

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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

FEBRUARY 1990

## Time for a new agenda

By Barry Streek

ONE OF the most significant of Nelson Mandela's statements shortly after his release from Victor Verster prison was also one of the least reported: his emphatic commitment to democratic practices.

He was, hopefully, not only demonstrating his own beliefs but was also pointing a finger at those in the struggle who call the attainment of power, "democracy", and call their strategies "democratic" when in actual fact they are anything but that.

Indeed, the struggle now should not only be about majority rule, but also about establishing true democratic principles and practices on all levels of South African society.

Sadly, however, some of the practices of the internal movement leave one in serious doubt about whether real democracy is even on the agenda, let alone a priority.

Mr Mandela made a special point in his speech on the Grand Parade on the day of his release to put his beliefs on this issue on the line: "On the question of democratic practice I feel duty-bound to make the point that a leader of the movement is a person who has been democratically elected at a national conference.

"This is a principle which must be upheld without any exception."

The next day at the Bishopscourt press conference, he was asked about his role in the ANC and replied: "No person has the right in our organisation to determine what his role is in the course of the struggle. We are loyal and disciplined members of the organisation. It is the organisation that will determine what role we should play."

No one, he might have gone on to say, has the right to be a leader or to assume leadership. They must be elected by the membership, as represented at a national conference.

Fundamentally, this is the question of answerability. It is also a question of internal

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Beverley Haubrich

Back in circulation . . . Nelson Mandela with Cape Town mayor Gordon Olivier before his first public address in 27 years.

## Lifting the lid on democracy

Sue Valentine

IT MAY have been a fortuitous choice, but in the light of recent announcements from parliament it was appropriate that Idasa's first conference of the 1990s focused on the need for democratic responsibility and accountability in public life.

Just what does it mean to be democratically accountable, who are "the people", who is accountable to whom, what sort of democracy are we talking about? These and other issues were raised during the two-and-a-half days of "Responsible Democracy: Ethics and Accountability in Public Life", held at the University of Cape Town

from January 18 to 20.

One of the key people behind the conference was UCT political philosopher Professor Andre du Toit who pointed out that institutions beyond a universal franchise were needed to build a fuller culture of democratic accountability.

"Even more difficult and pressing questions arise if we realise that building a culture of democratic accountability cannot be postponed until a future post-apartheid society will be achieved," he said.

In order to focus the discussion, conference speakers looked at specific issues and case studies in a variety of fields, including

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# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

- 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

# New demands, new opportunities

IF ANY doubt existed concerning State President De Klerk's determination to move swiftly away from apartheid towards a new dispensation, the earth-shattering events which took place in the first two weeks of February must certainly have dissolved it.

Mr De Klerk proved himself to be not only a good reformer but also a good politician. What he was actually announcing was the bankruptcy of apartheid and the need to put the clock back some 30 years, if not 42 years, to when the National Party took power. But he did it with such style that he has been, very understandably, hailed as the new saviour of South Africa. There were many of us, myself included, who did not believe that he had either the courage or the vision to deal so decisively with most of the obstacles to genuine negotiation. Therefore let us take nothing away from his quite remarkable shift away from traditional National Party policy.

What he has signalled is essentially that the National Party, unlike in 1948, has now decided that South Africa belongs to all her people, black and white. It follows therefore that apartheid must end and that a new dispensation must be introduced. How can this be achieved? Through negotiation politics. What stands in the way of genuine negotiation? Certainly the international community and in particular those who have opposed apartheid for so long have made that very clear. He in turn has responded by removing most of the major obstacles in the way of negotiation politics. Where he would like to see it end is anyone's guess. But that will slowly emerge when the dust has settled and the first glimpses are seen of what form negotiations are going to take and in particular how one is going to arrive at who should be at the negotiation table.

In the meanwhile one thing is very clear: the new wine which President De Klerk has poured into the vacuum of South African politics is going to bring about far-reaching changes. Therefore we can expect the collapse of many long-revered and established institutions; old leaders will move from the centre and new leaders will emerge to take their place. There will be realignments, new coalitions, fresh ideas because at long last we can begin to ask the fundamental questions and begin the road towards a new democracy. That the road is going to be bumpy no one will want to deny. That it is extremely exciting and full of new opportunity is something all of us must grasp.

Can the events in Eastern Europe be repeated in South Africa? No. The major reason why this is not on the cards is that the security forces are in place and loyal to the National Party and to the state. Thus despite all the announcements and shifts, De Klerk and his government are securely in place and South Africa's journey away from authoritarianism and repression towards a new society will take a very different route from that experienced by most of the countries in Eastern Europe. This in itself will bring its own agenda of problems because expectations are very high following the dramatic unbanning of organisations, release of political prisoners and in particular the release of Mr Nelson Mandela.

Idasa has played a modest role in changing the perception of the government and whites towards the ANC and its central role in any future scheme of things. It is too early to have a clear picture regarding the future role of Idasa. Inevitably, however, its future and its role must be re-evaluated in light of the significant changes which have been in-

## JA-NEE

### Kom reg, John

Cape Times columnist John Scott, commenting on the ironies in SABC-TV's coverage of Mandela's release, remarked of TV newsreader Marietta Kruger: "Her cleavage showed she has freckles on her chest. You notice things like that at times of high drama."

- Yet another commentator with an eye for the

sexist obscure. Or is Mr Scott suggesting the need for an SABC cover-up?

## The perils of nationalism

The Kappie Kommando recently tried to disrupt a memorial service for Emily Hobhouse when members of the crew and cast of the movie, "That Englishwoman", paid tribute to the Boer War heroine at her grave at the Women's Memorial in Bloemfontein. The Kappie Kommando claimed their folk heroes were being used for political gain

and Afrikaner culture eroded.  
- Sorry, ladies, the causes of humanity and reconciliation will never be the prerogative of any one nation.

## The fickle media

A picture of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, his wife Leah and his advertising agent son Trevor celebrating the release of Nelson Mandela was captioned in the Sunday Times: "Archbishop Desmond Tutu, wife Leah and a friend do the toyi-toyi as they celebrate the news."

- Hope the ad agency is doing better than his anonymous public image suggests.



roduced and the new dynamic which is being experienced.

Suffice it to say that Idasa did not come into being simply in order to bring about the unbanning of the ANC or the release of Mr Mandela. It came into being to focus on a democratic alternative to the present system. The present system still exists and the need for a democratic culture to underpin the moving towards negotiations which could lead to a democratic and non-racial South Africa is something which cannot be exaggerated.

There can be little doubt that there is a strong need for organisations and individuals to keep the focus on the central thrust of democracy, namely a multi-party state, an independent judiciary, a bill of rights, and accountability of those who govern towards those who are governed. In the meanwhile, there is much work to be done in assisting whites in particular to come to terms with the new demands as well as the new opportunities, which await them and all South Africans.

**Alex Boraine,**  
Executive Director

## Negotiating differences

**THE** Johannesburg newspaper City Press comments as follows on recent events:

"They say the genie is out of the bottle in South Africa. There is no turning back now as far as political reform goes.

"We as a nation have to continue changing our ways. The distance is nothing. It is the first step that is difficult.

"It may be that the ANC's Thabo Mbeki is correct. He says in a recently-published book about the ANC: 'The fortunate thing about the length of our struggle is that we are late in coming to our liberation.

"We have had the opportunity to learn from the mistakes and experience of others on the continent who achieved freedom before us. We will benefit from studying where others have tried and failed. We are not going to repeat their mistakes."

The newspaper continues: "The situation in South Africa resembles a stalemate rather than a crisis... But polarisation, is growing and it is trailing a crisis in its wake.

"Yet there are grounds for hoping that South Africans will begin to negotiate their differences peacefully. We are a society in flux. The country has entered a critical stage in its history."

# LETTERS

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

## The 'second-class' bus

**WE GOT** on to the "second-class" bus, and started to read the description of Winterveld handed out by Paul Zondo of Idasa. The trip was long. We travelled through central Pretoria, Marabastad, and the white suburb to the north-west of the city that used to be Lady Selborne - once a black freehold township. Once we had driven over the Magaliesburg, along the highway, through Soshanguve and into Bophuthatswana and Mabopane, we turned off the main road towards a horizon where the green and gold of summer acacias and Transvaal grassland was no longer visible. Instead, drab grey-brown hovels huddled interminably.

Paul stopped to show us a creche, one of many local attempts to provide a safe environment for the little children of the slum. Bright-eyed and smiling, the rows of uncomprehending little faces before us recited "Twinkle, twinkle, little star".

After meeting the Sisters of Mercy at the Catholic Clinic, who introduced us to members of the Winterveld Action Committee, we visited another creche. This one was a small, dark room in a hovel off an alley. The children gazed at us in the hot afternoon, and the expression in their eyes stayed with me.

Our last stop was the rubbish dump. Here, a whole community lives and works, collecting bottles, paper and whatever else can be salvaged. We picked our way through the fly-covered terrain, where the stench of rotting matter was overwhelming. Here, hovels were constructed of plastic and whatever other material would provide shelter from the heat, the rain, the dust. I looked down, trying to avoid stepping into the worst of the garbage. The rotting pile at my feet reminded me, painfully, of my own world, as I glimpsed a discarded "BASF Flexydisk" box, and the squashed remains of a packet of "Trim" biscuits.

*Lynda Gilfillan, Pretoria*

## Los die kuns uit!

'N **VERSLAG** van die Konka-vergadering in die Desember uitgawe van Democracy in Action, oopper die saak van mense wat politieke voogde van die kunste wil wees.

Het ons in Suid-Afrika nie al genoeg onder die soort van ding gely nie? Laat die kultuur- en kunsmense bymekaar kom, maar die blatante gebruik van die kunste vir politieke oogmerke gaan mense net weer onnodiglik van die kunste verdryf.

*Beswaard, Kaapstad.*

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

## Double-speak

Is it the same man? Not too long ago acting ANC president Alfred Nzo admitted that Umkhonto we Sizwe was somewhat lacking in capacity. But a few weeks later, on the eve of the NEC three-day meeting, he was reported as saying: "We must now move forward and intensify our all-round offensive against apartheid. For this purpose our glorious people's army must be given all the necessary and possible assistance to enable it to enhance its conduct capacity."

*- True to the democratic process, even the acting president is hauled over the coals sometimes!*

## Some evolution

And now for a completely different perspective on how it all happened. Writing in the Sunday Times, Willem de Klerk, the president's brother, commented (rather proudly):

"It is not a flash from out of a clear blue sky, nor is it an about-turn. What happened on February 2 was an unavoidable consequence of the way policy has always evolved in the National Party."

*- Well done, but final extinction is decades overdue.*

# Dismal notes amid the joy

By Shauna Westcott

THE day Nelson Mandela "strolled to freedom" will go down in history books as a milestone on the long march to democracy in South Africa – and it was. But it was also a day of huge disappointment.

It was a day marred most obviously on the Grand Parade in Cape Town by gangs of young thugs, whose heedless violence caused one death and injuries to many, including marshalls hurt in the cross-fire as they struggled unarmed to preserve the peace and safety of 80 000 people. But there were other dismal notes whose echoes will return to haunt us if they are not recorded and addressed.

The question being asked – by committed activists, not enemies of the struggle – is: what has the National Reception Committee been doing for its period of office?

True, the final confirmation of Mandela's release gave them only 24 hours to implement plans for a rally. True, it is impossible to book stadiums over a weekend at such short notice. Granted, controlling such a huge crowd would have taxed even the most superb organisation.

But they had weeks, even months, of warning. Why were they so ill prepared? Why were contingency plans not in place to ensure at least that absolutely vital communications equipment – a crowd-proof PA system and walkie-talkies to link marshalls – was not only available but in place?



Marchers gather in Cape Town on the day of the opening of Parliament.

This lack alone was enough to doom the rally to chaos. Organisers and marshalls were unable to communicate with each other or with most of the crowd. As hours dragged by, rumours flew in the heat and an undisciplined minority surged here and there at any hint of action, toppling a scaffold, crushing others against barriers and disconnecting what sound equipment there was for some time.

As a result the majority were unable to act in accord against the unruly few, whose reckless actions included mobbing Mandela's car (which took a wrong turn), forcing him to retreat when he first arrived for fear of being torn limb from limb. Had organisers been able to inform the crowd, they would have had thousands of instant marshalls co-operating to clear the way for the leader they were all there to welcome.

As it was, only the vast patience and discipline of the majority – together with the courage and dedication of the marshalls –

preserved a semblance of the greeting Mandela deserved, and prevented a disaster that loomed heart-stoppingly close at times.

Other discordant and painful notes were widespread experiences of racism, sexism, sexual harassment and other personal violence – knives pulled on marshalls, two people carrying guns trying to enter City Hall, pickpockets, drunkenness, shoves from youths careless of others in toyi-toyis given more to aggression than to celebration.

Perhaps a minor oversight, but a suggestive one, was the lack of thought for the thirst of the masses who, it seems, are simply expected to roast quietly in the sun while their betters take tea. This was a party. Where were the refreshments for us to buy? Where were the cups to lift to toast our leader? Perhaps the fact that there is only one woman on the NRC lies behind this neglect of an elementary aspect of celebrations – one that men have a habit of regarding as not within their sphere of concern.

The disappointment may be timely, however, and its message is both clear and constructive. Our critical gaze must shift from the old opponent, whose outline anyway is beginning to blur, to "the enemy within". Democratic practice is far from established in our own ranks or in ourselves. The struggle continues.

Shauna Westcott works in the publications division of Idasa.

## Time for a new agenda

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organisational coherence and discipline.

Of course, the state's repressive methods have made democratic practice extremely difficult, and at times impossible. The mere survival of formal organisations in the face of detentions, police raids, media restrictions, misinformation, bombs and assassinations was difficult enough.

And strategies had to be devised and developed to cope with this situation. Democratic practice, in these circumstances, even though it should have been "a principle which must be upheld without any exception", was a problem.

This however, should no longer be the case. In the wake of the De Klerk reforms, there should be no excuse that the goal of power can camouflage the need for democratic practice and democratic answerability.

What this means in reality is that the challenge should now be about developing structures and organisations, which are responsible to the people and whose leaders are subject to scrutiny and annual election by their members.

Crowds at rallies and marches are part of the democratic process. The right to meet and the right to march are democratic rights, as is the right to a free press, but they are only part of the process.

Within the emotional spirit of rallies and within the intensity of discussion in proverbial smoke-filled rooms, it is easy to talk about "the people" or "die volk daar buite". It is a very different matter in getting them to vote for you in an election.

When activists start walking the streets, knocking on doors of the

ordinary people and canvassing their support, they will find a very different situation from the rarefied atmosphere of in-struggle discussion and slogans.

They may find that rents or crime and gangsterism are closer to the real needs of the people than some of the loftier goals and well-worn slogans of the struggle. They may even find that groups that are dealing more effectively with those perceived needs will be able to win votes.

Then, the thoroughly undemocratic tactic of stoning cars, attacking opponents and groups of toyi-toying youths, apparently regarded by some as the frontline of the struggle, may have political consequences they never dreamed of.

There is also the very basic question of money. Political organisations are expensive and they have to raise considerable funds to be able to campaign effectively. They have to go to their members and supporters to get that money. In terms of the current law, and it is a sensible provision which may well survive the negotiations period, no political party may receive funds from foreign sources.

What this means is that the kind of financial extravagance that was lavished by foreign donors on the one-day Conference for a Democratic Future – publicly about R1,4 million but believed to be more – won't be around when the first post-apartheid elections are held.

Winning votes, raising party funds and commitment to democratic practice, as shown in the lead given by Nelson Mandela, give cause for hope for real democracy and true freedom in the future South Africa. That will be a welcome change from some of the activities of the past.

Barry Streek is on the political staff of the Cape Times.

By Nic Borain

# No time for empire builders

time for people and organisations that agree on broad principles to reach out and find each other.

**TWO** right-wing American politicians visited me at my office the other day. A polite political discussion turned into a slanging match when I disagreed with them by asserting that I did not believe that the greatest threat to this country was Soviet expansionism.

These two hardened Cold War veterans were watching all their power and influence slip away as fast as Gorbachev could say "multi-party democracy". These were powerful people desperate to maintain the myth of the "evil empire", because that struggle had been their life's work and their prestige was related entirely to the validity of the premise.

We have a similar problem. Our country is emerging from a "cold" and "hot" war situation where the real political dynamic has been between implacable enemies who have spoken to each other exclusively in the language of force.

The only objective of either side has been the defeat of the enemy. All debate has been about undermining the enemy forces and their allies and strengthening your own.

Over the last six months the terms of this conflict have changed rapidly, leaving most players breathless and confused. There has been perestroika and glasnost, the political transformation of Eastern Europe; in

National Party policy there are ongoing shifts and important new thinking in the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines.

The possibility of real negotiations has suddenly landed on our doorstep and none of us appears ready. We can't seem to believe that we are about to start talking and worse still, listening, to what each side is saying.

We have our own veterans and Very Important People whose only training has been in ideological and physical warfare and whose only importance is attached to the continuation of that war.

The nature of the struggle up until now has allowed pumped-up little bureaucrats from all sides to manipulate the political process to protect and advance their own interests. Ideological positions are raised by minor political princes like buttresses to protect little political castles.

At a time when both the ANC and the Nationalist government are talking about throwing the debate about the future open to all comers, and even about surrendering control and ownership of symbols and ideas to the terrain of the body politic, there is no place for builders and defenders of empires.

Differences are narrowing and now is the

Only those more concerned about the dilution of their own power and influence than about the interests of our country and our people are threatened by such a process. These political bosses should be removed as swiftly as possible by those who have elected or supported them.

Both the National Party, the ANC and their respective supporters have to define their objectives and then ask themselves the simple and direct question: "Who else could support these objectives?" If they are honest and courageous, they will eventually find themselves snuggled up with some strange and unexpected bed-fellows.

It is only in the creation of a culture of democratic debate that we have a chance of building a democratic country. It is only with a democratic and humble political leadership that we have a chance of breaking the patterns of the past.

If the Cold War veterans are not able to change we need to leave them behind. The two Americans who visited my office are off somewhere lobbying in vain for the view that the Soviet Union is about to invade the rest of the world. Well, old soldiers never die . . . they just fade away.

Nic Borain is Regional Director of Idasa in the Western Cape.

## Striving for a united front

**THE AIM** of the CDF was to demonstrate dramatically the unity of anti-apartheid forces in South Africa and to use the process of the conference to extend that unity. This second objective related particularly to black consciousness organisations which until then had not been incorporated into the liberal-left alliance - the Mass Democratic Movement.

In the opening speech, Jerry Mosala of Azapo called on conference delegates to listen to all perspectives and to seize the initiative by agreeing on a programme of action for unity. He also spoke of the need to build a national culture.

The final speech in the open session of the conference was given by Walter Sisulu. With the calm insight of a fine statesman he outlined the history of the struggle against apartheid.

On the subject of National Party reforms Sisulu said: "Our grievance is our exclusion from political power; our objective is transfer of power. Segregated beaches have symbolised our exclusion but their desegregation is not a transfer of power . . ."

In a dramatic gesture Sisulu turned as if to face De Klerk and addressed him saying, "Mr De Klerk, your back is to the wall . . . look up from the stony ground that lies between you and us. Don't be afraid. Others have stepped forward and found a home with the democratic movement. We've welcomed them. Like you they love their people and their country. Unlike you, they love democracy."

Finally Sisulu called on the meeting to "build a united front of all anti-apartheid

**The Conference for a Democratic Future (CDF) was held on December 8 last year. About 4 600 people from over 2 100 organisations attended. BARBARA KLUGMAN, reports.**

forces, for the establishment of true democracy and lasting peace."

Discussion on a range of issues followed, but it was the question of negotiations which dominated the conference and stirred up acrimonious debate.

The issue was the adoption of the Harare Declaration and ANC proposals for the process of creating a climate for negotiations in South Africa which had been accepted by the Organisation for African Unity.

Although the dominant view was that "the people" should set the agenda for negotiations as one strategy for change, many delegates from black consciousness and unity movement organisations agreed that "it is impossible for the oppressed to negotiate with the oppressor". Their call was simply for people to intensify the building of organisations and the struggle against apartheid - a call also expounded by the MDM delegates.

When it was time to vote, a resolution to

adopt the Harare Declaration and calling for a constituent assembly was passed virtually unanimously.

Discussion followed on children, the environment, the apartheid army, health, international pressure, labour, welfare, Natal violence, the national education crisis, the death penalty, press freedom, repression, resistance in rural areas, the sports boycott and rebel tours of South Africa.

Given the size of the conference, detailed debate was not possible, however it was hoped that the resolutions would form the framework of a programme of action to be discussed and implemented both by individual organisations and as national campaigns.

Overall the CDF was a success. It brought together groupings which would have been unable to work together and however difficult it was at times, a broad consensus was reached. It also showed the degree of unity that had been forged already and it started a process of broadening the anti-apartheid movement.

However, it was clear that many participants had not prepared sufficiently and this limited the extent to which resolutions could be considered binding. Another unfortunate reflection of the nature of anti-apartheid organisations was the absence of women both in the stage convening committee and, more importantly, as speakers from the floor.

The experience of the CDF and the resolutions arising from it offer strong motivation for the building and consolidation of organisation in the 1990s as the motor force for negotiations.

## ECC in Border soldiers on

**THE** Border region of Idasa hosted a forum on conscription during February. The main speaker, Dave Schmidt, national organiser of the End Conscription Campaign, gave a very interesting historical background on conscientious objection in South Africa.

People in the audience – some 250 attended – were reminded that the strong wave of anti-military and anti-conscription reaction that South Africa has been experiencing during the 1980s was not unique to the history of this country. He cited, amongst others, the example of the Ossewa Brandwag movement whose members refused to participate in World War II.

The declaration of a white republic in 1960 seemingly created more unity amongst white South Africans, however it was probably a unity born out of white fear of what the government coined "die swart gevaar". Schmidt added that whilst the creation of universal white male conscription in 1967 had been a further indication of the unifying of the white nation, it had also created an army clearly aligned against black South Africans.

He felt that the 1976 Soweto rebellion and the SADF's involvement in its suppression led, for the first time, to the realisation by many young white South Africans that the SADF was an instrument in a civil conflict which centered around opposition to apartheid.

Another speaker at the meeting, Dr Chippy Olver, reiterated this position by saying that in spite of the recent government concessions regarding conscription, the bottom line was still that conscripts had to fight in an army that served the interests of apartheid.

Speaking as a conscientious objector, Dr Olver stressed that he was not a pacifist and that in his experience people did not become conscientious objectors because they were scared to suffer or fight, but rather because they wanted to play a constructive role in building a new and just South Africa.

**Hermien Kotze**  
Regional Director

## Not in gilded halls . . .

**THE** real challenges of reform and reconstruction are to be met not in the gilded halls of international hotels but in the mud and dust of forgotten places like Winterveld.

This is how Johann Groenewald, professor of sociology at the University of Pretoria, felt after a visit to Winterveld in November 1989, organised by Idasa's Paul Zondo for five members of the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (Udasa).

"A visit to Winterveld brings one face to face with some of the most appalling living condi-

tions in South Africa," Groenewald wrote after the tour.

"Through no fault of its own, Winterveld has become a dumping ground of unwanted people – unwanted in those areas where they were disqualified in terms of the Group Areas Act, unwanted by a homeland government that recognises only Tswanas as citizens, and unwanted by an international community that does not recognise homeland authorities.

"The result is that an estimated half a million people live in grinding poverty"

## Talking openly at last

**NATIONALISATION**, the violence in Natal, economic structures and the practice of democracy were the major concerns of a trio of journalists interviewing members of the ANC and the MDM in Durban recently.

About 150 people gathered to hear Graham Linscott (Argus group), Martin Williams (Natal Witness) and Liz Clarke (Sunday Tribune) put questions to Harry Gwala and Nozizwe Madlala. Later these two were joined by a telephone link up with Tom Sebina of the ANC in Lusaka.

Gwala spoke strongly of the need to nationalise monopoly industries in order to redress present economic imbalances and of the role of the armed struggle as a defensive mecha-

nism against attacks and repression by the police.

The journalists, and later members of the audience, took up these questions and pursued them, talking about the example of Eastern Europe and expressing the feeling that the ANC might be holding to outmoded ideas. However, as Gwala pointed out, once negotiations are under way many of the things which parties presently held to could change and develop.

Summing up the meeting, Liz Clarke described the differences that still existed between people, but said: "However, we are talking openly, something we should have been doing a long time ago."

**Gary Cullen**  
Regional Co-ordinator

## Platteland project

**IN THE** Border region, Idasa has just launched "Operation Platteland" a project which we hope will reach out to all the towns and villages in our region.

The realisation of the need for political education in the platteland was illustrated recently when Idasa's regional director, Hermien Kotze was invited to attend a smallish meeting in Stutterheim as an observer.

The group consisted of about 25 to 30 people, including two farmers, a doctor, an estate agent, business people, housewives and about eight representatives from black civic organisations in Stutterheim. The

chairperson and convenor of the group was the assistant Anglican priest of Stutterheim, Rev M Glover.

On the night Idasa was present the group was discussing the ANC's armed struggle in a very amicable manner. The white participants felt they gained a better understanding and generally agreed with the black participants that the ANC had no peaceful alternatives after its banning in the early 1960s.

All in all we felt that there was a wonderful openness for new ideas and experiences amongst the group members.

**Hermien Kotze**  
Regional Director

Before the visit to Winterveld, Idasa Pretoria had decided "to refine the whole concept of visits to rural areas and townships" writes Paul Zondo. It was felt that in meeting their objectives in a professional, humane and non-paternalistic way, the visits should:

- \* Bring white South Africans into contact with black South Africans and expose whites to living conditions experienced in these areas;

- \* Bring some direct benefit to the communities concerned by encouraging white visitors to become involved in community and upliftment projects.

A specific goal of this project also was cementing a relationship with Udasa and the Winterveld Action Committee.

The journey took the group through areas like Marabastad and Lady Selborne, both products of forced removals. On their way back they also passed vast areas of unoccupied land where thriving black communities used to live.

Winterveld is a densely populated area now within the borders of Bophuthatswana. It is situated about 40 km northwest of Pretoria. The land – 22sq km – originally divided into 1 604 plots of five and ten morgen – was designated for agricultural use and bought by black people in 1938 from a land speculation company.

In the late 1950s and 1960s, the area was inundated by large numbers of families uprooted by the Group Areas Act from Lady Selborne, Eastwood, Riverside, Wallmansthal, Ga-Modiba (Wonderboom) and other "black spot" areas. They arrived in government trucks and were simply dumped. Heads of families had to go from place to place negotiating with plot owners for accommodation.

After the independence of Bophuthatswana, Winterveld was South Africa's "gift" to the "homeland" – one given without consultation with the residents, 90 percent of whom are not Tswanas. So much unhappiness ensued that many non-Tswanas moved to KwaNdebele.

After lunch and a discussion on the problems of the community, the groups was taken on a guided tour of Winterveld: to the cardboard-box schools, the broken water pumps, the squatter areas, the rubbish dump that is home to a whole group.

# When cool heads prevail

By Jon Qwelane

**ON MARCH 21** Namibia will wake up to a new day, a new government, a new order, a new nation, new hope . . .

It will be Independence Day and the realisation of the new country's dreams of peace and prosperity for its slightly more than 1,5 million citizens.

Perhaps the mature, sensible and democratic manner in which the Namibian constituent assembly conducted itself in the two months of drawing up a constitution – in spite of initial deep-seated feelings of suspicion among many of its members – was in itself a good omen for things yet to come.

After the bitter and unrelenting accusations and counter-accusations leading to the independence elections last November it was anybody's guess if the constitution would enjoy the full blessings of all seven political parties represented in the assembly.

There had been those who had insisted the majority party in the assembly, Swapo, must first produce or account for "hundreds and hundreds" of people it still allegedly kept in detention camps in Angola and Zambia.

And there were those who claimed the elections, let alone independence, could never take place for as long as the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (Untag) was part of the scheme of things.

Then there were the cranks who produced "intercepted" radio messages allegedly relayed over Untag frequencies and giving "irrefutable proof" of a massive build-up of Swapo guerillas just across the northern frontier, in readiness to invade Namibia if the elections went against the party. They placed the SADF on alert. Somehow cool heads prevailed, and the elections resulted in the constituent assembly, which itself resulted in a mutually accepted constitution, which ended in March 21 being unanimously agreed upon as the day of "uhuru".

The relative ease with which the constitution was hammered out and eventually accepted by the assembly overshadows the long weeks of hard and tough bargaining behind the scenes which preceded the few days of debate prior to adoption. It was, says just about every member of the assembly, also the fair and impartial manner with which chairman Hage Geingob treated all the parties that eased a lot of tension and ensured the relaxed manner in which debate took place. Geingob was chairman, too, of the assembly's standing committee on rules and protocols. It was the committee which worked long days and nights preparing the constitution with the

help of three South African legal experts: Arthur Chaskalson SC, Professor Gerhard Erasmus and Professor Marinus Wiechers.

The first acrimonious notes on the constitution were sounded before the elections with Dirk Mudge, chairman of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), alleging Swapo was reneging on the 1982 principles formulated by the Western five

The first two days of the assembly were characterised by acrimonious debate with

parliament and the structuring of parliament. Swapo wanted an executive president elected directly by the voters, a system of constituent voting and a single-chamber parliament. The DTA and three or four other parties wanted a ceremonial head of state elected by parliament, a system of proportional representation and two houses of parliament.

In the end Swapo won the executive presidency it wanted, in return for giving the DTA and its allies the second house of parliament and a parliamentary system of proportional representation.

But as the newfound camaraderie in the assembly enveloped members, dark clouds were gathering on the constitutional horizon: the DTA wanted the bill of rights made non-negotiable and protected from amendment, but ran head-on into the Namibia National Front which argued that the present generation could not decide for future ones.

Geingob allowed the DTA five hours to state its case, which also involved opposing a clause empowering the president to call a national referendum if both houses failed to reach a vote of two-thirds on amending the constitution. The party felt the president was

being given too much power. Again Geingob allowed the DTA time, and at resumption next day the DTA dropped all its objections. Mudge stated why: a minority party had been given five long hours to state its case thoroughly without being subjected to any undue pressure in the process, and that was very revealing and showed that democracy indeed was alive and well in Namibia.

Few could have disagreed.

Happy endings, however, are the stuff of fairy tales. The constitution had its opponents – Kosie Pretorius of the National Party was opposed to a bill of rights and hinted he would abstain from voting, while Kaptein Hans Diergaardt's Federal Convention of Namibia opposed the entire constitution because it made no room for "own affairs" structures and also did not make Namibia a federal state.

Such was the democratic spirit that those parties were allowed to disagree, while the majority view won the day.

Even the unveiling of the new nation's flag had pleasant surprises for everyone. The banner has one blue half, the other green and both halves neatly separated by a broad red diagonal along which runs two smaller strips of white either side. A bright yellow sun shines from the top left-hand corner of the blue half.

The colours of the flag, amazingly, contain at least two from each party's flag. How much more democratic could they get?



the DTA. It declared that the 1982 principles were non-negotiable and must be incorporated in the constitution. It did not strike the DTA as odd that as the immediate past "interim government" it had itself not respected human rights at all, and had sat silently while the army and Koevoet paramilitary units ran riot throughout northern Namibia maiming and killing and burning and raping.

Swapo's foreign affairs spokesman, Theo-Ben Gurirab neatly pulled the rug from under the DTA when he not only said his outfit had been party to the controversial principles, but also moved that they form part of all deliberations in the assembly forthwith. That set the tone for the harmony that followed, and it was unanimously accepted that debates would not be political since the assembly had the sole purpose of drafting and adopting a constitution. Former adversaries got to know each other better during the weeks that followed, and the tags of "sell-outs" and "South African puppets" and even "band of terrorists" which had characterised the run-up to the election lay buried in the lush lawns of the Tintenpalast, the seat of government in Windhoek.

It was perhaps a sign of times changing for the good that all seven parties agreed that Swapo's blueprint for a constitution be accepted as the basis for a future state.

There were three major areas of difference between Swapo and the minority parties led by the DTA: the nature of the presidency, the system of returning legislators to

# Much more than reading

By David Screen

AS A teacher for 12 years in "white" education, I assumed a high level of literacy among my students. It was only when I embarked on further study in the early 1980s that I came to realise the frightening level of illiteracy in South Africa and its implications for a sound political and socio-economic future.

It is a stark fact that one in two South Africans is illiterate.

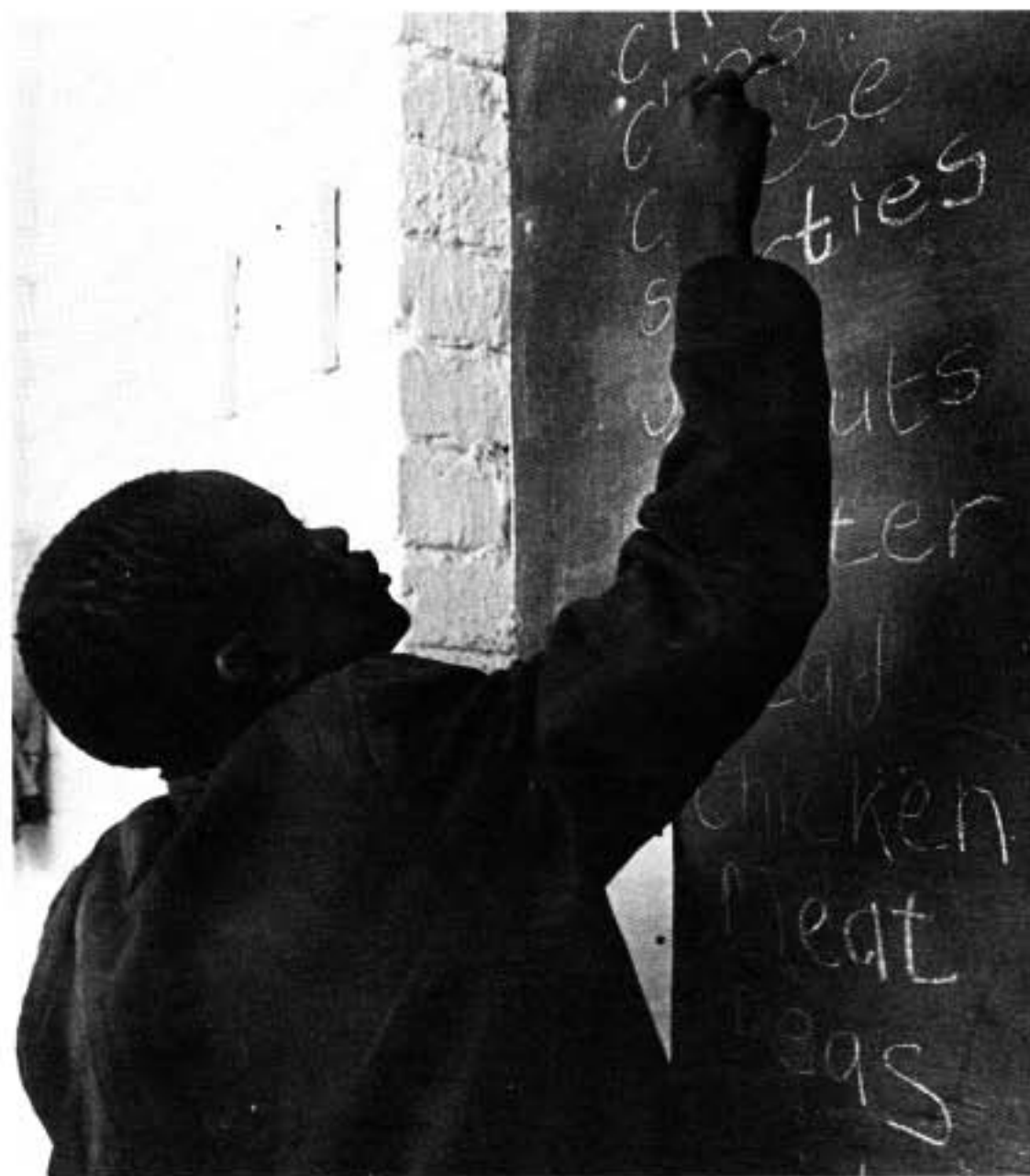
1990 has been designated World Literacy Year and September 8, International Literacy Day. But, according to Edward French, literacy specialist at the University of the Witwatersrand, highlighting the problem this year will not alleviate South Africa's acute crisis. "What we need is urgent planning for a decade of literacy," he says. However, literacy in South Africa is a political minefield.

In a paper entitled "Illiteracy and adult basic education in South Africa", prepared for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, Linda Wedepohl makes the point that the term "literacy" does not always fully reflect the concept under discussion. The process goes beyond merely reading and writing to include at the very least, numeracy and language learning, and the term "adult basic education" (ABE) is often more appropriate.

**A DEFINITION** of literacy, argues Wedepohl, should go beyond a mere ability to read and write. It should define literacy as enabling and functional. It must be accompanied by understanding and insight, be related to the life of the learner and contribute to the growth and development of the individual and his/her community.

It is important to note that the definition of literacy in a complex, multilingual community such as South Africa is fluid.

Linguistic diversity and the proximity and interaction of rural and industrial worlds affect the definition. In a paper entitled "Adult Literacy work in South Africa: A history to be made", French points out that "literacy work is thus seldom merely the teaching of reading and writing skills, but is likely to include second, and possibly third, language instruction, either as a supplement to mother-tongue literacy, or as the site of literacy acquisition itself, the latter a



## and writing

practice which is only justified by the personal commitments and needs of learners."

The story of the introduction of literacy to South Africa has not been investigated in any coherent fashion and remains open to conjecture. There appear to have been no early efforts directed expressly at teaching adults literacy. After World War II, the United Party government instituted a commission of inquiry into adult education which set up a plan designed to foster local efforts. With the coming to power of the National Party in 1948, the liberal and radical night schools were simply destroyed by attrition. Adrienne Bird (1984) has eloquently described how official harassment affected the growth and brought about the decline of the adult night school movements for blacks on the Witwatersrand.

Literacy services were improved in the 1970s. Several factors, including the need for a more skilled workforce and the influence of the world-wide literacy movement were responsible. French argues a two-fold contribution to the awareness of the issue of adult literacy: on the one hand there was some growth of literacy work linked to notions of liberation, on the other hand, some believe the authorities moved into literacy

work in order to pre-empt its use by radical movements.

The first South African independent literacy organisation was formed in 1946 under the aegis of the Institute of Race Relations, and registered as the Bureau of Literacy and Literature (BLL) in 1964. Two similar organisations, Operation Upgrade (1966) and Learn and Teach (1972) have since been established. The mid-1970s saw the state becoming directly involved in literacy work with the establishment of adult education sections in the education departments for blacks.

**IN SPITE** of these attempts, the need for adult literacy work in South Africa can hardly be doubted in terms of the statistics. According to the 1980 census, 97 percent of whites were literate, while the literacy rates for Asians and coloureds were 80 percent and 69 percent respectively. The level of illiteracy amongst blacks in 1980 was estimated at between five and nine million of a total adult population of about 14 million. The fragmented nature of South Africa obviously makes an exact figure problematic.

More disturbing, research by French has revealed that fewer than 50 000 adults were completing literacy courses annually. This is not only less than one percent of illiterate adults, but a mere fraction of the number of people reaching adulthood every year without any schooling or with insufficient schooling to be considered literate.

As South Africa starts the last decade of the 20th century, the implications of a largely illiterate, poorly-educated, rapidly-urbanising population must be apparent to all. A final statement by French might perhaps give an idea of the impasse in literacy work:

"A powerful state, while unwilling to engage in a literacy campaign of its own, would certainly not permit a large-scale popular adult literacy movement to succeed. And even were the state to develop a whole-hearted commitment to the promotion of literacy, its efforts would be denied legitimacy by an opposition which questions its ability, or even its right, to serve the interests of a people to which it denies franchise and the full rights of citizenship."

David Screen is the National Director of Idasa.





A responsible press: The Star's Jon Quelane and the MD of Times Media, Stephen Mulholland, debate the issue.

## *Lifting the lid on democracy*

the press, the judiciary, government and the public sector, business and labour, the professions and extra-parliamentary politics.

On the opening night two women dominated the speakers' podium, veteran politician Mrs Helen Suzman and former British cabinet minister and co-founder of the Social Democratic Party Dr Shirley Williams.

Introducing Williams, Suzman condemned the general lack of accountability in South African politics and the predominance of a "faceless bureaucracy" whereby officials and cabinet ministers between them made it virtually impossible to get answers about the country's administration.

"Historians in the 21st century will call the 50 years since the Second World War ended, the era of democracy," Williams said in her opening address, adding that democracy was an extremely young political system which had had its successes and failures but which was on a rising tide.

Threats to democracy she identified included internal divisions such as communal, tribal, religious, ethnic and racial differences as well as extreme discrepancies in wealth. Another was the abuse of power. Quoting Immanuel Kant - "out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made" - Williams said political power bred abuse and personal corruption was endemic in most human societies. The imposition of opinions, policies or regulations - anything which led to a loss of freedom - was dangerous.

In South Africa the vast discrepancy in wealth between the minority and the im-

poverished majority threatened the growth of democracy. Nevertheless, there was reason for optimism. She identified the country's wealth, sophisticated infrastructure, substantial (although insufficient) number of educated and professional people along with a tradition of struggle, and courts that had produced "ringing verdicts" as important advantages.

"Accountability means power is not absolute. It means officials must account for every one of their public actions. To make accountability effective, laws must be clear, simple, well-publicised and universal," Williams said.

A discussion on the ideals of democratic accountability, followed by presentations on "accountability in practice", set the tone for the first day's programme. Speakers from the MDM, lawyers, doctors, journalists and academics looked at abuses of power within their ranks and ways in which democratic processes could be implemented.

MDM representative Mr S'busiso Ndebele said the main concern was to come up with something that was superior in every way to the apartheid system - a system based on unity, non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy. He outlined six principles that governed the MDM's perspective on democratic accountability.

These included discipline - a willingness to subordinate one's own will to that of the collective. This might involve, in some cases, freedom for political prisoners having to be secondary to the needs of the

struggle; elected leaders who could be recalled if unsuitable or undisciplined; collective leadership which ensured discussion and spread leadership skills; the need to operate with a democratic mandate; report-backs and self-criticism which was vital for an effective organisation which could correct mistakes and learn from them.

The director of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Professor John Dugard, raised the thorny issue of judicial independence vs accountability.

Judges should reflect the democratic aspirations of a system rather than the prejudices of a society and they were thus accountable to the general public, Dugard said. He stressed the need for the press to break with its tradition of not commenting on judicial decisions and urged that it should concern itself with the conduct of the judiciary. Similarly legal professionals and academics should monitor the judiciary and express opinions. He added that judges should be drawn from all sections of the community and chosen carefully by a broadly representative group (not just the cabinet).

The lack of direction given to the medical profession by the South African Medical and Dental Council was attacked by Dr Paul Davis, who reminded the audience that the council had to be taken to the Supreme Court before an inquiry into Steve Biko's death in detention was instituted. "The council's failure to respond laid waste to the reputation of the South African medi-

cal profession," Davis said.

He suggested that the "incredible power" of commitment to the Hippocratic oath offered one way of ensuring accountability by medical professionals.

If the press ensures government is accountable, who ensures the press is accountable? asked South African Council of Churches communications director Mr Saki Macozoma. Control of the media and to whom it should be accountable were



Prof John Dugard

the key issues addressed by the press panel. While Times Media Limited managing director Stephen Mulholland held that in a free society accountability to media owners and shareholders would be adequate, foreign correspondent Mr John Battersby warned that this presupposed an ideal world. Therefore it would be inappropriate in South Africa where very few people have access to the media.

Under pressure from several delegates to explain his reference to the press being "like any other commercial activity", Mulholland conceded the social role of newspapers, but said managers had a duty to keep newspapers alive. To do this, newspapers had to succeed in the marketplace without relying on subsidies.

**THE DEBATE** on the press was somewhat overshadowed by a controversial call to editors to defy restrictions on quoting banned persons and organisations. Although only one vote was eventually recorded against the motion itself, several participants argued strongly that Idasa conferences, which normally draw people of divergent political opinions, were not appropriate platforms for potentially divisive motions. The counter argument was that by their mere attendance participants had already made a choice for democracy, which would entail support for defying unjust laws as advocated by the motion.

In his lead-in paper on the press, *Boston Globe* correspondent Mr Phillip van Niekerk, a regular contributor to the *Weekly Mail*, singled out media monopolies and marketplace distortions which favour wealthy white people as two major causes of the poor state of the South African media.

"If I compare what is available in the mainstream English press today with 10 or 15 years ago, I can only conclude that the quality of information available to the public has suffered. Information and a well-informed public is one of the most essential factors in the process of democracy," he said.

Van Niekerk cautioned against nationalisation, the "classic remedy" for dealing with market distortions. "There is not a single model where state control of the media has resulted in a free, independent and vigorous press." What was needed was a system which moved beyond both models, one which advanced the three principles of diversity, quality and equality to create a democratic press which would empower the public with knowledge.

He suggested the Swedish subsidy system, which has apparently produced one of the most diverse and democratic presses in the world, as a possible way of overcoming the distortions of the marketplace that give unfair advantage to the rich - and to create a more equal flow of information.

Much of the criticism routinely levelled at the press was irrational, said Van Niekerk, adding that the press had become a handy scapegoat for the collective woes of the people, even in countries where the people and their press were free. In South Africa, however, government restrictions on the press further undermined the credibility of journalists among their readers. The fact that the establishment press was "so solidly white and middle class" meant that even the liberal opposition press was often perceived as part of the enemy.

Van Niekerk pointed out that to the average journalist the notion of accountability smacked of "Big Brother". It struck at the very credo of the profession - the notion of independence. However, the press needed to take a hard look at itself and see where it was to blame for its frightful public image. "I suggest we stop using the government

'Authorisation will not go away immediately in the post-apartheid period.'



Dr



Mrs Helen Suzman with Marcel Golding of NUM, left, and Naas

and its essentially failed attempt at a form of totalitarianism as a cover for the dreadful state of South African journalism."

In looking at the ideals for an open and democratic society, Urban Foundation director Ms Ann Bernstein posed some hard-hitting questions in a spirit of "honesty and independence". She said it was necessary to define democracy. "For me it includes far more than merely accountability. What we need is a political system that encourages organisation, leadership, innovations, effectiveness/results, independence of thought and accountability. The next question is how to achieve this."

She asked whether there was really any option other than representative democracy and asked if "direct democracy" (the "permanent dynamic of the peoples' participation") was possible and practical in a complex, modern, industrial society.

"Or is this an idea - a slogan - that hides undemocratic practices, decisions and institutions? Is it really possible for everything to be decided democratically by everybody when ordinary people are very busy trying to make a living, feed themselves and their children and build homes? So the idea 'the people shall decide' is often a rationalisation for 'the activists shall rule'."

Recalling Eastern Europe, Bernstein said the term "peoples' democracies" had often been the advertising slogan of "callous, corrupt, unaccountable and totally undemocratic self-perpetuating bureaucracies".



Shirley Williams and Dr Richard Neustadt.



Steenkamp of Gencor.

How was democracy best served? By a belief in "the people" and the continual use of rhetoric that subsumed different interests and ideas into a single dominant position where people were called to account for their opinion behind closed doors; or by open debate between organised, different, competing groups within the context of a free and critical press and freedom of association?

In a case study on the Labour Relations Amendment Act, University of the Witwatersrand sociologist and labour consultant Dr Duncan Innes described the Act as "the most undemocratic I have seen" and said protests against it in June 1988 had provoked the most successful stayaway in the country's history. "The unions have been consistent in declaring their opposition to the LRAA, but despite the strength of their opposition they have expressed their protest in a non-violent way." Innes said this strategy was beginning to pay dividends as more and more employers agreed not to persevere with the legislation as it stands at present.

He said an ironic offspin from the Act was that it had promoted unity between the two rival union federations Cosatu

and Nactu. However, he added that a forum for employers and unions where they could sit down, discuss and debate issues was needed. The process of labour legislation shouldn't be left to politicians alone. "We must move away from the limited idea that the only legitimate areas of negotiation are wages and working conditions," he said.

As he handed the discussion over to panelists Mr Marcel Golding (Num), Mr Naas Steenkamp (Gencor) and Mr Christo Nel (Consultative Business Movement), Innes posed several questions: Is the unification of Nactu and Cosatu a positive step? Do discussions between Saccola and unions promote a democratic approach to problem-solving? Can they evolve into a more constructive forum for debate? If negotiations are now the dominant strategy, how relevant is boycotting? Do stayaways alienate employers or have they a role?

Assessing the record of democratic accountability in extra-parliamentary politics, Kehle Shubane, research officer at the Centre for Policy Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, described how the Soweto Peoples' Delegation emerged towards the end of 1988 as a response to the two-year-old rent boycott.

The SPD issued five key demands to the Soweto council and was taken by surprise when the council agreed to all of them. Despite their agreement, however, the council was powerless to implement the demands and the SPD had to look elsewhere to realise their objectives.

Eskom was identified as one target, as was the TPA and the Development Bank of Southern Africa. One of the crucial demands was that a single tax base should be created between Soweto and Johannesburg. However, the Johannesburg City Council and the Witwatersrand Chamber of Commerce and Industries refused to talk to the SPD about this issue.

Shubane explained how the service research group Planact was drawn into the process of providing the technical information needed by the SPD to back up its demands. In turn the SPD (which, because of the state of emergency, comprised only seven high-profile members) relied on the Soweto Civic Association to liaise with the community and to convey the technical information through which people were empowered to evaluate the options open to them.

The crippling effect of the state of emergency was clear insofar as it detained competent activists and banned organisations which were able to inform the community en masse. Shubane said one of the many shortcomings of the SPD was that the clarity of the report-backs that the community received depended on the quality of the activists conveying the often complex information.

**HEAD OF** Eskom's Soweto project Mr Nic Terblanche said he had no differences with the principles which the SPD saw as essential for creating an effective electricity supply for South Africa. "The fact that 22 out of 33 million people in South Africa do not have electricity is an alarming impediment to the development of quality of life of people," he said. In addition to a humanitarian interest in supplying electricity, Terblanche said the more electricity Eskom could sell, the more electricity could be provided. He said losses in electricity payments amounted to R290 million at present.



Prof André du Toit

He added it was essential to solve the problems of Soweto to set a precedent in South Africa and for that reason Eskom had gone beyond government structures because it was clear that was where the majority community opinion rested.

The ideals of a democratically accountable research group were outlined by Planact's Mr Andrew Borraine, who said the organisation worked on a commission basis and responded to the political process. The issues for research (such as the supply and costs of electricity for Soweto) were those identified by political organisations and Planact's role was to try and generate ideas and skills that would provide the relevant information which could be utilised by community organisations.

On the often thorny issue of critical thought, Borraine said there was no "one line" which had to be observed and the right to critical research was accepted. It was acknowledged that critical thought was the best way to generate ideas, he said.

"As long as organisations are banned there are limits to how democratic they can become," said University of the Western Cape political scientist Mr Vincent Maphai. He pointed out that more than a bill of rights was needed to cope with the authoritarianism that prevailed in South African society and which would not go away immediately in the post-apartheid period.

UCT anthropologist Dr Mamphela Ramphele said there was a need to look beyond the rhetoric - "the people shall govern" - and to develop the capacity of the people to govern. This would act as a unifying process, she added. Whether people had the space to participate, or whether they were simply too busy surviving, also needed to be considered. "Unless we recognise the limitations on people's capacity, we'll continue to speak at cross purposes or only in rhetoric," Ramphele said.

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## SOVIET VISIT

# From Russia with love

By Ronel Scheffer

**AN EARLY** – and controversial – Christmas gift to the political and academic community in South Africa was the visit by noted Soviet academics Irina Filatova and Apollon Davidson in the first weeks of December.

Two delightful (but very much no-nonsense) characters, the history professors and African specialists at Moscow State University quickly gained a reputation in the press for being "difficult". If they were politically less outspoken than some expected, they were certainly far too circumspect in their approach for the liking of most.

After a week in Johannesburg, which included a baptism of fire from forthright questioners at a public meeting, the two opened a press conference in Cape Town with an unusual request. Would the journalists present "please ask original questions", pleaded an exasperated Davidson.

The first Soviet academics to visit the

out clearly denouncing or rejecting them as mistakes. In the Soviet Union, this break with the past had occurred and, as historians, they felt that the De Klerk government would need to follow suit if its reforms were meant to be radical.

In their experience, open discussion in the media was a necessary first step to overcome the social difficulties resulting from bad policies of the past. In the Soviet Union, this has in fact accelerated the process of coming to terms with past mistakes, says Davidson.

And the mistakes of socialism? The Soviet Union's response is to develop and improve socialism, which is still very popular and regarded as the only system which is able to provide social justice. "Perestroika has nothing to do with capitalism, the issue is how to develop and improve socialism," said Filatova.

Davidson added that whereas the origins of capitalism go back several centuries, the history of socialism has just begun and its journey is a very difficult one. "In the



Filatova and Davidson face the press in Cape Town.

country in more than 50 years, their schedule was crammed. They were under pressure, privately and in public, to provide definitive answers on the complex questions of the future of socialism, developments in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union's relationship with the ANC and a host of local issues.

At times they were expected to answer for the Soviet government too, and their comments were not always accurately reported or placed in context.

As they travelled from Johannesburg to Cape Town and on to Port Elizabeth as guests of Idasa, visiting universities and townships and meeting MDM leaders, Filatova and Davidson spelt out the dangers of over-simplification and comparison and stressed the importance of solutions based on local conditions. "All people and all countries have to learn from their own mistakes, their own achievements and their own histories," said Filatova.

What they found disconcerting in South Africa was the apparent attempt by the government to move away from policies, with-

first periods of socialism unfortunately some mistakes were made in each country and I am sure that socialism in the next century may be quite different from now, as capitalism now is not the same as in the 18th century."

The two academics were impressed with the political awareness and deep concern about the future of the country they found among all South Africans they met - from Soshanguve to Stellenbosch. They were surprised too, by the objective, reasonable analysis they encountered in the townships and shanty-towns, places where more fanaticism and hatred could be expected.

Among their disappointments were the many distorted views of the Soviet Union, the poor understanding of events in that country - even among intellectuals, and the reporting in some newspapers which were, as Davidson described it, "very rough with Irina's and my answers".

It is expected that the academics' visit may be followed by return visits to Moscow by a number of small groups of South Africans this year.



Victims of Renamo in Mozambique.

AFRPIX

**WHICH** shall it be, a Southern Africa gradually moving toward some kind of regional political integration and playing a growing, strategic role in helping to fashion a more just South-North relationship, or an area where future generations are condemned to surviving amidst the ashes of today's states ravaged by wars of secession?

Let's take a look at the Mozambican case, where Rhodesian-sponsored destabilisation, begun in 1975 and taken up by South Africa in the early 1980s, interrupted the process of nation-formation before it had matured.

Renamo's destruction of schools, rural clinics, shops and other infrastructures shattered national points of reference which

**The possibility of escalating "feudal" wars, a ravaged economy and millions of deaths is staring Southern Africa in the face, says Carlos Cardoso, director of the Mozambican news agency Aim, who, in this article, argues for an integrated regional policy.**

tors can do little against the corruption of the "nouveau riche". Thousands of abandoned and orphaned street children beg and steal, slowly acquiring the skills that will make them the samurais of future gangs commanded by urban warlords.

By now, there may be as many as 3 000

for US agricultural aid, including trucks and tractors, which they deploy to fatten their wallets as untaxed public transport and equipment for hire to the rural family sector. A climate of peasant revolt against these officials is growing, while in the cities the ever increasing cost of living is forcing workers into strikes whose solution is extremely hard to envisage.

All these are examples of what one might call the internalisation of destabilisation, the unchecked growth of what Renamo's founder, Rhodesia's top security official Mr Ken Flower, in his latter years called the "Frankenstein" of Southern Africa. The aggression has overflowed already into Zimbabwe and Zambia, while almost a million Mozambican refugees

## Integration or collapse?

are vital for a people made up of many ethnic groups, races and religious creeds. A vicious cycle of violence, misery and more violence set in and gained a life of its own. Entire areas of the country had their material base destroyed.

Untold thousands of Mozambicans now survive on plant life normally eaten by antelope. For years they have had neither salt nor sugar, neither meat nor fish. Their swollen eyes speak of horror. Their black skins have turned grey.

Other sources of violence were unleashed as the years went by. Dispossessed peasants, groups of bandits with no allegiance to any particular organisation, hastily demobilised units of the Mozambique Armed Forces (FAM/FPLM) and units of a Zambia based group called Unamo roam the countryside stealing and killing. In the urban areas the new elite's more capable sec-

children whom Renamo has brutalised and trained to kill indiscriminately. I have spoken to 12-year-olds who murdered newborn babies and their mothers as part of their military training in Renamo camps.

Ivory, precious stones, animal skins - the riches of the country - are stolen and sold at ridiculously low prices by private and state dealers who have developed an interest in war and use public office to accumulate capital illicitly. In Maputo, by now, it is not difficult to buy weapons.

In these desperate circumstances, the Mozambican government adopted an IMF and World Bank sponsored economic recovery programme which contains the usual IMF "medicine" of huge cuts in state social sector expenditure. A process of fast social stratification set in. State officials in the cities get rural land titles. Many of them do not work the land. They use it to apply

stretch to breaking point the humanitarian assistance capacity of Malawi, Swaziland and the Eastern Transvaal.

In some areas of Mozambique where the power of the state has withered away, Renamo gangs who have severed links with the rest of the group, Unamo groups and ex-FAM/FPLM units live under the chieftanship of local "regulos" and queens - a process often facilitated by the expropriation of land by local Frelimo officials. In other areas people have simply gone back to old forms of local rule under the leadership of ancient lineages. In short, one is witnessing the refeudalisation of power in parts of the country, which will develop into secessionist wars if peace does not come soon.

What now gives many of us sleepless nights is the possibility that a part of Renamo is told to accept President Chissano's

principles for direct negotiations while other sectors are ordered from South African soil to continue fighting. It depends on whether President De Klerk can put an end to the apparatus that still commands Renamo.

In your country too, there is a tendency to disintegration. The clashes in Natal already have some of the characteristics of Renamo's type of systematic terrorism: the cutting off of ears and limbs, vigilante, Inkatha and Ama-Africa groups coming to your homes and killing indiscriminately.

It is my belief that important sections of military intelligence and parallel structures of power in the SAP are doing in South Africa what they have done in Mozambique: financing and commanding a process of carnage which they propagate as "black on black violence". In South Africa, old unsolved contradictions in society are gaining a military dimension.

Equally frightening is the prospect of the Afrikaner ultra-right moving blindly towards the proclamation of a third Boer Republic, the insane creation of a "whitetan". The possibility exists that Afrikaner will kill Afrikaner in the same way that South Africans of Zulu descent are killing each other, and the South African economy which is the backbone of the regional sub-system will collapse. The whole of Southern Africa will enter a process of redefinition of nations, lasting possibly for 100, 200 years. Feudal wars will destroy the region. Add Aids, desertification and other looming eco-

logical crises and you'll have an idea of what awaits us all if the ultra-right is allowed to materialise its insanity.

I've outlined the worst possible scenario. It need not go that way.

The other regional tendency is integration. The nations of Southern Africa share cultural, family and economic bonds which cut across today's borders. The Front Line has shown an inspiring sense of unity and political maturity in the face of attempts to divide it by "total strategy". SADCC member states already devise national policies in rail transport, ports, civil aviation and telecommunications which take into account each other's needs.

In a post-apartheid Southern Africa this co-operation will expand and I, therefore, am led to contemplate a moment when each country's citizens will demand some kind of dual citizenship, institutionally manifested through voting for a regional parliament.

The SADF has consistently defended apartheid. Its commitment has been to promote white racist rule, not a nation of equals. It was defeated in Angola but not at home, and its internal foe, Umkhonto We Sizwe, does not yet pose a military threat. This is a huge obstacle to the negotiated abolition of apartheid.

It will take some courageous, long-term, strategic thinking by all anti-apartheid forces in South Africa and in the region to overcome this obstacle.

One idea worth contemplating, it seems to me, is the following: to invite the SADF's top officer corps to join the armies of a post-apartheid region in the creation of a regional force responsible for the defence of Southern Africa.

The sheer power of Africa's cultures, once placed at the disposal of white South African soldiers, would in time deliver a death blow to the racist ideology - much of it born out of fear and ignorance of the "black" world - which for too long has kept them isolated from the daily pleasure of belonging to the wider, pluri-cultural dimension of their country.

I noted with interest, in 1988, the insistent Conservative Party demand that the government establish separate barracks for the different races in the SADF. The inference is that the little racial integration which has occurred in the SADF has already dented its racist structure and ideology.

In addition, one cannot expect generals who have not been defeated at home to simply sit down and sign resignation papers. They must have a role, as President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe perceived, integrating units of the previous Rhodesian army into the country's armed forces and keeping General Peter Walls and other white officers in positions of command after Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980. Mozambique benefited immensely from that decision.

The armies of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Tanzania have considerable experience in joint operations. Military co-operation in the region already includes support to Mozambique from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana and Angola, as well as a security arrangement in terms of which

Malawian soldiers help guard Mozambique's northern Nacala railroad.

And what about South Africa's military industry? Should we throw it out of the window?

Without wanting to sound absolutist, there are worrying signs coming from Europe, where moves towards a super-Europe may be aimed at guaranteeing a few more centuries of European international central-

**I have seen the professional destabilisers of your country turn mine into a sad and skinny hand stretched out to that ultimate form of domination: charity.'**

ity. If Southern Africa proves capable of seriously competing on the world market but does not show the military muscle to keep would-be dominators at bay, we may face unbearable pressure.

**HOWEVER** much I'd love to see all weapons disappear from the face of the earth, it would be unwise for the South to disarm before the North's military arsenals are reduced to parity with ours. For the last 500 years, European economic domination of extensive parts of the world has been supported by military intervention or the threat of intervention. I am yet to be convinced that the future will be radically different. (This does not mean that we should stop looking for "weapons" of regional defence that do not involve death and destruction.)

From being a liability to the region, could the South African military industry not become an asset in the future? Is its regional decentralisation possible so as to guarantee that no single state has total control over it?

The basis for all solutions is a shared view of what the future ought to look like. One of the central questions is the future of whites in South Africa. Sadly, hundreds of thousands of them still see themselves as whites or as white South Africans, and not simply as South Africans or Africans. That will take a long time to change.

So, what do the region and the anti-apartheid forces inside South Africa want? Do they want to get rid of those whites? Do they see them just as carriers of technological know-how or as South Africans who can pay back, by teaching, the knowledge they accumulated on the backs of cheap black labour? Do they think their racism is so inbred that it cannot be washed away and, therefore, that they must leave? Must they then be replaced by thousands of European experts whose anti-racism is doubtful, to say the least, and whose incomes will be sent to banks in their countries of origin instead of being invested in South Africa and the region?

It is the answers to these questions that will determine whether the idea of an integrated regional force has any value. (My opinion: I have seen the professional destabilisers of your country turn mine into a sad and skinny hand stretched out to that ultimate form of domination: charity. Don't let them do the same to your country.)

## **Idasa Johannesburg**

**is looking for a**

### **PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR**

The person appointed to the position of regional project co-ordinator will plan, organise and implement specific projects and programmes within the region, co-ordinating Idasa strategies and resources with relevant individuals and organisations.

This position calls for:

- \* good organisational and administrative skills
- \* a sound knowledge and understanding of the political situation in South Africa
- \* a commitment to the aims of Idasa.

Additional skills in your favour will be:

- \* bilingualism
- \* group facilitating skills

Idasa and two staff members will select the preferred candidate and the salary will be negotiated. The candidate will be required to commence duties as soon as possible.

A written application (including a summary of past experience) should reach Idasa, P O Box 32804, Braamfontein 2017 by March 8, 1990. Tel: (011) 403-3580/1/2/3/4.

# Jong pogings in demokrasie

Deur Anton Steenkamp



'n Ligte oomblik by die werkswinkel.

## SKOOLKINDERS

van alle rasse uit vier van Pretoria se top skole het in Januarie 'n Saterdag prysgegee om 'n werkswinkel oor demokratiese besluitneming, aangebied deur Idasa, by te woon.

Leiers van rasseverhoudings- en kontakklubs by die skole het self vir André Zaaiman, Noord-Transvaalse organiseerder van Idasa, genader om die werkswinkel aan te bied.

Die Pretoria High School for Girls het 'n klaskamer beskikbaar gestel, en sowat 100 skoliere van dié skool en van Pretoria Boys' High, St Alban's College en die Diocesan School for Girls het die werkswinkel bygewoon.

"Party van ons het mekaar al vantevore by Sayftt (South African Youth for Tomorrow Today) ontmoet, maar dit was lekker om nog nuwe vriende te maak en op 'n gemaklike manier belangrike vaardighede aan te leer," vertel Liza Stewart, een van die leerlinge wat die konferensie bygewoon het.

Liza, 'n matriekleerling van Pretoria Girls' High, was ook een van die leerlinge wat verlede jaar 'n soortgelyke werkswinkel by Thornybush, 'n kampeerterrein in die Noord-Transvaal, bygewoon het. Die idee om 'n werkswinkel vir die ander skoliere in Pretoria te reël, het by hulle ontstaan.

"Ons het 'n kontakklub by die skool, en ons het gevoel ons moet ons vaardighede om komitees te beheer en vergaderings te reël, 'n bietjie opknop. Toe het ons vir André genader, en hy het aangebied om die werkswinkel te reël," vertel Michelle Mostert, ook van Pretoria Girls' High.

"Kinders wat nie betrokke is by Sayftt

nie, maar leierskapsposisies in die skool het, het ingestem om dit ook by te woon, en hulle was baie opgewonde daarvoor," voeg Liza by. "Dit het ons beslis gehelp om ons vaardighede te verskerp. Ons het onder meer geleer om te luister na ander mense, wat baie belangrik is in die toekomstige Suid-Afrika. Dis iets waarop ons sal voortbou wanneer ons in die res van die jaar probeer om groter kontak met die swart skole in ons omgewing te bewerkstellig."

Die skoliere het aan die begin van die oggend 'n uur of wat gespanneer aan 'n oefening om mekaar se vertrouwe te wen en mekaar te leer ken. Daarna het André luister- en kommunikasietegnieke aan hulle verduidelik, wat deeglik getoets is in 'n lewendige bespreking oor die swart onderwyskrisis. Terwyl die een helfte van die leerlinge die kwessie bespreek het – sonder 'n voorsitter – het die ander helfte hulle dopgehou, en daarna kritiek gelewer op hul optrede.

Die middag is gewy aan oefeninge oor gedeelde leierskap, samewerking in groepe en gesamentlike besluitneming.

"Die blote feit dat ons na ete kon wakker

bly, en dit nog geniet ook, is bewys genoeg van die sukses van die werkswinkel!" het een van die leerlinge na die tyd gesê.

Die primêre doel van die werkswinkel, sê André, was om mense bewus te maak van die ondemokratiese praktyke wat dikwels in komitees en groepe bestaan.

"Ons is in so 'n ondemokratiese omgewing grootgemaak, dat die demokratiserings-proses heeltemal 'n nuwe ondervinding is," sê hy.

Hy probeer dus deur middel van Idasa se program aan die skoliere tegnieke leer hoe om dit uit te

skakel en hoe om die lede van die groep sover te kry om deel te neem en 'n bydrae te maak. Die werkswinkel sal as 'n basis dien wat opgevolg word met die ontwikkeling van praktiese vaardighede, soos hoe om doelwitte te bepaal en 'n plan van aksie vir 'n organisasie uit te werk.

Die byeenkoms by Thornybush verlede jaar, waarby heelwat meer skole betrokke was, was 'n uiters geslaagde wegspringpunt, sê André.

Die werkswinkels vorm deel van Idasa se skole-projek, wat veral in die Wes-Kaap al goed op dreef is. Afrikaanse skole in die Pretoria-omgewing, wat nog nie wou betrokke raak by die program nie, sal hopenlik binnekort betrek word. Heelwat individuele leerlinge uit Afrikaanse skole het al belangstelling getoon.

"Die werkswinkel het ons gehelp om krities na onself te kyk en ander te verstaan," se Nicola Beukes van DSG. "Die volgende stap is om hierdie soort kontak uit te brei na meer swart en Afrikaanse skole."

Anton Steenkamp is 'n joernalis by *Vrye Weekblad*.

## ACTORS ON THE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY STAGE

**A three-part series of meetings in Johannesburg Hosted by Idasa and the Wits Centre for Continuing Education during March.**

### DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION – Tuesday March 6

- \* Mass Democratic Movement (MDM)
- Mr Terror Lekota (United Democratic Front, publicity secretary)
- \* Pan African Movement (PAM)
- Mr Benny Alexander (PAM, general secretary)
- \* Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)
- Mr Nkosi Molala (Azanian Peoples' Organisation, president)

### THE RIGHT WING – Tuesday March 13

- \* Afrikaner Volkswag (AV)
- Professor Carel Boshoff (AV chairman)

- \* Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB)
- Professor Janice Grobber (Department of Sociology, University of South Africa)
- \* Boerestaat Party (BSP)
- Mr Robert van Tonder (BSP chairman)

### EXILED ORGANISATIONS – Tuesday March 20

- \* African National Congress (ANC)
- Mr Isu Chiba (Transvaal Indian Congress, executive member)
- \* Pan African Congress (PAC)
- Speaker to be confirmed
- Venue: Room 102, Education Building, Wits West Campus.
- Time: 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm
- Fee: R18 (R8 per session)
- Booking is essential. Phone 716-5509/5510.

## BC talk draws many

**FEBRUARY 8** saw the Idasa conference room in Port Elizabeth packed to capacity for the first in our evening lecture series on "Major Actors in South African Politics". This monthly series focuses on the key extra-parliamentary opposition movements in South Africa. Idasa is inviting a representative from each organisation to outline its history, policy, strategy and vision of the future.

The first speaker in the series was Dr Jerry Mosala of Azapo, the Azanian People's Organisation. Mosala, a priest, theologian and senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town, is chairman of Azapo's Cape Town branch and a member of the Azapo national secretariat.

Dr Mosala traced the historical origins of the Black Consciousness Movement and its philosophy, analysed the growth of the BCM in the late 1960s and 1970s, and concluded by explaining the current structures of the BCM and its policies. He explained how Saso (South African Students' Organisation) broke away from Nusas (National Union of South African Students) in the late 1960s; during the 1970s various other black consciousness organisations emerged, including the Black People's Convention, the Black Community Projects, and the Black Theology Projects. By 1977, the leadership of the BCM had been murdered, imprisoned or exiled, and the organisations banned. Those in exile, including Barney Pityana, formed the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania; in 1978 Azapo, the "internal wing" of the BCM, was formed in South Africa.

Azapo policy stresses two things in its analysis of South Africa: firstly, the specificity of black oppression and therefore the need for cultural liberation and black leadership of the liberation struggle; secondly, the need for economic transformation to address the material conditions of the oppressed, which implies a commitment to some form of socialist economic system. The Azanian Manifesto, the policy document of Azapo, outlines the BCM's analysis of

the nature of oppression, and its position on the economy.

Lively debate followed Dr Mosala's stimulating input, with questions focusing around the differences between Azapo and other forces in the liberation struggle, such as the ANC and PAC; questions about the role of whites in the struggle against apartheid; and debate around socialism as an "option" for South Africa.

Janet Cherry,  
Research Consultant

## Transforming Natal trips

**THE** Durban office of Idasa is setting up bus tours of the city's black residential areas. The tours take in the northern townships of KwaMashu and Ntuzuma and the sprawling informal settlements of Inanda, and are designed to give white people the opportunity to better understand the lives of black Durbanites with whom they mix on a daily basis.

A prototype tour was conducted early in January for 22 German visitors to South Africa. The trip started with a

briefing on the history and development of the city, followed by the journey which included a visit to the Bambayi area. Bambayi consists of some 12 000 residents and encompasses the private land of the Phoenix Settlement. This historic site was established by Mahatma Gandhi around the turn of the century but was destroyed in the wave of violence of 1985.

Mrs Isobel Mgadi, headmistress of the only primary school in the area, Thembelihle, offered a moving insight into the difficult circumstances in the impoverished community. The school was started in 1982 as a local initiative but is not recognised or funded as yet. It consists of the old museum building and the shade under nearby trees which shelter the 15 teachers and 1 087 pupils. The teachers earn a pittance, but even that is not guaranteed every month.

The Bambayi visit was an important aspect of the trip which otherwise can have a rather numbing effect. The sheer vastness and density of settlement in Inanda, which is chronically under-served, gives one an insight into problems our city will have to cope with in the future.

Visits of this sort will be tre-

mendously beneficial to whites who wish to understand better the lives of most black people in Durban and to assist in tackling needs of the city. Trips into the townships can be arranged on request for interested groups of any size up to 50 people, and can be tailored to the specific interests of the group.

For further details contact Gary Cullen at the Durban office on (031) 304-8893.

## Patience needed

**AFTER** FW de Klerk's opening of parliament speech, a public meeting planned for Dr Alex Boraine in East London was extended to include city councillor Donald Card and an MDM spokesman, Khaya Mabece.

The meeting was very well attended (about 200 people) and a lively discussion ensued after the addresses by the various speakers. It has been a long time since Idasa drew such crowds in East London, a possible interpretation of this being the rapidly changing political scene in South Africa which has left many people confused and looking for answers.

In his address, Dr Boraine said current events in South Africa did not constitute negotiation but involved the "removal of certain obstacles in the path of negotiation".

He urged South Africans to be patient with one another, without losing their sense of commitment and urgency.

"Whites will have to understand what it is like to have lived under apartheid and what it means to be in that situation now. Blacks, on the other hand, are also going to have to understand that those whites who have been fighting for peace and for change are desperate for statesmanship from the black community... so that a new and free society can emerge without unnecessary delay," he said.

Mr Mabece said the national campaign waged by the masses had made the government realise that they could not continue with white domination.

He said the time had come for all South Africans to view each other as people and not as a member of a race group.

Hermien Kotze,  
Regional Director

## A new look at history

**IDASA** in the Eastern Cape has introduced social history tours for the general public that are run on a monthly basis. The first tour on 29 January drew a very favourable response from the public, and we set off at 9am on an experimental/experiential trail around sites of interest in Port Elizabeth.

The aim of the tour is to show people how the city has developed historically into what it is today: how different people were separated on a racial basis, and what problems have subsequently arisen. From the Khoi-San clans who lived in Port Elizabeth long before the European settlers or the Xhosa arrived, to the first Portuguese explorers to land in Algoa Bay; from the 1820 Settlers to Piet Retief's role in the Great Trek; from the Xhosa cattle-killing of 1856 to the first strike by Mfengu harbour workers in Port Elizabeth: all this is covered in the morning section of the tour, which visits the locations of various events in the making of Port Elizabeth.

We also visited the sites of the first black locations in the now all-white city centre, the township of Walmer next to the affluent white suburb of the same name; the barren areas of Fairview and South End where Group Areas Act removals took place; and Korsten, previously a massive non-racial shack settlement and centre of resistance.

The second section of the tour focuses on the history of the black townships, as well as contemporary social conditions there. Participants travelled through the poverty-stricken area of Red Location, New Brighton, meeting residents, and examining soup kitchens, new housing schemes and informal-sector trade. We wound through the townships of Kwazakele and Zwide before ending up in the smart new middle-class area of Kwamagxaki - looking down on the extensive shackland of Soweto-by-the-Sea.

Janet Cherry,  
Research Consultant



# Injection of hope for Natal

By Paul Graham

**SIMMERING** violence in the townships and shacks surrounding Durban and Pietermaritzburg flared again in January and has reached an incandescent high.

With an estimated 300 or more deaths in the last two months, the destruction of houses and properties and the collapse of the most promising peace initiative in Mpumalanga, the stage seems set for a stormy future unless there is an intervention by leaders from all parties.

While behind-the-scenes negotiations continue to bring ANC and Inkatha leaders together, and the police force re-organises itself to conduct an adequate and impartial peacekeeping operation, Idasa has embarked on a programme designed to inject realistic hope into a situation which is being characterised increasingly as inevitable and endemic.

A young political science graduate, Charles Talbot, who has been working in the media and music industries, has been given the brief to pull together a programme to investigate the impact of violence on the region and to develop strategies for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Professor Gavin Maasdorp of the Economic Research Unit and Clive Emdon, head of the Natal Technikon journalism department will draw teams together to describe the impact on the region's economy and the responsibility of the media. Human resource consultants Philip Glaser and John Radford, who are active in the Pietermaritzburg peace talks, and researcher Paulus Zulu will explore the consequences for law and justice, social life and the stumbling blocks in any peace process.

**SOONER** or later, the region will have to engage in a concerted effort to heal itself. The Idasa research papers will provide all parties with a map of the aftermath of the violence. Joint planning to deal with these consequences could be just what is needed to move from violence to peace.

This long term programme does not take account of the present demand for immediate action to reduce the level of violence. More and more people are finding their work hampered by the crisis and resources are sorely stretched.

New aspects of the violence include its steady spread into more rural areas, the level of armaments, and attacks on members of the Indian community.

While an increasing number of white people are coming to see the violence as an integral part of their lives and responsibility, many continue to believe it is a "black on black" phenomenon and that black people are inherently violent. Such misapprehensions of the context of the violence and the factors which encourage it remain major stumbling blocks - both to local initiatives and to the development of confidence in a democratic settlement for South Africa.

Paul Graham is Regional Director, Natal.

## MALIBONGWE

# Pilgrimage to Amsterdam

By Marion Shaer

## A GROUP

of women from around the globe started 1990 with a pilgrimage to Amsterdam for the Malibongwe ("the celebration of women") conference. The 178 women who congregated in the Dutch city shared two characteristics: they were all South Africans, and they were united in their concern about their future as women in a politically liberated South Africa.

Most of the delegation were women from inside South Africa who are involved in progressive organisations. Representatives came from organisations involved in mobilising women. These included women's organisations, youth organisations like Cayco (Cape Youth Congress), Wescos (Western Cape Students' Congress) the National Union of South African Students (Nusas), health organisations, religious movements, cultural workers, Black Sash and Rape Crisis. ANC representation included women from Lusaka involved in the women's, education, external affairs and health desks and the chief representatives of Sweden, United States, Angola and Zaire - all women.

Before the South African women went into closed conference, more than a week was spent getting to know Amsterdam and the Dutch people.

An on-going problem of women's conferences is because the struggle of women is linked to so many spheres, including traditional roles, the framework in which discussion takes place is often too wide for thorough analyses. Experiences and peculiarities of different regions were shared and new insight gained by women who are geographically removed.

The first paper made the point that the mother image should be used to organise women. This subject was taken up later when the suffering of children was raised by delegates from the Transvaal region. They acknowledged that all South African children - black and white - have been brutalised by apartheid, violence and militarisation and that the process of neutralising their effects must start. However, one commission felt that, although the harm instilled by a militarised society was evident, children in the townships were to be encouraged to attack and resist the apartheid system.

Oppression and discrimination against women in the workplace gave rise to calls for women to be unionised. Domestic work was referred to periodically during the conference: in one context it was noted that this



In Amsterdam: Marion Shaer, Rosie van Wyk Smith, Karen Chubb.

was unpaid labour which was reserved for women within the home. Black and white women are equally, though differently, oppressed by domestic work in South Africa.

The reality is however, that domestic work does supply employment and suggestions were made that national criteria

be laid down for wages and hours so that the dependent relationship between "maids and madams" is broken down. Steps should also be taken to educate and provide skills for domestic workers so that they can determine their own lives. The South African Domestic Workers Union was acknowledged for its efforts in this regard, and it was mentioned that employers often needed to be informed more than their employees.

Progressive organisations were encouraged to further the aspirations of women. Gender mixed organisations are often a site of double struggle for women and women's organisation consequently become niches. Warnings were sounded that members often became over-assertive and oppressed other women. The commission examining the weaknesses and obstacles to women's unity identified the lack of accountability and the formation of cliques within organisations as major stumbling blocks which could be eradicated with thorough political education. Two papers on women's emancipation concurred that this cannot be achieved while radical, economic and national oppression exist.

Concern was expressed that the women's issue was not taken seriously even within progressive organisations. Not only were women being discriminated against, but events of abuse and violence against women were rife. The conference expressed outrage at the objectification of women as portrayed by beauty queens handing over bouquets to the released leaders at Soccer City recently. Strong action should be taken by instilling a code of conduct and disciplinary measures into organisations.

Direction for this was given in the January 8, 1990 statement of the national executive committee of the ANC. The statement expressed concern that "even the most developed sections of the liberation movement in our country have not addressed seriously the issue of emancipation of women". The solution that this statement suggests is similar to the findings of the conference, namely that women should be organised on all levels as equal participants.

Marion Shaer is the Regional Co-ordinator of Idasa in the Western Cape.

**A**nthropologist Mary de Haas, of the University of Natal's African studies department, responds to Prof Hermann Giliomee's assertion in the August issue of *Democracy in Action* that democrats tend to "downplay or ignore the fact that we have a competition among nationalisms in South Africa". Ms De Haas argues that Prof Giliomee oversimplifies, failing to contextualise nationalism and to link it to its material base.

## Ethnicity in perspective

**HERMANN GILIOMEES** contribution to the debate about nation-building ("One Nation, many problems", *Democracy in Action* August 1989) raises important issues which certainly do warrant more attention than they are receiving at present. His argument is, however, fundamentally flawed because he does not contextualise nationalism and link it to its material base, a point to which I return at a later stage in the course of discussing another problem I have with his argument, namely his tendency to oversimplify the whole question of nationalism in South Africa today.

For example, he speaks of two nations in South Africa today, a "predominantly white and a predominantly black one". Here one could argue that the "last outpost" ideology of many white Natalians would mitigate against a broadly based, white Afrikaner-influenced nationalism. It is, however, the issue of black nationalism which I wish to explore for, quite apart from black nationalistic movements, the potential exists for competing black ethno-nationalisms to play a part in a future South Africa; these ethno-nationalisms are offspring of colonialism, Nationalist government policy, and the concerted efforts of some bantustan leaders to harness the emotional appeal of nationalism for their own political ends.

I shall treat ethnicity and nationalism as similar phenomena, since both involve emotional appeals to personal identity, and in dealing with both in South Africa today, it is useful to posit a continuum, the "cultural identity" of ethnicity crossing "the ill-defined threshold of nationalism" when it becomes politicised, mobilised and ideologised, a process which has been occurring in many of the bantustans. It must be stressed that there is nothing inherently "black" about such ethno-nationalisms; had whites been economically and politically dispossessed in the manner in which blacks have, a similar fragmentation along linguistic lines could be expected.

The naturalness of ethnic groups in South Africa, which form the building blocks of ethno-nationalism, is part of the taken-for-granted knowledge of most South Africans, whites in particular - socialised as they are into thinking in terms of "group" identity. A brief overview of the historical development of these "groups"

will serve to remind us that, real as they now are in some respects, there is nothing immutable about ethnic identities. As elsewhere on the continent the emergence of ethnic identities is a relatively recent phenomenon.

When one looks at the African farming communities which the whites encountered and colonised in the 19th century, there was a high degree of uniformity insofar as culture (in the sense of shared norms, values, beliefs, etc.) and customs were concerned. Prior to the creation of ethnic groups as we know them today, personal identity was probably based primarily on clan membership and territory. Political flux was, in most instances, the order of the day, and old settlements were abandoned, ancient chiefdoms disappeared; new groups came

**L**et us also work to lose our obsession with the supposed 'differentness' which has occupied us for so long.

into being and in turn dissolved. Even the Zulu kingdom which was being forged during the 19th century (and which, for the major part of its existence, was situated north of the Tugela) was marked by social and cultural heterogeneity, the clans which formed this political federation varying in the degree of their allegiance to the king. As elsewhere on the continent, the 19th century saw, as a result of processes set in motion by colonialism, the creation of "tribes", based either on existing territorial groupings, or completely new groupings under new chiefs, formed to establish some sort of claim to land.

Early this century these "tribes" were classified by anthropologists, then preoccupied with taxonomy, into four major groupings, their classification being based primarily on linguistic grounds, viz Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Tsonga and Venda. It was these essentially anthropological categories which, after the Nationalist government set in motion its "homeland" policy - policy which was reinforced at an ideological level by its untenable "ethnos" theory - were converted into de jure if not de facto political groupings.

What the anthropologist observes today is that black persons speaking different languages continue to share a broadly similar "traditional" (ie perceived as stemming

from the past) culture. Whilst differences in this "traditional" culture and custom do exist between different linguistic groups (as they do, for example, between Afrikaner, Portuguese or Jewish white South Africans) such differences are present not only between, but also *within* linguistic groupings, differences in cultural norms and customs occurring from one region to another (eg Natal and Zululand). Furthermore, these linguistic groupings are cross-cut by factors such as differential education, wealth, occupational status, religious worldview and values, factors which are of *far more significance* in daily life than are differences based on "traditional" culture; these significant differences not only cause deep divisions within black (African) society, but also create important cross-cutting ties between black and white.

At the same time, the type of economic and political processes which have occurred have played a crucial role in promoting the development of ethnic identities. The means by which these identities have been formed vary, and include the labelling by outsiders (eg reference books, and constantly referring to people as Zulus, Xhosas etc) and the skillful use of symbols, myths and "tradition" (often recently created) in promoting an identity supposedly based on shared "culture". Of crucial importance has been the link between ethnic identity and access to scarce resources such as housing and jobs. Within this material context it is the emotional appeal of ethnicity, with its implications for personal identity, which has facilitated its manipulation by persons Crawford Young has termed "cultural entrepreneurs", who stand to gain politically and/or economically from its promotion (and this type of manipulation is obviously by no means unique to South Africa).

I must, however, emphasise that this emotional appeal does not operate in a vacuum, but must be viewed in the broader political and economic context; the emotional appeal of ethnicity or nationalism is activated by circumstances, "affect" and "circumstances" being in a state of complex interaction. Thus, asserting, as Prof Giliomee does, that "people . . . are moved more by the emotional power of nationalism rather than by materialist considerations" does not do justice to the complex relationship between the two, and the *situational* and fluid nature of ethnicity and

# Unique, comprehensive

By **Anthoni van Nieuwkerk**

**RACE RELATIONS SURVEY 1988/89: SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS, JOHANNESBURG, 1989: 817 PAGES INCLUDING INDEX, R60.**

*"IF YOU ask a black South African what apartheid has done, he will say it has caused nothing but grief... If we do not get rid of it, it will crucify us all." - Minister of Law and Order, Mr Adriaan Vlok, July 1989*

The research staff of the SAIRR must once again be congratulated on an exceptionally well-researched and comprehensive publication. The survey, published annually since 1936, has pioneered research into the impact of discriminatory legislation on every aspect of South African life.

For many years the survey had little to do but report the enactment of one discriminatory law after another. However, as institute director John Kane-Berman noted in the preface, in more recent years the institute has been able to report the repeal of quite a number of these laws.

A brief perusal of the contents pages confirms the uniqueness of the publication. Although other similar services are available, the survey is the only one systematically monitoring the impact of apartheid right across our society. The survey should therefore be of value to a wide range of researchers and academics. The publication covers an impressive range of topics, including politics, the economy, health and welfare, housing and education, and religion. In addition, a useful overview of some 23 pages puts the detailed contents into an overall perspective.

Apart from being an indispensable source of data, the survey makes for fascinating, if morbid reading. Much of the contents tend to dampen any heady expectations of coming peace and prosperity one might have developed in recent times. Consider, for example, the sections on the financial crisis experienced by the "independent" homelands.

The growing public debts of these four homelands, alleged misuse of public funds and corruption which received much attention lately, are covered in depth by the survey. One reads that the four homelands have run up a total long-term joint public debt of R5 billion. In addition the four have short-term loans of R1,5 billion.

A commentator quoted by the survey attributed this largely to financial mismanagement, and said that a dubious code of ethics had been adopted by elements of the private sector, which had "set out to enjoy the easy pickings afforded" in these homelands. It is furthermore revealed that expenditure increasingly outstripped revenue during the 1980s and budget deficits amounted to 48 percent of revenue by 1986/87, compared to 7,5 percent in 1980/81. In 1986/87 overdrawn accounts amounted to R910 million, and banks refused to give any further loans. Apart from economic underdevelopment and poor

management, problems were created by expenditure on prestige projects and "uhuru-hoppers" who had earned millions from inexperienced governments by stimulating interest in major but totally impractical or unnecessary projects.

Of late, South Africans have on numerous occasions been told that apartheid, the "albatross around the country's neck", is to be dismantled as a matter of urgency. Although the contents of the survey partly bears witness to this, it is an eye-opener to read that during 1987 the Department of Development Aid (an Orwellian term) had moved 1 828 African families within South Africa, and the Department of Development Planning (another one!) had resettled a further 47 617 people. It is clear that one of the ugly faces of apartheid, namely forced removals, is still around. In fact, according to statements made in Parliament in September 1988, the government planned to move more than 248 000 blacks in 60 communities throughout South Africa between 1988 and 1995 - at a total cost of over R450 million. The survey gives detailed information on the communities and settlements to be relocated.

**THE SURVEY** also deals extensively with the crisis in housing and education. The following selective statistics reflect the extent of the crisis in education. Per capita expenditure of the state during 1987/88 on pupils of different race groups are given as R595 for blacks, R1 507 for coloureds, R2 014 for Indians and R2 722 for whites. Estimated pupil/teacher ratios for 1988 are given as 41 to 1 for blacks, as against 16 to 1 for whites. The pupil/teacher ratio for primary schools in the Transkei in 1987 was 62 to 1. School shortages, examination results and teachers' qualifications (or the lack thereof) are also put under the spotlight.

For political observers the section entitled "Political Organisations" should be of special interest. Apart from discussing some 28 political organisations, the main ones - the African National Congress, Mass Democratic Movement, National Party, Pan Africanist Congress and to a lesser extent the trade union federations and religious organisations - are given particular attention. Importantly, these organisations' positions on the question of negotiations are included. For instance, the ANC document outlining guidelines for negotiations in South Africa and adopted by the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) in August 1989, is reproduced in full.

A careful reading of the survey clearly illustrates the trend away from apartheid. Even so, one is struck by the extent to which apartheid has succeeded in creating problems and a degree of polarisation that now seem almost insurmountable. The survey is essential reading, even if it is only to define more clearly the obstacles South Africans face on the road to a non-racial, democratic future.

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nationalism. An understanding of these phenomena is not possible unless the specific material conditions in which they come to the fore are taken into consideration. Studies of ethnic conflict, such as that which took place in Zaire in the 1960s, or the sort of nationalism which gave rise to secession attempts such as that of Biafra, confirm the complex interplay between circumstances/context on the one hand, and affect/emotional appeal on the other.

**HEREIN** lies the challenge to constitution makers and policy formulators: because of the pervasiveness of racial and ethnic awareness in our society, which has resulted from our political and economic system, they are both factors which must be taken into account in planning for the future - not through building them into the constitution, as some advocate, but through ensuring, insofar as is possible, that political and economic power are not devolved along racial or ethnic lines. Here, for example, one needs to look carefully at the question of devolving power along regional lines, for experience elsewhere suggests that federal political structures are more likely to promote the sort of ethnic nationalism which is potentially divisive than are centralised states.

Here there is a great deal of comparative material, and we are in a position to learn lessons from what has happened elsewhere in the world, including in Africa. Why, for example, do manifestations of ethnicity or nationalism occur only in certain countries and not others? Why, for example, in Uganda and not Tanzania, both of which are ethnically diverse? Why do they come to the fore at one time and not at another (as, for example, in Zaire)?

The building of a broadly based South African nationalism necessitates change at the closely interrelated levels of material base and ideas. Political and economic change, giving all their rightful stake in the country's resources, is essential and, as this process proceeds, there is no reason why the task of building a nation at an ideational level should not be pursued.

The challenge of dealing with racial and ethnic divisiveness should not rest solely with constitutional planners, but should start amongst all sectors of the population right now. Divided as we have been for so long, the sort of bridge-building undertaken by Idasa, and similar endeavours, are essential exercises.

Another, small, step in the process of nation-building involves the unlearning of those pervasive tendencies to think and talk in ethnic and racial terms - a process hopefully facilitated by bridge-building endeavours - and to see fellow South Africans as first and foremost human beings rather than whites, blacks, Zulus, Sothos etc. As we work towards giving all their rightful economic and political stake, let us also work to lose our obsession with the supposed "differentness" which has preoccupied us for far too long, and focus on those many commonalities which unite us all as South Africans.

# And here is the NEWS . . .

**BROADCASTING** in South Africa has always been used by its political masters for their own ends. Jan Smuts used radio extensively during World War II to boost the Allied cause by broadcasting the speeches of British statesmen which, not unsurprisingly, angered the emerging National Party.

After the NP victory in 1948, the SABC systematically became the mouthpiece of the ruling party. Control was extended gradually but effectively as the more liberal viewpoints of men such as Gideon Roos were slowly emasculated by the extreme *verkramptheid* of Piet Meyer and Albert Hertzog.

Meyer brought with him the Broederbond influence of Afrikaner ideological domination while Hertzog (the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs responsible for the SABC) stated publicly that the introduction of "the little black box" would mean that "the Bantu would crowd round the few sets which there are and they will witness the commission of crimes, they will learn how to evade the police". (Hansard, 1964:6 611)

These men moulded the SABC into playing a continuously subservient role. It is therefore evident that the broadcast media has reflected the dominant ideological orientation of the state. This is clearly due to the centralised government control of the SABC in recognition of the important and often dangerous role such a media institution can play.

However, the days of Albert Hertzog are over. The National Party is beginning to respond to the ever-increasing pressures and dynamics of the South African body politic. Again, this response is visible in an analysis of the changing trends within the SABC.

Glasnost in the SABC had been slowly building even during the "reform and repression" PW Botha years. However, it has been evident that since the waning of Botha's power since the beginning of 1989, a new-found openness has emerged which would have left Albert Hertzog turning in his grave.

Witness the following examples:

Both Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu, two of the most outspoken critics of the state, have recently appeared on SABC Network/Netwerk debates.

Gregory Rockman was shown at the Cape Town Press Club castigating the police for promoting unrest.

Walter Sisulu and other former prisoners were brought into the homes of white viewers after their release and now are

## Daniel Silke, author of "The Broadcasting of Politics in South Africa", reflects on the change of style at Auckland Park.

regularly mentioned in evening newscasts.

Winnie Mandela, who has long had one of the worst relationships with the broadcasting authorities, is now freely quoted and shown without bias.

National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) members were interviewed regarding the current education crisis.

I Yusuf Ebrahim of Sacos and South Africa's arch sporting enemy, Peter Hain appeared in an unedited debate which was

traditionally served the interests of the state. They continue to do so. While glasnost has hit the SABC, control remains solid and the promotion of the dominant government thinking is maintained. Nevertheless, propaganda has a tendency to become boring (witness the Rumanian example of television for two hours an evening totally devoted to praising Ceausescu). Glasnost may also be used to increase the attractiveness of the propaganda effect.

Thirdly, it is clear that the examples of openness mentioned above represent the reform policies of the F W de Klerk era. It may be argued that the willingness to film and show those associated with the MDM and ANC on television indicates an acceptance of their importance in bringing about a non-racial democracy.

The new openness also shows a more relaxed approach to problem-solving and incorporates opposing viewpoints which were largely stifled under previous NP administrations.

The broadcasting of this by the state-sanctioned SABC indicates again the close state/SABC bond which this time is used as part of the reform initiative.

The fourth and most important reason is that of the socialising and conscientising effect of television. This motivation, largely directed at white audiences, involves bringing into the homes of conservative voters, activists and individuals who are critical of government policy. This may be done with the hope that the more white voters see these images, the more comfortable they will become with an alternative viewpoint.

It should be remembered that for years, the very same SABC was able to demonise many of these personalities now shown objectively. This may be an attempt to correct in the minds of white viewers, the misplaced and prejudiced judgements that some of them entertain as well as

familiarise them with the majority viewpoint of which they may be unaware.

If this factor is genuine, then it may be seen as one of the most important reforms by the government - an attempt (albeit rather crude and undefined at present) at re-educating an electorate that has historically supported security clampdowns of the very people they now see nightly on TV.

Glasnost has found the SABC. We are today witnessing a state-run broadcast media that, while still painfully under the National Party thumb, is beginning to display a new responsibility so necessary in an era of removing mistrust and encouraging nation-building.

(With acknowledgement to South)

## 'We want to be fair to all'

**WHILE** it is unlikely that the changes are due to the efforts of one person alone, the appointment of Carel van der Merwe as chief director of news at SABC in June last year has coincided with some significant changes.

Asked whether the SABC had undergone a change of policy Van der Merwe said this was the case and since the middle of 1989 the corporation had been trying to report matters of public concern.

"We are trying to put over different political viewpoints of political parties, persons, groups and organisations," he said, adding the SABC wanted to be fair to them all and wanted the public to understand the broadcasts they were seeing.

"We want to supply good quality radio and TV," he said.

Since F W de Klerk's an-

nouncements unbanning the ANC, PAC and Cosatu as well as easing the media emergency regulations on February 2, Van der Merwe said life had been made easier for all the media.

"Now we are ready to handle the whole of the political spectrum. It is most important for the public to understand there are other views which differ from their own. They must accept that what we broadcast is to inform them, we are not trying to take sides."

Van der Merwe emphasised the need for the public to accept the changing situation in South Africa and said the media likewise had to learn to report on events in this new climate.

"We must be responsible in our reporting and be careful not to create mass hysterics. Our only yardstick is to do a good job of reporting what is in the public interest," he said.

highly critical of the state.

Why is the state allowing such glasnost in this influential medium of television broadcasting? There are four identifiable reasons.

Firstly, the advent of M-Net means that viewers now have a choice to watch the evening newscasts or tune to entertainment programmes. To compete, therefore, the SABC must make its news more attractive to viewers and so ensure high viewership and commensurate advertising revenue. It would seem that such competition has forced the SABC to switch from continual government supporters to the more stimulating divergence of opinion approach.

Secondly, the evening newscasts have