not need either capitalism or socialism but a "happy marriage" of both systems. "From the look of things, the probable econo-



Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, Rory Riordan and Mark Swilling speaking on the economy.



Mr. Moulana Faried Essack (right), National Co-ordinator of the Call of Islam in conversation with delegates.

mic framework in a post-apartheid South Africa will be heavily socialistic," he said.

The issue of what would be the official language in a new South Africa drew the conclusion that English would probably be the official language with the second official language varying from region to region.

Punctuating the various debates and discussions over the two days were unsolicited testimonies from delegates — testimonies that shed light on the suffering and bitterness spawned by apartheid. One delegate told the conference that whites were living in a prison but did not realise it because the cell was so beautifully padded. Another insisted that whites' standard of living would have to drop, "otherwise you must continue living in fear with burglar-bars on your windows and guns in your hands".

Dr. Boraine acknowledged the "pathos and anger" of some delegates and told the conference: "It would be foolish to ignore that just because it makes us feel uncomfortable."

During the debate on equality before the law, the contrast between the present state of the legal system and the kind of system the Charter foresaw was vividly highlighted.

*The legal system had failed completely in South Africa, advocate Mr. Zack Yacoob, Counsel for the Defence in the Delmas Treason Trial, told the conference. There could never be equality before the law in South Africa as long as there was economic inequality.*

Professor Dennis Davis of UCT's Faculty of Law said the basis upon which the country's lawyers were trained needed to be "completely overhauled".

"Law faculties in this country fall appallingly short of the kind of legal education that should be provided to train lawyers for a future South Africa," he said.

Amongst the reforms suggested were:

- \* A revision of the racial and sexual composition of the Bench, particularly at the Supreme Court.
- \* The reintroduction of the jury system.
- \* A revision of the vagrancy and squatting laws, which "criminalised poverty".
- \* A broadened legal aid system that would be independent of the Government.

In a sober note during the education debate, Dr. Neil McGurk, headmaster of the Sacred Heart College, said South Africa did not have the resources to provide a quality provision of education to all based on the present provision to whites.

"White education is presently in serious demise," he said. Prof. Colin Bundy of UCT's Department of History later offered some consolation by remarking that white schooling was "education for orthodoxy".

Mr. Fanyana Mazibuko, director of the University Preparation Programme in Johannesburg, said the Freedom Charter clause which promised work and security for all would prove meaningless unless people had been trained and educated so as to take up those jobs.

Earlier on, Dr. Motlana had expressed the wish that the Freedom Charter had stressed the importance of acquiring skills and education, come what may. "Our children must be ready to run with the ball," he said.

In the final debate, Moulana Faried Essack, national co-ordinator of the Call of Islam, said there was freedom of worship in South Africa but not of religion.

His confidence in the leadership of the African National Congress led him to believe the situation would be redressed in a post-apartheid South Africa.

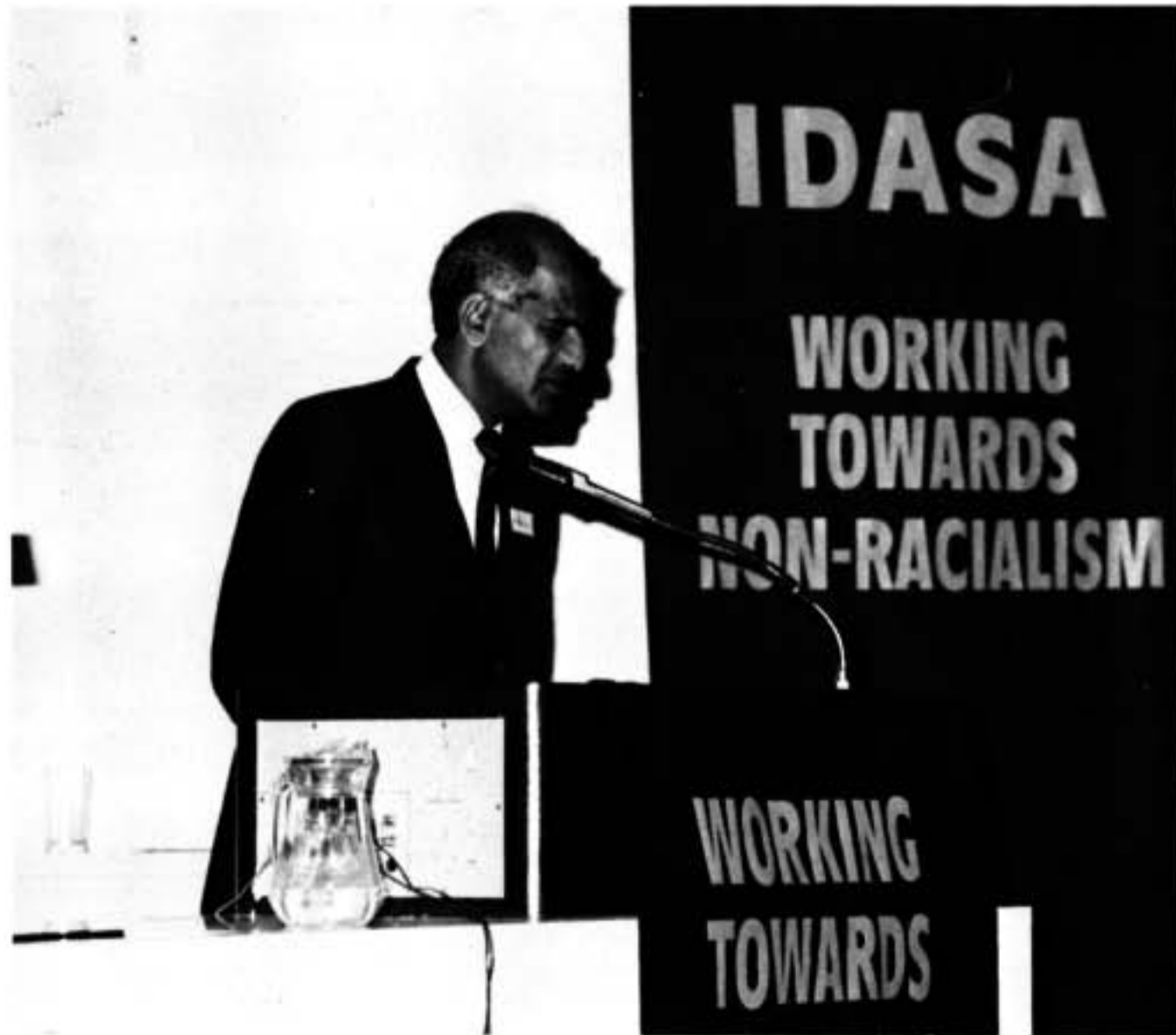
In his closing address the IDASA co-director, Dr. Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, spoke of the role whites could play in the democratic struggle.

The fear of the future being experienced by whites was being fuelled by their isolation from the democratic struggle in an increasingly authoritarian society, he said.

However, it was important for whites to realise that they could become part of the struggle for a just, non-racial South Africa. Their role would be to work through the bodies and organisations outside Parliament and to take discussion and debate on the Freedom Charter into their communities.



Mr. Bheki Sibuya.



Adr. Zack Yacoob speaking on Equality before the Law.

We have a wealth of outstanding speakers, thus my opening address will be short. I want to make only three points:

**(a)** The Freedom Charter today should be seen as a dynamic document rather than a static one. Yesterday I returned from Moscow where a country of 300 million people are engaged in what promises to be a transformation of that society. For many Soviet citizens, perestroika means moving beyond "the dead hand of the past." Certainly the contributions of their great leaders and thinkers, and in particular Marx and Lenin, will be regarded as highly as before. But there is a genuine acknowledgement that, whilst building on the past, they must not be captive to it. In a dynamic world with changing circumstances and conditions, there must be space for new and innovative thinking. The Freedom Charter has inspired and continues to inspire thousands of South Africans.

It has also been a source of informing many thousands about their hopes and aspirations and goals. To be inspiring and informing does not mean to be enslaving. We too are engaged in a perestroika of our own and therefore the Freedom Charter comes to us as a document of the utmost importance and significance, but should be seen as open-ended with no limits to new ideas and new demands. If we were to try and produce a similar document today, it may well focus on additional areas of concern which were not necessarily addressed in the 50s.

The Freedom Charter has social, economic and political implications and to that end will be instructive, but we too must do our part.

**(b)** Secondly, we cannot participate in the on-going search for freedom and truth and justice in South Africa unless we are directly involved in the struggle which that entails. This conference will fail if it assumes the character of armchair critics who either simply applaud every clause of the Charter or seek to negate any or all of the clauses of the Charter.

To participate in this conference should lead to greater involvement in what the Charter is all about. I wonder how many of you who are old enough can remember where you were on 26 June 1955? That was when the Freedom Charter was

## The Freedom Charter Today - Dr. A. Boraine opens the Charter Conference

adopted. I confess with dismay that I was a student at university and didn't even know the Congress of the People was taking place. Alan Paton in his latest book published just before he died gives us an account of how the Liberal Party decided not to participate at the Congress because of reservations it held concerning the Congress of Democrats.

It is a very sad account of good people who denied themselves a great moment in history because of their reluctance to get involved. In the same way today, there are many good people who espouse strong liberal values and have begun to opt out because they are either no longer dictating the debate or because they feel that some of the values that they hold dear are not being taken into account. In the



Rev. Canon Mcebisi Xundu, Ms. C. Cook and Dr. Alex Boraine at the conference social function.

struggle for a non-racial democracy, we ought all to be involved, which does not necessarily mean agreeing with one another on every point or on every strategy.

There is a huge task which waits to be done and we shall be performing the task in different ways and amongst different constituencies. But if we are opposed to apartheid, and if we are committed to a new South Africa, then we must act against apartheid and work for that new South Africa which waits to be born.

**(c)** The final point I want to make in opening this conference is to emphasise not only the *content* of the Charter but to highlight the *process* by which the Charter came about.

I remind you that discussions and debates concerning the formulation of such a Charter took place far and wide throughout South Africa. Many people, and some are present today, moved amongst various groups asking them what they would like to see in the Charter. Here was an honest and successful attempt to involve as many people as possible. This is in stark contrast to the approach by the government of South Africa. It would seem that they will never learn that the time is long past when Parliament or the cabinet or the State President or the State Security Council can seek to impose solutions on the majority of South Africa.

This is why the new Bill which is now being published will fail as dismally as previous attempts at so-called reform. If there is one lesson which this government needs to learn it is that the only successful way to resolve the present conflict in our country is through the democratic process. Many of us present in this room warned the government in 1983 and 1984 that its attempt to impose a new constitution on South Africa would not only fail but tragically would lead to violent confrontation. It seems that they have not learnt from that bitter lesson. I fear that the refusal to move towards genuine negotiation with credible leaders will lead to greater confrontation and escalating violence.

With these brief remarks, I should like to formally open this conference with the expressed hope that in considering both content and process, we shall be taking another step in the direction of a truly non-racial, democratic South Africa.

THE task of persuading Whites to abandon apartheid and to commit themselves to a non-racial democracy assumes Herculean proportions when seen against the background of persistent and far-reaching state propaganda. A favourite theme of South African television and radio is the threat of Soviet invasion if the present government's policies are abandoned. The image is conveyed that the Red army of the Soviet Union is poised to invade South Africa and destroy its way of life, its economy, its churches and in particular White South Africans!

In IDASA's attempt to persuade Whites to move towards a democratic future, we are constantly faced with White fear of communism and the "Soviet threat". On the other hand, there are many statements and articles from Soviet academics as well as Sovietologists from the United States and Great Britain and elsewhere which refute this alleged threat. Therefore when an invitation came to visit the Soviet Union, it seemed wise to travel there and to see for myself.

Jenny and I spent two weeks in the Soviet Union during July, visiting Moscow and Leningrad with a number of visits to outlying areas. We talked with politicians, administrators, academics, leading members of the Russian Orthodox church and foreign ministry officials (apart from the many hours spent in discussion and debate, we were fortunate enough to attend a ballet, a concert in the Kremlin, folk dancing and singing in Leningrad and the Moscow Circus!). Insofar as Soviet policy towards Southern Africa is concerned, there seemed a clear commitment to encouraging negotiation rather than violence as a solution to the conflict within the area. We were specifically told that the Soviet Union's policy towards Southern Africa was that the region should not become the theatre for competition between the great powers of the United States and the Soviet Union. As far as Angola is concerned, they were greatly encouraged by the discussions taking place between the Angolans, the Cubans and the South Africans and were willing to offer any assistance to ensure that the discussions led to genuine negotiation towards the withdrawal of Cuba and South Africa from Angola and the implementation of the

## From the Executive Director - *Perestroika and the Soviet Union*

**DR. ALEX BORAINÉ**

long-awaited United Nations 435 Resolution.

They were hungry for specific information about South Africa and

we spent many hours answering their questions. They stressed that solutions to existing problems in South Africa had to be found by South Africans themselves although they made no secret of their total abhorrence of apartheid and opposition to its policies. Clearly perestroika has touched every aspect of the Soviet Union including its foreign policy. As America discovered in Vietnam, so it would appear that the Soviet Union has discovered in Afghanistan that regional disputes cannot be solved by the intervention of the major powers.

Amongst the academics there was a real attempt to understand the nature and complexity of the racial and economic problems within South Africa. I was amazed when



*Dr. Alex Boraine, a Soviet Union professor and Jenny Boraine with Russian Orthodox priest in 13th century monastery.*

two of them greeted me in Afrikaans as I entered into discussions with them! I was particularly impressed by the detailed knowledge of our situation displayed by Professor Appollin Davidson, whose library on Southern Africa was extensive. They were well aware of the perception amongst many White South Africans of the so-called Soviet threat and emphasised that the Soviet Union had no desire to become embroiled in what was essentially a Southern African problem. Again, however, they stressed that they would do anything they could to encourage genuine negotiation between legitimate Black and White leaders within South Africa.

We were fascinated and even excited by the mood of expectation which seemed to run through the Soviet Union society in terms of Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership, and the emphasis on perestroika and glasnost seemed to pervade the atmosphere. Everywhere we went, people were discussing the new commitment to far-reaching and fundamental economic and political reform. People queued up from 5 am in order to secure newspapers which devoted enormous space to the perestroika debate. The Soviet Union citizens are fortunate in having Gorbachev, who has the power to turn back the havoc and repression brought about under the Stalin era and to unlock the vast resources, both human and material, for the good of all.

We have many people in opposition in South Africa who regularly over the years have spelt out a course of action which, if adopted, could bring stability, security and peace in South Africa. Tragically, the people in charge who have the power and therefore the initiative seem to lack both the will and the desire to resolve our own internal crisis. One thing is clear though — as developments take place within Southern Africa the fig leaf of the Soviet threat is going to be snatched away from the South African government, and they will have to resort to a different programme of propaganda in their attempts to confine South African Whites within the apartheid laager.

IDASA will continue to try and expose propaganda wherever it exists and to help all South Africans to be informed so that enlightened decisions can be taken about our future.

## South African Students' Perceptions Changed in Zimbabwe

STEVE FOURIE

"WHAT do a Nusas head office staff member and the son of Professor Carel Boshoff, ultra-conservative leader of the Afrikaner Volkswag, have in common?" asks Robert Houwing of the *Weekend Argus*. Dries van Heerden of the *Sunday Times* begins: "He spoke of ANC members in Harare and found it a 'stimulating experience'. He saw the Biko movie, *Cry Freedom*, and enjoyed it."

These are the opening paragraphs of just two of a number of newspaper articles which have appeared in South African newspapers since the visit to Zimbabwe of a diverse group of sixteen students, drawn from the universities of Pretoria, RAU, Free State, Stellenbosch and Port Elizabeth. The trip was facilitated by IDASA in association with the Zimbabwe-based Cold Comfort Farm Trust during July this year.

Although newspaper articles have naturally focussed on two aspects, the presence of Carel Boshoff and the informal talks with student members of the ANC, the students' most commonly expressed highlight of the trip was their experience



Neil Shaw (right) in conversation with Zimbabwean students.

of life at the Zimbabwe University. The programme had been planned around a number of visits to the campus of the University of Zimbabwe to afford the South Africans the opportunity of interacting with the students and teachers. The very gracious welcome of the Chairman and Committee of the Students' Union set the stage for the vigorous, friendly debate which stretched over the next two days.

It was during the discussions at the university that the S.A. students met their compatriots, members of the ANC studying at the university. Although the relationship was a little stand-offish to begin with, it had developed into a warm, friendly one by the end of the week — evidence again of the possibility of our finding each other in discussion rather than destroying each other through conflict.

Also included in the busy itinerary were meetings with a number of people on the subject of the destabilisation of the Frontline States, their development and the "Zimbabwe experiment" (the government's reconciliation programme). For a number of the students another highlight of the trip was a visit to an Afrikaans farming community.

Students' comments on their trip include the following:

\* "Zimbabwe is a land where democratic tolerance has become a reality. We heard lecturers and students at the University of Zimbabwe criticise the Mugabe government openly, and stayed with Afrikaans families in the rural areas who did the same from a fairly racist perspective."

\* "When I listened to Zimbabwean students talking about their national struggle I could not fault them on anything. It is just a pity that they do not show the same understanding for the Afrikaner's quest for liberty."

\* "Ek voel gemotiveerd om die stryd vir die totstandkoming van 'n demokrasie voort te sit."

\* "Ten minste 50% van die dinge wat ek oor RSA in Zimbabwe gehoor het was vir my totaal nuut en het beslis 'n kwalifiserende invloed op my politieke mening aangaande RSA gehad."

\* "Ons het almal se storie gehoor. Die boer wat swaarder kry, maar tog erken dat hy nog die lewe geniet en dink dat Mugabe 'n goeie, intelligente leier is."

THE regional conference on democracy in education which was held in Grahamstown in May brought together a cross-section of people engaged in the education field in South Africa.

The delegates, who addressed and attended the conference in their private capacities, were drawn from the mainstream of white education, the more conservative black teachers' organisations and the democratic movement. The composition of conference delegates was in itself a challenge, necessitating much serious listening and learning.

There was broad agreement on the undemocratic nature of the current education system and the need for reform or a new educational system. However, the debate on the content of democratic education clearly has a long distance to go in some constituencies.

In his keynote address to the conference, Prof. André du Toit of the Political Science Department at the University of Cape Town highlighted the critical issue of the meaning of democracy, which ostensibly has the support of South Africans of all political and ideological persuasions.

***"We must learn to reason together and educate each other as to the meaning of democracy in South Africa today and tomorrow"***

"Virtually all parties and groups claim to be for democracy. Some may consider various other parties to be non-democratic or even anti-democratic, but no-one is currently attacking the democratic ideal itself, or proposing to look for alternatives to democracy," said Prof. Du Toit. He stressed the need for an exploration of the interpretation and application of the democratic ideal. "We must learn to reason together and educate each other as to the meaning of democracy in South Africa today and tomorrow."

Prof. Du Toit said two models of democracy, those of liberal and social democracy, predominate in South Africa. For education this means that at least two contrasting options could be advanced in the name of democracy. They differ on the essential issue of whether education belongs in the public realm and should be the subject of popular rule, or whether education should be wrested from political interfer-

ence and be restored to the protected private sphere of individual rights and liberties. The one option entails a further, but different, politicisation of education, and other option calls for the disengagement of education from public rule — an essential depoliticisation of education.

The other keynote speaker at the conference, Sached director Mr. John Samuels, said the content and shape of the term democracy was constantly being developed. His personal understanding of democracy, he said, was strongly shaped by the culture of liberation and it tended towards openness and a critical spirit, grassroots involvement and access to empowerment. He said the content of the new educational system was taking shape now and at this stage it reflected these features.

Mr. Samuels cautioned that those engaged in the education struggle would need to accept the very qualities they articulated about democracy. "We will need to develop structures of accountability, we will need to give content to the idea."

Dr. Roux van der Merwe, the vice-principal of Rhodes University, said there was little doubt that the present education system was seriously flawed. In changing it, however, one should look at those aspects of the education system that are fundamental to education and do not "grow out of the present impasse we find ourselves in". If not, one could easily be replacing one flawed system with another.

He also had reservations about making the community the prime determinant of a university. He said in the 1970s the concept of "volksgebondenheid" — from which grew separate universities for each group — was seen to be the cultural transmission role of the universities. "Heaven forbid that in the 1980s, it is the people's gebondenheid that becomes the cultural transmission role of the universities." The two concepts were really no different, he said, and neither should be the central focus of a university "which has a commitment to far more lasting values than to a particular community which is dominant at any one time". Prof. Van der Merwe called for the retention of the healthy balance which, he said, currently existed between egalitarianism and individualism at universities.

### Conference on democracy

Mr. Mzukisi Mbu, of the South African National Students' Congress, charged academics and universities with being uncommitted in the fight against apartheid. He said little of the research undertaken at universities addressed the question of an alternative society or was relevant to issues of common concern in the community. The universities, he said, had to be transformed from ivory towers to people's institutions.

"We are talking about the whole question of the accountability of these institutions. They cannot remain silent, they have a role which history has endowed them." Mr. Mbu said a structure urgently needed to be created for academics to bring them into the fold of those opposing apartheid and working for a non-racial democratic future. A few universities, he said, like the University of the Western Cape, Wits and Natal, were to be commended for having made a start towards becoming more relevant to the community in which they operate.

Ms. Maureen Robinson, of the University of the Western Cape, said the struggle for alternative edu-

(Left to right): Mr. Sefako Nyaka, Bria Ashley.





### Education — Ronel Scheffer

Education was inextricably linked to the struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa. She said the call for people's education was not simply a protest call, but an attempt to lay a foundation for the post-apartheid society. People's education will evolve through a dynamic process of change and debate on the education and political levels, and the answers to "what is people's education" will only be found through active participation in that process.

Certain key features of people's education have already emerged as a result of that process. One of them was that education must be controlled by and advance the interests of the mass of the people. The current understanding is that democracy in education must operate at two levels. At one level there is a call to build democratic structures in the community and to take seriously the process of consultation and accountability to those structures. At another level, there is a call to redefine classroom practice and to begin to train teachers and students in democratic education practices.

Mr. Curtis Nkondo, a Reef activist, and Prof. Michael



ist associated with the National Education Union of South Africa and the National Education Crisis Committee, said a mere extension of the current education system would simply serve to heighten inequalities and the heterogeneous nature of society. "Genuine education means, in part, a complete about-turn from the tribally and racially fragmented approach to education to a unified national system to produce a transformed and integrated personality for a new South Africa," he said.

Mr. Sefako Nyaka, a journalist with *New Nation* and *The Weekly Mail*, said the new government practice of appointing black educationists as heads of departments did not constitute meaningful change as these individuals lacked real decision-making powers. It was simply a way of changing the colour of the oppressor, he said.

Mr. James Maseko, publicity secretary of Sansco, said the fact that school boycotts occurred less frequently did not mean that the crisis in black education had been resolved. Boycotts, he said, were not a principle employed whenever there was a crisis at schools, but students still had very few alternatives avenues for protest.

The slogan "education for liberation" implied that a new education system was not divorced from the political struggle for liberation. "We cannot wait until after liberation for education — we need to create a new education system now," said Mr. Maseko.

Three commissions — focussing on curriculum development, management and allocation of resources — were set in motion during the conference to prepare working documents for on-going study and debate in various constituencies.

The commissions expressed overwhelming support for initiatives to "buck" the existing system by informally implementing democratic reforms. The Management Commission suggested that flexibility of the current system should be exploited to "water down" the grip the state has on the management of education. It said confrontational actions would have limited success and supported covert action, warning however that covert actions ran the risk of being deemed "subversive" when they became successful.

Mr. Franklin Sonn, the rector of the Peninsula Technikon, who intro-

duced the Management Commission, said the struggle in education was essentially one for control over the management of education. It deals with the right to determine what shall be taught, in what form or style it shall be taught and by whom it shall be taught.

All three commissions criticised the authoritarian bent of the current system, calling for the maximisation of the community's influence over schools. The importance of unified action against the current system, and of communication and co-operation between constituencies, was also stressed.

The Commission into Curriculum Development said while examinations and results were over-emphasised in the current system, many teachers were already incorporating democratic practices and alternative content in their teaching. However, it said that democratic teaching methods required expertise and confidence, and advised that resource material developed in this field should be shared.

The Commission into Management said consideration should be given to accepting the challenge of Minister Gerrit Viljoen to educa-

**"We cannot wait until after liberation for education — we need to create a new education system now"**

tionists to come forward with alternatives for discussion. Research could be conducted into alternative management structures and the government could be lobbied for change in this way.

The Commission into the Allocation of Resources commented that teachers were conditioned into believing that everything needed official sanction. The government often allowed innovations as long as these were not "rammed down its throat", it said. There was scope for improving the utilisation of facilities and resources to promote the ends of democracy. It recommended that schools should seek greater autonomy in the area of the utilisation of facilities, and that teachers' expertise be better employed. Regarding teacher training, it said the alternative style to Christian National Education must be vigorously pursued by those institutions which espoused the more open and less authoritarian approach.

## Port Elizabeth scholars create an apartheid-free weekend

By: Keith J. Wattrus

MONTHS of consultation with teachers in Port Elizabeth finally bore fruit on 10 June when 48 pupils of all races embarked upon a weekend outing in the Tsitsikama area. Reaching their destination by bus, they settled into their dormitories on the Friday evening largely unaware of just what an impact events in the next two days would have upon their perceptions.

Before leaving Port Elizabeth the scholars were divided into pairs and asked to spend the two-hour bus trip productively by finding out as much as possible about their partner. Immediately after supper on Friday evening each pair in turn was seated in front of the audience and each person was asked questions about their partner in a form of check-your-mate competition. Besides acting as an "ice-breaker" this exercise served the purpose of beginning to stimulate the scholars into exploring more fully their colleagues' backgrounds: products quite clearly of vastly differing home environments.

The evening ended with the showing of a video entitled "A Question of Power" which traced loosely the careers of two journalists, the late Percy Qoboza and Tertius Myburgh, and focused on extraneous events and circumstances which contributed to the moulding of their respective careers. While watching this, the scholars were asked to write down one sentence from the video which was very meaningful to them and to hand it in afterwards.

Saturday's programme began with the dividing of the scholars into 6 working-groups of 8 each. The groups were then given exercises to carry out, the success of which depended on their ability to co-operate with one another rather than on any individual skills or flair.

Thereafter the sentences from the video that each person had written down were handed back to them in their group, and they were asked to reach consensus as a group as to which sentence was the most pertinent. A reporter from each group was then given the oppor-

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tunity of addressing all the scholars, raising any important issues discussed in their group.

A morning tea-break was taken before a lecture on demographics was given. With the emphasis in this lecture placed on urbanisation, unemployment and educational requirements, some startling facts were given the scholars and these clearly were thought-provoking if judged by the avid response evoked amongst them.

This lecture prepared the ground for the resumption of activities after lunch, at which point the working-groups were asked to spend two hours preparing a play on the subject of their perspectives of South Africa in the year 2010. Each group was to have the opportunity of producing their play in front of the general body of scholars that evening. The thinking was that as each participant contributed his/her thoughts about the future, submerged fears and insecurities within others could be brought to the surface and allayed if not eradicated.

Through all this, recreation had not been forgotten and at 4.00 p.m. scholars were given time off until supper to make use of the sports

facilities available. It was eventually only the setting sun that dragged some scholars off the volleyball courts. Supper followed and some final frantic preparation for the production of their plays.

No one could have foreseen quite how superbly inspirational these plays were going to be. Each was a masterpiece in political expression with no "prickly" issues being side-stepped for the sake of expedience, although by the same token no such issues were allowed to dominate. The level of participation and the exuberant approach of the players was a measure of the success of the weekend's attempt to weave the many loose strands into one thread. An extract from one of the plays which was a skit on a well-known television advert perhaps best summed-up the general mood: "Can you see the difference? I can't!"

Sunday began with an optional religious devotion and continued with a discussion about ways of taking the weekend's initiative further. A most concrete suggestion was the setting-up in each school of societies named appropriately enough Y.E.S. (Youth Empathy Society). Finally a two-hour hike was taken along one of the Tsitsikama river-trails. Despite the inclement weather and the hike's being optional, every single scholar chose to go along and this was further proof that a unit had developed: a unit in which friendship and understanding were the watchwords.

The return bus-trip provided one very poignant moment when the black scholars, who for a weekend had been true fellow South Afri-



Scholars acting out a play as part of their programme.

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cans with their white counterparts, were dropped off in the black township which is their decreed home. The looks on the faces of the white pupils changed from puzzlement to empathy but then to resolution as they realised that there was something they could do, some way of being part of the solution.

The trip had been a success!

## JANET CHERRY — Profile of a Woman in the Struggle

JANET CHERRY, 27, Port Elizabeth Black Sash member, Eastern Cape Adult Learning Project co-ordinator and End Conscription Campaign leader, was released on 30 July 1987 after 342 days in detention. That simple fact bears testimony to the price she and hundreds of others have paid for their political commitment. She was recently appointed as Consultant to the Idasa staff in the Eastern Cape region.

After matriculating with distinction in 1979 Janet began a degree in Economic History and Industrial Sociology at UCT. Through her concern for the need for a living wage she joined and later co-ordinated the Wages Commission. She also served as a voluntary worker for the General Workers' Union and assisted with its worker advice office. She played a central role on the support committees of the 1980 Meat Workers' strike and the 1981 Wilson Rowntrees strike.

In 1980 she began working as a volunteer literacy teacher for the Adult Learning Project. Through this work, most of it involving evening classes in Crossroads, she not only learnt to speak Xhosa fluently but also had first-hand experience of the needs and desires of black workers.

Janet has always believed in the importance of working for change within her own community and of winning over as many whites as possible to the cause of democracy. For this reason she became actively involved in student politics. In 1980 she was elected to the Arts Students' Council and in 1981 was one of the poll-toppers in the SRC election. She served as SRC Media Officer, and through this work developed contacts with youth and civic groups throughout the Western Cape. After graduating in 1982 she was elected Secretary-General of

the National Union of South African Students and worked full-time for NUSAS in 1983.

Rather than returning to the relatively secure environment of Cape Town, Janet took up the challenge of moving to Port Elizabeth, where there was a pressing need for her skills as a literacy teacher. In 1984 she set up the Eastern Cape Adult Learning Project, and began her work teaching literacy skills to trade union members.

In 1986, when the repression in the area made it difficult for her to fulfil her role as a literacy co-ordinator, she transformed her offices

into a community and detentions advice centre. A prime focus of her work was always on training others to impart skills. This has meant that her work has been able to continue despite her detention.

In 1984 Janet joined the Black Sash and has played an active role in the organisation ever since. She developed a close friendship with Molly Blackburn, and together they worked tirelessly in showing the white community the realities of life under apartheid.

One of Janet's first efforts in winning support for the democratic movement within the white community was in setting up the Million Signatures Campaign in 1984. Over 1 000 signatures were collected from Port Elizabeth's white suburbs, and in August 1984 the Walmer town hall was packed for the launch of the Port Elizabeth UDF Area Committee. Janet was elected its first chairperson.

In July 1985 all meetings of the  
*Continued overleaf*



Ms. Janet Cherry

UDF PE Area Committee were banned, and the ban has since been renewed. During this period Janet also served on the UDF regional and national General Councils and on several UDF sub-committees.

In December 1984 Janet and Molly Blackburn formed the Port Elizabeth branch of the End Conscription Campaign and Janet was elected its chairperson. She has also served on the ECC National Committee, has addressed ECC meetings throughout the country and has represented the ECC overseas.

On 22 August 1986 Janet was detained by the security police while visiting Cape Town. She was transferred to Port Elizabeth and was held in solitary confinement for over two months, but later shared a cell with Sue Lund, the Grahams-town Rural Committee co-ordinator. She was released on 30 July 1987.

(Courtesy of SASH magazine August 1987.)

## Domestic Employers' Association formed

By: Keith J. Watrus

OVER recent months IDASA in the Eastern Cape has been facilitating meetings between domestic workers and their employers, aimed at promoting a better understanding of their respective needs. Out of these meetings there arose an urgent need for the formation of an association of domestic employers which could help to regulate the working conditions of domestic workers. (Organised domestic workers have in fact been seeking protection in terms of the Labour Relations Act and Basic Conditions of Employment Act for several years but all representations have fallen upon deaf ears.)

On 6 June 1988, IDASA called an Inaugural General Meeting of the Eastern Cape Domestic Employers' Association. At this meeting a Constitution was adopted and an Executive Committee elected. This Executive Committee subsequently met again and has already embarked upon a vigorous membership drive. Furthermore, contact is being made with organised domestic workers with the intention of bringing about discussions relating to regulation of their working conditions.

The aims of this Association have

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been provisionally set out as follows:

- to assist in formulating a contract between employers and employees
- to assist in language/communication skills between employers and employees
- to assist both employers and employees in any legal dispute
- to assist in placing employees
- to provide interested parties with information regarding various courses offered in Port Elizabeth and the persons to contact.

Anyone interested in knowing more about this Association should write to:

The Secretary  
P O Box 28415  
Sunridge Park  
6008

## WESTERN CAPE

### Breaking down apartheid barriers by regular township visits

WE have been taking approximately 100 people on regular visits into the townships for the last few months.

The visits are now an established long-term IDASA Western Cape Project. We believe they are highly effective in breaking down age-old apartheid barriers and helping people prepare to live together in an open and democratic society.

We asked a twelve-year-old schoolgirl from Sea Point to describe the recent township visit she went on with 60 other participants:-

"On Friday 22nd April Mr. Mziwonke Pro Jack of IDASA, an organization promoting better race relations, took us on a bus tour through the townships.

"Our first stop was the KTC Squatter Camp. There we were welcomed to a 'community hall' by the members of a committee of the leaders of the people living there.

"The hall has no seats, but the people from the squatter shacks around it brought stools and benches for us to sit on. We could then ask questions.

"They told us that they had lived in an area nearby which the Government wanted cleared of houses, but from which the Government did not itself want to remove them by force, because this would cause protests overseas.

"In 1985 other black people called the 'witdoeke' (white bands) were promised better living conditions by the Government, if the KTC people were driven out. The 'witdoeke' attacked the KTC people, burnt their shacks and destroyed the area, so that the Government did not need to do this itself. The police and the army did not stop the 'witdoeke', because the Government wanted them to drive out the KTC people, who had to move to a new area and build new shacks under much worse conditions.

"In reply to other questions, the KTC committee said there are 18 000 people living in their area, in which there are only two water taps. The water is carried in buckets to the shacks.

"The shacks are built of wood, pieces of corrugated iron, plastic sheeting and cardboard. They have almost no real furniture. There are no proper roads and the rain turns the whole area to mud, often flooding the shacks.

"The children grow up seeing policemen with machine guns everyday, which builds up a natural hatred of all 'white' people, especially the police. This worries the older people, who still want to accept people of all races and colours, and who would be happy to live under any government elected in free elections in which everyone could vote.

"We could then walk around and visit the shacks. My mother and I played with a group of the smaller children, to whom we were complete strangers, but who enjoyed it, hugging and kissing us as we left! Even though we did not understand each other's language, we were friends!

"We drove through Crossroads, and next stopped at Butter Square, where we could speak to people again and ask questions.

"The people told us that they had come from the Transkei and other 'homelands', because there was no

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work there and they were starving. In Cape Town they hoped for better opportunities to find work and perhaps stay with relatives."

"They say the Government want them to go to Khayalitsha, where there are already half a million people. The Government says the houses and facilities are better there, but the KTC people pointed out that Khayalitsha is freezing cold in winter, that the wind and sand makes it very difficult to live there, that the houses are badly ventilated (or not at all) and that it is very far from the places where they work.

"Worst of all, moving to Khayalitsha would scatter them among other people and destroy their community spirit.

"When we were driving out, we were passed by two police Casspirs' patrolling the townships. We felt very sad about the conditions in the townships, but also hopeful, because the people there are still so friendly and were so glad that we had visited them, although they are suffering a lot."

The next township visit is scheduled for Saturday, 13 August, as from 1.00 p.m.

## Nic Borain joins IDASA Staff

MR. Nic Borain was recently appointed as regional co-ordinator to the Idasa staff in the Western Cape region. His schooling took place at St. Albans College, Pretoria. In 1983 he was editor of Varsity, official student newspaper at UCT. In 1984 he was SRC president at UCT and in 1985 secretary general of the National Union of South African Students. In 1986 he was chairperson of the Cape Town branch of the End Conscription Campaign and spent 1987 as the ECC national organiser. He has already participated in the planning and organisation of several Idasa projects including the Freedom Charter conference.

## Seminar series on contending ideologies in Cape Town

By: Nic Borain

WHEN trying to change attitudes, it is important to understand the bar-

riers that are standing in the way of that change.

One of these barriers that IDASA has identified is the ideology that people hold as a closed belief system.

We have been running a project in the Western Cape that is designed to create debate within and between different ideologies. We hope to emphasise that there is more common ground between the different ideological positions that have currency in South Africa than at first meets the eye.

The first seminar was given by Dr. Ken Hughes and he dealt with the topic: "Liberalism and its Relevance to South Africa Today".

The debate was lively as Dr. Hughes insisted that liberals should oppose tyranny whether it came from the government, or those opposing the government.

Mr. Mark Swilling delivered the next seminar on the topic "The Ideology of National Security". This session packed out the IDASA Semi-

nar Room. Mr. Swilling spoke about the government's reform strategy, the National Security Management System and the forthcoming municipal elections.

He painted a chilling picture of a government that was preparing to spend many billions of rand to avoid making real political changes in the country.

On the 17 of August, Prof. Dennis Davis will be speaking on the Marxist ideology and we hope to have someone talking on Black Consciousness a week later. These sessions will all take place at the IDASA Offices in Mowbray.

## National co-ordinator visits USA

DURING the month of May Mr. Wayne Mitchell, national co-ordinator of Idasa, visited the USA on a fact-finding trip. He focused on meetings with American politicians, academics, businessmen, church leaders, lawyers and anti-apartheid activists. His extensive journey took him to New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Boston, San Francisco, Orlando and other cities. A highlight of his visit was an informative meeting with Mr. Gregory Craig, the official aide to senator Ted Kennedy on Southern African affairs (seen in picture on right).



Messrs. Wayne Mitchell and Gregory Craig.

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## TRANSVAAL



Ms. Marcia Haak (above) recently appointed to the Idasa staff in the Transvaal region as a consultant.

## NATAL



Mr. Paul Graham

### IDASA opens Natal office

MR. Paul Graham has recently been appointed to the Idasa staff as regional director for Natal and can be reached at tel. (031) 701-6394.

Paul Graham was born in Durban, grew up in Moçambique and the Orange Free State, and returned to Natal to complete his education as a teacher. He worked for the Methodist Church's Christian Education and Youth Department as deputy and then general secretary responsible for South Africa and the front-line states. For the last 2 years he has been a tutor at the University of Natal Centre for Adult Education specialising in community organisation.

He is married to Marjorie, a community health nurse and has two young children, Emma and Benjamin.

## NELSON ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA – a birthday greeting

IDASA deplores the fact that Nelson Mandela was not released from prison on his 70th birthday. However Idasa did, co-incidentally, celebrate his birthday with a historic Freedom Charter conference (see report in this issue)! The Institute wishes a speedy release and many more years of good health – to both him and his family. We reassure him that “your freedom and ours cannot be separated.”

### Cry Freedom seized – “An Obscene Action”

THE Governments handling of this film will go down in history as mind-boggling, totalitarian and shameful! Mr. Michael Williams-Jones, the UK managing director of United International Pictures who are responsible for the distribution of the film, summed it up well when he described the seizure as “an obscene action”.

I had the privilege of seeing the film at the recent Berlin Film Festival. It was an excellent production. It was *not* inflammatory and would not incite racial hatred (reasons given for confiscating all copies of the film.). If anything, it is clear that the police action has done just that – infuriating thousands and exacerbating racial tensions. The film moved my wife and myself to tears!

**James Polley,  
Media Consultant**

### Freedom Charter Conference publication

THE twenty papers which make up the official proceedings at the recent Freedom Charter Conference are in the process of being published in paperback book form. Publication date is set for Monday 5 September, and enquiries regarding orders for the book can be directed to the National Office after that date (tel. 021-473127).

#### IDASA: OCCASIONAL PAPERS

- 1. Democracy and Government: A Post-Leninist Perspective**  
Dr. Charles Simkins, Associate Professor of Economics, University of Cape Town.
- 2. Democracy and Law**  
Advocate Arthur Chaskalson, National Director, Legal Resources Centre.
- 3. Democracy and Government: Towards a People's Struggle**  
Presented by Mr. Andrew Boraine on behalf of the United Democratic Front.
- 4. Democracy and Business**  
Mr Leon Louw, Director, Free Market Foundation.
- 5. Democracy and the Church**  
Prof. J.W. de Gruchy, Professor of Christian Studies, University of Cape Town.
- 6. Democracy and the Media**  
Mr. J. Latakgoma, Editor, *The Sowetan*.  
**Democracy and Education**  
Mr. M. Ralawe, Chairman, NEUSA (Eastern Cape Region).  
**Democracy and Labour**  
The late Mr Eric Mntonga, Regional Co-Ordinator, IDASA (Border Region).
- 7. The Dynamics of Reform & Revolt in Current South Africa**  
Dr. F. van Zyl Slabbert – A Three Part Talk as Tanner Lecturer, Brasenose College, Oxford, October/November 1987. **Lecture 1: From Apartheid to Reform: The Ideological Preparation for the Total Onslaught.**
- 8. The Dynamics of Reform & Revolt in Current South Africa**  
Dr. F. van Zyl Slabbert. **Lecture 2: The Dynamics of Reform: Co-optive Domination – Sharing Power without Losing Any.**
- 9. The Dynamics of Reform & Revolt in Current South Africa**  
Dr. F. van Zyl Slabbert. **Lecture 3: The Dynamics of Reform: Patterns of Resistance and Revolt.**
- 10. Dakar Report Back**  
Dr. Alex Boraine, Executive Director, IDASA, Cape Town (4.8.87).
- 11. The Dakar Reports: Responses from Sixteen Delegates.**

ALL AVAILABLE AT R2.00 EACH  
(POSTAGE INCLUDED) FROM:  
IDASA, 1 PENZANCE ROAD, MOWBRAY 7700

THE declaration of the Save the Press Campaign was adopted at the launch of the campaign at the University of Cape Town on May 22 1988.

Since the successful launch, the campaign's co-ordinating committee has moved fast to establish a broader grouping, in line with its aim of taking the campaign into the community.

About 200 media representatives attended the launch at UCT's new Education Building, where the campaign's declaration and resolutions were adopted. They are reflected below:—

Communication in all its forms has played a crucial role in shaping the world as we know it, contributing to enlightenment and progress, facilitating the exchange of ideas, and the breaking down of barriers between cultures and people. In the modern world communication has become institutionalised in the public media.

In democratic societies the media play a central role, providing access to information, presenting a wide range of opinions and contributing to the process of accountable government. The freedom of the press is thus intrinsic to the democratic process.

The role of the media in such societies inevitably generates a measure of tension between the

## IDASA Supports Save the Press Campaign Declaration

government and the press. Indeed, public vigilance and commitment to democratic ideals are crucial to prevent governments from encroaching on the free flow of information.

In South Africa today the government is clamping down on the media in an attempt to promote its own policies and deny the public access to information and opinion about alternatives. It has done this by using the law, by assuming blanket powers under the State of Emergency, and through restrictions on individuals and organizations. It is now resorting to closing down newspapers. This trend can only intensify as the government resorts to increased force to impose its policy against the wishes of the majority of South Africans.

In silencing the media, the government is cutting what lines of communication remain in a polarised society. South Africans will become more isolated from each other, conflict will intensify and the chances of a democratic outcome will diminish.

We, people and organizations associated with the media in its various forms, cannot remain silent while this process continues. We have joined hands in rejecting the government's attempts to define and restrict the role of the media in South Africa. We demand the right to fulfil the role of a free press in serving our society.

To this end we demand the right to:

- \* procure and disseminate information in accordance with the principles of our discipline, without state intervention, harassment or detention.
- \* free access and movement in pursuing these objectives.
- \* air ideas, views and opinions of people and organizations regardless of their political and ideological persuasion.
- \* act and campaign on behalf of any cause we consider to be humane and in the interest of the people we serve.
- \* associate with any movement or organization in pursuing these objectives.



# SAVE THE PRESS



Prof. H. Giliomee opening the Save the Press Conference. With him are Mr. Essa Moosa, Prof. Jakes Gerwel, Mr. Harold Pakendorff and Mr. Mansoor Jaffer.

*Glimpses of the  
Freedom Charter  
Conference  
at work . . .  
and in lighter  
vein*



*Dr. André Roux, Mr. Steve Fourie and Prof. Peter Vale.*



*Dr. F. van Zyl Slabbert who closed the conference on a high note regarding the future.*



*Idasa staff members Mr. "Pro" Jack (left) and Ms. Margaret Kulu (right) with delegates.*



*Dr. Farouk Meer, Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress (left), Mr. Wynand Malan, Dr. Motlana and Prof. H. Giliomee.*



*Prof. Lourens du Plessis, Dept. of Public Law, University of Stellenbosch.*