

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

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## An ANC that's home to stay

By Paul Graham

**T**he ANC national conference is over. Resolutions, reports and leadership have been analysed and reported everywhere.

From the crisp flags, the massive banners by renowned artist Andrew Verster, the luxury buses for visitors, the laminated identification cards for everyone from delegates to SAP liaison officers through to the final rally at which the new NEC was introduced to the

public, this was a display of an ANC that was home to stay.

The cool jazz song, "Spare a thought for Africa", which welcomed the new leadership into the King's Park Stadium and accompanied their 15-minute triumph past the crowded stands, provided a new counterpoise to the militant poems and the loud cheers from countries and movements of the revolutionary East and Middle East.

Observers who had hoped, even as Mandela himself hoped in his opening

address, that the ANC would talk with a single and clear voice, have found it difficult to distinguish that voice.

The opening ceremony was a symbol of what the ANC faces. In a crowded and banner festooned hall sat 2 354 delegates from 15 regions (including the delegates under the banner of "MK"); staff of all the commissions and offices which merged three different backgrounds – prison, mass action and exile; the world press – eager for stories and espe-

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### No skills, no jobs, no security.....

## What future SA youth?

By Sue Valentine

**I**n spite of the urgent need to reach out to millions of young black South Africans who are living on the fringes of society, terms such as "the lost generation" and "marginalised youth" have slipped into the realm of clichés, masking the reality of a looming social crisis.

However, in June more than 50 organisations and political groupings, ranging from the Girl Guides, to Inkatha, the PAC and ANC, met for a weekend outside Johannesburg to look at the specifics of the situation.

As a working definition, the conference agreed that the young people to whom they were referring were typically neither in school nor in employment, no strangers to a culture of violence, and burdened with



Dr Mamphela Ramphele with the ANC's Walter Sisulu at the "marginalised youth" conference.

strong feelings of failure and of anger. They are not easily integrated in this society's educational, economic, social or political institutions – and they are all too likely to remain outside society's institutions even after the accession to power of a democratically elected government.

Throughout the weekend's discussions – organised by the Joint Enrichment Project (a project of the SA Catholic Bishops Conference and the SA Council of Churches aimed at giving young people basic knowledge and skills in fine art, dance, drama and music) and sponsored by the Kagiso Trust – the emphasis was on the practical application of what was being said and the urgency for talk to be translated into action.

A range of proposals was submitted by each of three commissions on what short and long term measures could/should be adopted in the fields they explored, namely employment, education and the social environment.

Although the conference theme was

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## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Idasa's goals are:

- To promote the development of a democratic culture in South Africa
- To address fear, prejudice, anger and other obstacles in the transition to a non-racial democracy in South Africa
- To engage influential groups and individuals who may be outsiders to the transition process
- To provide, wherever possible, information on critical issues and to explore ways of addressing these
- To facilitate discussion of constitutional and developmental issues relevant to Southern Africa
- To assist and encourage others to contribute to the attainment of these goals

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## EDITORIAL

# Challenges ahead for ANC and govt

**O**liver Tambo, in his opening address at the recent ANC conference, highlighted again the organisation's "proud record of struggle against apartheid". However, the real question facing the conference delegates was whether or not the ANC had the potential for government!

This is a question which the newly elected ANC president, Nelson Mandela, sought to answer. His speech, which was in large measure enthusiastically supported by delegates - not only at the time of delivery but in the deliberations which followed - gave a more convincing answer than South Africans had heard thus far from the ANC.

A party that is "ready for government" must be prepared to negotiate, must look well beyond the present obstacles, must be prepared to fight in a free and fair election, must have the appropriate machine (organisation) in order to fight that election and must have a base which is representative of all South Africans rather than only one part thereof.

In his speech, it would be fair to say that Mr Mandela has met all those requirements of a party that is ready for government. It is clear that the commitment is there but a very long, hard road lies ahead. The election of a person of the calibre of Cyril Ramaphosa as secretary-general of the ANC gives further cause for encouragement.

There are two major problems which the ANC is going to have to come to terms with if they are going to be successful in presenting "a consistent voice" and a "clear vision" which will meet the many fears which still exist, not only among white, coloured and Indian people, but among many blacks as well.

You don't have to be a supporter of the "red under every bed" brigade to have misgivings about the relationship between the ANC and the South African Communist Party. The recent collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe makes it difficult for many South Africans to understand why there is the continuing strong identification between the ANC and the SACP. The SACP should never have been banned and it was right that it was unbanned at the same time as the ANC and PAC and UDF, etc. But it has a very clear economic position which supports socialism.

The Communist Party in many parts of the world has had a very dismal history and

it would do the ANC a great service if these two groupings were clearly separate with distinguishable identities. In a word, there are many who are inclined to support the ANC but they want to be clear that by supporting the ANC they are not at one and the same time supporting the policies and the practices of the SACP.

Another problem which is going to face the ANC is the need for greater clarity concerning the activities and the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

It is readily appreciated by anyone who understands the history of South Africa that MK is part of that historic reality. Many of its members will play a role, and in many instances a significant role, in the future defence force and police force in the new South Africa. The real problem is to know what their current role is. It is particularly important because of the grim cycle of violence which has gripped South Africa in the last few years. The fact that the ANC has its military wing could well give other parties and groupings excuses to have their own "private armies".

**M**eanwhile the other major actor in the unfolding drama is obviously the South African government. President F W de Klerk, like Mr Mandela, has given bold and courageous leadership. But the current government also has its problems. Firstly, there is a continuing belief among many blacks that the security forces are playing a role in the current violence, either through the sins of omission or through the sins of commission. President De Klerk has not yet satisfactorily clarified the recurring questions surrounding violence and the state.

Secondly, it would appear that the government has yet to learn that when it apparently waits to be pressurised into action, the only message it gives to the ANC and other organisations is that they will never get anything significant or worthwhile unless they adopt continued pressure and mass action.

If the government is to convince the vast majority of South Africans that it means what it says, it has to take far greater initiative which will persuade the dispossessed, the poverty-stricken, the homeless and the jobless that negotiations are worthwhile and worthy of active support.

- Alex Boraine  
Executive Director



OH, ALL RIGHT THEN. LET'S HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

## Redistribution of white vote

Press reports of a recent Markinor survey suggest that a tantalising redistribution of political interest is occurring in South Africa.

While the non-racial African National Congress continues to engender heavy support among black respondents – some 68 percent of whom say they would vote for the ANC – it has not made any inroads into the white community. Only two percent of whites say they would vote for it.

The Inkatha Freedom Party, however, recently established from the predominantly Zulu ethnic base of the Inkatha Liberation Movement, shows strong support in the white community with a significant number – some 18 percent – suggesting they might or would vote for it. On the other hand the survey suggests no new support in the urban black community – 62 percent apparently “reject it completely”.

It is not clear from the reports whether white support is at the expense of the traditionally white parties such as the DP or the NP – but it raises intriguing possibilities.

Gallup polls do not translate, necessarily, into electoral support. Nor are elections on the immediate horizon. Nevertheless, the Markinor results suggest that the “uncertain” and floating vote is still in the white community and is being contested by the the IFP, ANC, DP and NP. □

## LETTERS

### Shackles stay without the right to know

Your recent conference in Johannesburg, “Public Information During Transition”, left me with some observations

The first of these concerns how rapidly we have come to accept the present level of freedom to express opinions on contentious matters, to a point where we are in danger of taking it for granted.

Since February 1990 we have entered an era which could best be described as a “Liberal Spring”, and it is conceivable that we are even now at a high point in the experience of open debate without fear of lurking securocrats.

In his excellent summation of the constraints on freedom of expression, under which he labours, Max du Preez gave some indication of the plethora of laws on the statute books which restrict the public’s “right to know”. We need to guard jealously the gains we have made in this past year, and ensure that “The Right to Know” is firmly entrenched in the public consciousness before we finalise the rules of negotiations.

All parties represented at the conference conveyed an aggrieved air of being misrep-

resented by the media, and while each in turn loudly proclaimed their adherence to the idea of freedom of expression, the non-verbal sub-text accompanying these varied protestations was loaded with conditional “ifs and buts”.

It was quite obvious that each participant saw the media as existing to serve their needs and when they neglected to act as an extension of their respective PR departments, they were in some way being subversive.

However, the corollary to this and a point completely overlooked in the conference was that in the competition for the “hearts and minds” of the “people” every party and political grouping actually has an unrecognised and unacknowledged *vested interest* in freedom of information simply to protect themselves from each other.

Without the right to know all the blood spilt in the struggle for liberation is rendered nugatory and we simply exchange shackles.

Nic Williamson  
Johannesburg

### Senseless murder

I am writing this letter to express my deep sorrow and anger at the assassination of Mr Pro Jack near his home in Nyanga on June 19.

About two years ago my husband and I

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# Home to Stay

From Page 1

cially for the latest sanctions position; some 350 international guests, long committed in solidarity but many now with their own countries in transition as communism and militant Islam undergo sea changes. Rural demands, women with an affirmative action agenda, delegates from war-torn regions and those in which infor-

the conference and will be able to carry out the decisions of the ANC with a lot more deftness than prior to the elections. For many, the opportunity to elect leaders through monitored secret ballot elections was as important as the outcome.

The ANC is, as its "Conference '91 News" suggested, committed



Delegates at the ANC's 48th conference

mal repression and apartheid are the norm - all had to be accommodated.

The conference, from its opening speech, a moving report-back of the exile by Oliver Tambo, to its closing ceremony, a 3 am announcement of the new national executive committee, was a turning point in defining not a platform, but an identity as an organisation with roots, history, constituency, destiny and a programme for a new context.

Nevertheless, it pored over position papers and resolutions on negotiations, violence, the role of MK, organisational development and its own constitution.

The top five leaders - Mandela, Sisulu, Ramaphosa, Zuma, Nkobi and Tambo in the new position of NEC chair - received a mandate for talks from the conference.

The NEC elections themselves returned a mixture of people. Analysts, according to their own needs, will have spotted SACP members, militants, MK leadership, moderates and whites. Whatever the composition of the NEC, it now has the confidence of

to the central question: "How do we ensure the transfer of power to the people so that we can achieve democracy?"



Bishop Trevor Huddleston opens the conference.

For them, the steps are removing the obstacles to negotiations; convening an all-party conference and defining the rules of transition including an interim government; and finally the election of a constituent assembly which will lead to a new constitution and democratic elections. □

Paul Graham is regional director of Idasa in Natal.

## YOUTH CRISIS

# What future SA youth?

From Page 1

"Marginalised Youth", several speakers pointed out that this term was problematic because of its negative connotations. No positive purpose at all was served, they said, by constantly referring to many of South Africa's young people as "marginalised" - in need merely of welfare assistance.

A major coup for the organisers was in securing Dr Mamphela Ramphele to deliver the keynote address.

Dr Ramphele, a deputy vice-chancellor at the University of Cape Town, was a founder member of the Black Consciousness Movement together with Steve Biko in 1969. She spent 139 days in detention in 1976/77, was banned for five years in May 1977 and was restricted to Lenyenye township in Tzaneen where she lived until a second banning order was lifted in July 1983.

In Tzaneen she opened the Itusheng Health Centre, worked as superintendent of the clinic and established a number of self-help schemes including a brick factory, a creche, a housing project, bursary fund and irrigation scheme.

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**'When children are relieved from having to police the community, they will be free to take their part'**

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In a detailed and articulate examination of the causes and implications of the marginalisation of the country's youth, Dr Ramphele painted a stark picture, but one which resisted defeatist attitudes and invited creative action and change.

The problem of the so-called "marginalised youth", said Dr Ramphele, was one which contained the conditions of a rapid downward spiral which could lead to the disintegration of the black community as a whole.

These conditions included the breakdown of family structures, low job participation, high alcohol and drug abuse, low performance at all levels, high crime rates, widespread violence, widespread despair and a victim self-image. In addition, skilled people and positive role models were moving away from certain black communities exacerbating, the disintegration of those communities.

However, she added that the problem was not only a "black" problem. The rising numbers of family murders within the white community, along with the activities of hit squads and the Civil Co-operation Bureau were signs of a disenchanted and desperate people whose world was also disintegrating.

There were also many poor, black people who did not exhibit the features characteristic of a society under extreme pressure and this needed to be acknowledged - and celebrated.

Key questions needed to be raised and addressed in understanding the magnitude and nature of the crisis, said Dr Ramphele. These included the causes of social disintegration, why it had taken so long for them to emerge and why certain individuals succeeded despite overwhelming odds.

Over the years, separate development and apartheid had

# YOUTH CRISIS



youths from adults as it led to politicised youths challenging traditional African authoritarianism which demanded respect for the father as head of the household – regardless of whether the children knew more.

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**'Black people have had to shrink as human beings in order to fit the constrained socio-economic space they have'**

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The events of June 16, 1976 thrust children into the frontline. They became used to wielding power and refused to yield to the authority of parents because they felt they had failed them – their parents had not stood



Ann Letsebe: easy to dismiss the youth as radical.

up to the "bully boys" in Pretoria.

During the 1980s existing tensions hardened and children responded readily to the call to make South Africa ungovernable. The boycotts and protests contained a strong element of intimidation and once again, much of the responsibility for enforcing this rested with the youth.

Young people assumed enormous powers and became a law unto themselves rejecting the authority of parents, schools and local and national structures.

Reflecting on the scenario Dr Ramphele

posed the question: "How do you grow up without any authority structure?"

The example, or lack of it, set by the South African regime's political conduct during this period also set the precedent that violence was an acceptable way of dealing with political opponents.

Dr Ramphele said the notion on non-violent political competition needed to be introduced to the townships so that vigilantes comrades, comtotsis and warlords could no longer feed off the political conflict.

"Young people are supposed to be rebellious, but they need an environment in which to deal with that. Families are under siege and cannot cope with the problems," she said.

Tradition had also been selectively applied in black households as a means of dealing with difficult conditions. The oft-vaunted communal values in which the interests of the group take precedence over the individual were not always ideal, said Dr Ramphele, they formed part of a survival strategy which entailed denying the individual and putting the group first.

"It is all very well to have a support network, but it comes at a cost – conforming to tradition. Individualism is an important creative force that we need."

"In a society where normal behaviour has been criminalised, the very system of the law falls into disrepute and generates a crisis of confidence in the legal system. This will not change when we have a new democratic government, because old habits die hard," she added.

Definitions of crime had changed. Many black people felt justified in stealing from work and had the attitude, "I'm redistributing the wealth". The question was would such attitudes change 10 years from now?

Offering a challenge to black South Africans, Dr Ramphele said there were many tough questions which needed to be confronted honestly.

"It is important to look at how we have cast ourselves as victims and the impact of seeing oneself as the victim. We have to accept the fact that black people as a group have been victimised. The very process that has ensured conquest and dispossession is a systematic victimisation. But how does one deal with individual victims?"

Research in the United States had shown

forcibly "contained" poverty in the overcrowded black rural areas. The result was that when the floodgates were opened through the abolition of influx control legislation in 1986, people streamed into the urban areas putting great strain on existing resources.

Dr Ramphele said the deliberate impoverishment of a sector of the population had resulted in dangerous misconceptions: the majority of South Africans believed they lived in a rich country and although this was not the case, the impression was perpetuated by, for example, the countless cases of single white families owning numerous houses.

The dehumanising nature of the migrant labour system had not only split families but had forced humans to live in filth and overcrowding. It was therefore not surprising that there were outbursts of violence; society was reaping the whirlwind of what that system had produced.

Within the townships, some of the violence directed by hostel dwellers towards the community was understandable because township people had deliberately neglected hostel residents and had never really drawn those migrants into their communities.

Education had been devalued in the eyes of the black community by job reservation and racism. When black people were confronted by white views such as "my vel is my graad" (my skin is my degree), it destroyed faith that it was worth struggling for an education in the hope of finding meaningful employment.

The nature of politics in the black community had changed over the past 30 years. Sharpeville, said Ramphele, had marked the end of an era – one in which black politics was led by black adults – mainly men.

The intensive repression that began in the 1960s, and what it did to the leadership, left people feeling helpless. In addition it estranged young people from adults as children lost respect for their frightened and hopeless parents.

The rise of Black Consciousness should be seen against this background, said Ramphele. It encouraged black people to realise they had the capacity to take the initiative and to believe that they were not only lucky to be South Africans, but lucky to be *black* South Africans who had a contribution to make to their society.

Black consciousness further divided

it became very difficult to break that view.

"People come with excuses such as, 'I don't do well at school because of the system'. That approach ensures that mediocrity becomes entrenched as acceptable.

"One has to understand that in a system where excellence has been precluded to black people, excellence has come to be seen as a white value... We must be careful not to imbibe the poison that has been dished out to us. Some blacks have succeeded because they were determined and because they were supported, not necessarily because they are more clever than anyone else. We need to ask how we can support our young people to excel."

Black people have had to shrink as human beings in order to fit the constrained socio-economic space they have. This had happened physically, psychologically, intellectually and hampered people's ability to deal creatively with the situation.



Right wing violence and black on black violence was the concern of everyone in South Africa.

Dr Ramphela cautioned that the diagnosis of current problems needed to be done in a way that allowed people to look at the situation in a broader way. It was vital to ensure that short term strategies did not negate long term strategies. "We should have thought about the implications of slogans such as 'freedom now education later'. We must learn from our mistakes."

She suggested that a purist approach was not the answer. It was necessary to engage present realities. The school system was the biggest challenge facing society. "We are going through a birthing process - it is by nature a dirty process."

Dr Ramphela acknowledged that it might be difficult for activists to engage the system, and some would opt for "greater pollution or greater purity". What was all important, however, was how best to transform the existing system so that it did not take another five years before an effective school system was in place.

"We need to ask what are the implications of not talking to the existing authorities?"

Tackling the issue of poor teacher morale and inferior qualifications she said: "We have to go to school with those students and hold the hands of those teachers who have become demoralised... We have to engage young people to define for themselves what they want and hear their perspectives. This will require a major shift by adults."

Families also needed support - and in many cases even the concept of "the family" was inadequate because it could mean a sin-

term on Robben Island.

In that short encounter with him we were impressed with him as a man of stature, gifts and ability as a future leader, such as we so badly need in the new South Africa we long and pray for.

I would be grateful if you would pass on to his family, the ANC and Idasa colleagues our concern, sorrow and anger at this senseless and brutal murder.

G V McMinn  
Kenilworth

(Letter shortened)

gle parent on their own. Traditional family relationships needed to be redefined so that parents' authoritarian attitudes changed.

Dr Ramphela stressed that negative forces needed to be changed into positive forces. When children were relieved from having to police the community, they would be free to take their part.

Other speakers at the conference echoed many of these sentiments, emphasising that it would be meaningless, and impossible, to work with the youth without involving the parents as well.

The director of the Education Development Trust and a returned exile, Dr Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi, offered a comparative international perspective on marginalised groups.

She said assimilation of people on the outskirts of society had to do with opportunities and power structures. Where people felt totally powerless, it was less likely that they would be assimilated into the society.

There was not just one way of addressing the issue, however, creative alternatives needed to be explored. Above all, an holistic strategy was required.

## 'We have to go to school with those students and hold the hands of those teachers who have become demoralised'

Looking ahead Dr Ramphela said part of the present problem was that rising expectations were being frustrated.

Although F W de Klerk's speech on February 2, 1990 had opened political space, no similar socio-economic opportunities had been created.

This had increased tension and conflict in society as people struggled to develop within the narrow socio-economic space accorded them.

"Until political liberalisation translates into homes, jobs, schools and peace, no reconciliation will happen."

She said violence in the black townships would spread because it was inevitable due to the high crime rate. "These are not just actions of bad people, but of desperate people," she said.

## LETTERS

From Page 3

went on an Idasa-sponsored bus tour of the townships, Nyanga, Crossroads and Khayelitsha. The leader or conductor of the tour was Mr Jack. Throughout the tour he was helpful, understanding of our possible apprehension, friendly and appeared free of rancour, though I believe he had served a

## 'We have to engage young people to define for themselves what they want and hear their perspectives'

Social worker and University of the Witwatersrand academic Ann Letsebe also stressed the importance of finding home-grown and original solutions. No one was going to deliver neatly packaged answers.

"It is easy to dismiss the youth as radical and so on, we forget that some of these things are normal processes. It is important to channel youths' energies into creative, beneficial processes," she said.

The lack of recreational resources in black communities - and worse still in black rural areas - was of proportions as great as the schools crisis, said Letsebe.

Youth clubs offered one important area where youth could be reached.

Letsebe again stressed the importance of involving and supporting the family when looking for ways of reaching children.

"If children do not grow up with supervision and care, they grow like weeds", she said. She appealed to professionals with skills who were able to make a contribution to the community to "nationalise your degree" and make themselves available to the society around them. □

Sue Valentine is media co-ordinator with Idasa

# FALSE DAWN?

**South Africa's sudden progress in Africa has surprised most political observers. But, according to PETER VALE, it seems unlikely that Africa will accord South Africa the recognition which many think it deserves until the entire process of negotiations has been completed.**



TRIUMPHANT: President De Klerk and Foreign Minister Pik Botha.

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**'In Africa an exchange of goods seldom leads to an exchange of diplomats'**

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**T**his raises a second point: those in Africa to whom Mr De Klerk has spoken, with the notable exception of the Namibian president, are all themselves under some international whip. The Kenyan leader, Daniel Arop-Moi, is a case in point. His human rights record is poor and he seems determined to maintain a one-party state in Kenya at the very moment that the rest of Africa is moving in the opposite direction. This is not a flippant consideration. Diplomacy is almost entirely about the company one keeps. This is something seasoned South African ambassadors well understand and which they must have pointed out to their president as he worked out his itinerary.

The self-same principle of diplomacy helps explain why it is that so many African states will trade with South Africa but are

hesitant to deepen their links. Shifts in international relations have narrowed, not widened, the options facing enfeebled African economies. Trade with the nearest – not necessarily the dearest – has become part of the search for economic salvation. The appeal of this particular reality has undoubtedly been enhanced by the energy of South Africa's salesmen who have been very active throughout the continent. The orthodoxy remains, however: in Africa, an exchange of goods seldom leads to an exchange of diplomats!

But what accounts for the averred near cave-in on South Africa of the Organisation of African Unity meeting in Abuja,

Nigeria's new capital?

The key to an understanding of this lies in the fact that while the South African issue occupied local centre stage, there were more immediate threats to the OAU's future. Of these, the most pressing was the downfall of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia and the break-up of Somalia. The former is symbolically important because the OAU is located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital; the latter because the kind of fragmentation which faces Somalia is Africa's worst political nightmare. To a greater rather than lesser degree, all African states – including our own, incidentally – face the prospect of disintegration if the impetus towards irredentism deepens.

**B**ut this interpretation does not account for the near conciliatory tone of the Nigerian government which, for so long, has been a strident foe of South Africa.

It seems clear from diplomatic sources that the Kenyan visit was used as a stalking-horse for a visit to Nigeria. Indeed, when interviewed astride the equator President De Klerk came within a whisker of admitting

It would be churlish not to give recognition where it is due: in any book, F W de Klerk's June visit to Kenya was exceptional. So long, and with such obvious pain, white South Africa was excluded from the affairs of the continent. Now as the SABC triumphantly suggested, the tide has turned.

Or has it? The sheer hype of the event and the obviously carefully crafted De Klerk speech in Nairobi thwarted efforts to see the safari in its context.

Exceptional? Yes. But unexpected? Probably not.

After all, in the times in which we live unforeseen developments have become relatively commonplace occurrences. If Leningrad can revert to St Petersburg, Verwoerdburg to Lyttleton, why should a white African president not be seen in deep conversation with a black African president?

And yet, the very symbolism of this colour factor which made the event so remarkable, is the same issue which will retard Pretoria's immediate diplomatic ambitions on the continent.

To begin with the plainly obvious: however significant the changes which Mr De Klerk has made at home, he has yet to draw a credible opposition grouping into negotiations on the country's constitutional fate. It is, of course, true that this was not possible until the formal vestiges of apartheid had been expunged. This the Kenyans clearly understood and the invitation to the country aimed, like so many of De Klerk's foreign visits, to encourage him to stay the distance rather than to reward him for completing the race.

So, while the SABC and sections of the press danced on the grave of sanctions and isolation, the conditions attached to the visit were simply ignored.

# The right to KNOW

**Do the media have the capacity – and will – to tell South Africans what is going on in their country during these critical times? Journalist RAYMOND LOUW is not optimistic. This is an edited version of his speech at a recent Idasa seminar on the subject in Johannesburg.**

All sorts of information has a bearing on our country's situation – the learned views of constitutional experts, the views of lawyers framing bills of rights and of others who have been involved in changing societies and changing economies; the mechanics of political and constitutional processes, of revolution and negotiation; the histories of past failures and successes in the art of reconstructing societies and nations.

There is an enormous amount of material and an enormous amount of talking about the relevance of all this to our particular circumstances.

But how is this information being conveyed to the people who have to come to terms with the new state we are in the process of building – and with the process of transition? And how does it affect the "haves" who don't see any reason why they should give anything away, or why they should show an over-inclination to share – and the "have nots" who feel very deeply that having been deprived all their lives there is some natural law that should compensate them?

The questions are: what is the media telling us of this complex process of transition? Is it really telling us what is going on? Is it presenting in a meaningful and understandable way the various options open to us? Is it doing an adequate job or is it failing because it lacks the will and skills to do so or because it is being prescribed to?

And of course there are the ancillary questions: is the public really interested in exploring the possibilities or has it fragmented into groups behind leaders who have taken up stereotype positions? And that leads to the further question whether the public has the desire and capacity to think for itself, to discuss the options and arrive at conclusions

independent of the dogma of the political parties.

Listening to Radio 702 and reading the letters columns I find myself increasingly being confirmed in the view that there is little independent thinking; that South Africans have locked themselves in behind the banners and the sloganeering of the various political parties and pressure groups. Perhaps, this is the way people do their thinking, by adhering to political positions, but it does not give much scope for fluidity and movement and changes in attitudes which I would think is necessary in our country.

**'Critical faculties are not being exercised in assessing what the politicians are saying'**

An example of this is the solidarity of the National Party establishment in its acceptance of an amazing 180 degree change in policies after 43 years without one of its public figures breaking ranks. I am not talking about supporters, who have quietly slid to the right – or should I say, have remained at the right wing end of the spectrum where they have always been while the NP has slunk towards the centre. These have stayed solidly racist, but the MPs, the cabinet ministers, the members of the President's Council, to a man and a woman, have maintained ranks behind the party banner.

Why should this be in the most traumatic time in South Africa's history? Why should the Nats behave in such a disciplined fashion while the white opposition to the left of the Nationalists, the Democrats in the centrist area of white politics, are floundering, not certain whether to join the Nats or the ANC,

that Lagos was his next port of call. Plainly there have been links between the Nigerian and the South African governments: the point is what happens next.

While it is not impossible that South Africa's president will soon find himself gazing upon one of Lagos's seven lakes, the harsh anti-South African resolution passed at Abuja may well impede his journey. President Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's president who is now chairman of the OAU, will certainly be advised by his own diplomats to slow down the impulse to embrace South Africa. They will see it as more important to heal the rifts which surfaced at the OAU than to compound these by rewarding South Africa long before the race is over.

This raises the now familiar question of irreversibility. However evaluated, it seems unlikely that Africa will accord South Africa the recognition which many think it deserves until the entire process of negotiations – however long and bumpy these will be – are well and truly over.

**'As all Africans know it is only a few quick hours between the chill of a false dawn and the searing heat of noon'**

But the effect of this stance, of course, cuts both ways. While foiling De Klerk's effort to pull, as it were, the African rabbit from its international hat, the ANC will be strongly pressurised by African states towards a settlement. This may itself seem a trivial point: what immediate purchase could African states have on the ANC?

The answer seems to be very little until one remembers that a country like Tanzania has made support for the liberation of South Africa a pillar of their foreign policy. In many cases, the influence which flows from moral stances of this kind, as the South African government may come to discover, completely outweigh the immediate appeal of commerce.

So how is one to judge the current stage of South Africa's Africa policy?

At the formal government to government level, it seems a false dawn. But as all Africans know, it is only a few quick hours between the chill of a false dawn and the searing heat of noon. □

Prof Vale is attached to the Centre for Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape. This article was written in mid-June.





Journalists Jon Mattison and Raymond Louw at the Idasa seminar.

and the coloureds and Asians are flocking to join the NP, the party which was once anathema to them and which did them such great harm.

Of course there are many reasons, but I want to focus on the one that is the theme of this seminar – the availability of information, how it is used and the uses to which it is put.

It appears that the lack of defection by public office Nationalists is due to the glue of Afrikaner nationalism, loyalty to their cause and the dire warning drilled into the party that if they divide they fall. This has been brought about by skilful and sustained propaganda within the party and its fruits are to be seen in the solidarity with which the party forges ahead to a non-racial South Africa. Every Nationalist MP should resign because none of them were elected on a non-racial ticket.

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**'The government is not in the business of informing people so that they can make up their minds about their future'**

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Nationalist public information systems and their media vehicles spread a message of solidarity with the leadership and do not encourage doubts and questions, certainly not in public. Nationalists are told what is going on in the way they have always been told – to suit leadership views and party ide-

ology. There are few if any dissenting voices. There are not Solzhenitzyns in the National Party.

That is why strenuous attempts are made to crush papers like Max du Preez's *Vrye Weekblad*. Though by no means a Nationalist, Du Preez has to be silenced simply because he is an Afrikaner questioning Nationalist values. That is simply not to be tolerated, and of course, lack of tolerance of a relatively small dissenter such as *Vrye Weekblad* is a measure of the NP's inability to appreciate what democracy is all about and certainly its fundamentals of dissent and argument.

So, as far as Nationalists are concerned, the answer to the question of what is going on is easily answered. What the boss – F W de Klerk, Adriaan Vlok, Pik Botha et al – say is going on. And this unchallenging view is prevalent throughout the NP. So the answer as far as the Nationalist media is concerned is that no attempt is being made to widen the parameters of public knowledge, to encourage independent thinking and debate. It has to fit the mould laid down by the leaders.

But when we come to the rest of the country, the circumstances are different. People are assailed from all sides with conflicting information, propaganda, disinformation about what is going on, and virtually no information about the possible courses of action ahead of the country.

One of the reasons for this is quite simply that the media information gathering and information assessment and dispersal channels in South Africa have been seriously damaged, if not nearly destroyed.

That, you will say, is the natural consequence of the restrictions the government has placed on the press and of its tight control over what goes out from the state-controlled electronic broadcasting media. It has had a long run; it had been doing that since it came to power in 1948. But I say, the government tried...but it did not totally succeed. It passed law after law – there are now more than 100 on the Statute Book and they range over the spectrum of information that the public should have access to. But strangely enough, despite that clutter of legislation that certainly did inhibit information gathering and dispersal, it was not destructive of the information channels. Journalists were still able to gather and publish a great deal of information that the government would have preferred to see buried.

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**'There are few reporters probing the possibilities raised by transition'**

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The real destruction was performed by the Anglo American Corporation, the conglomerate that professes to support the principles of a free press, that has on more than one occasion been sturdily supportive of the papers it controls and has never to my knowledge interfered in the editorial departments.

So, why, with this record – largely achieved, it should be said, by scrupulously keeping their hands off the newspapers

rather than delving into their policies and activities – should I accuse Anglo American of having seriously damaged the information channels?

The answer again is relatively simple. Anglo – not the government – killed the *Rand Daily Mail*, the morning daily in Johannesburg which operated within the country's political and economic heartland. It closed the one paper that was the catalyst for the country's press information systems.

It is not generally known that the *Rand Daily Mail* fed more information to its sister morning papers around the country – *Cape Times*, *Natal Mercury*, *Eastern Province Herald*, *Daily Dispatch* – and to the national news agency, the SA Press Association, than any other newspaper in the country. It was pored over by countless local journalists and foreign correspondents as an ideas and information base for their day's work. And, among the most avid of those professional readers were the reporters and news desks of *Beeld* and the other Afrikaans newspapers and, of course, the news desks of the SABC.

The effect on South Africa was similar to what would happen in America if the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* were closed.

### **'No matter who was to blame, the catalyst had gone out of SA journalism'**

People now talk of the poor quality of their newspapers. But outwardly nothing has changed; indeed, since 2 February 1990, information is more freely available. The *Mail* was closed ostensibly because it was losing money. A few months after its closure a senior director of Anglo American admitted that it had been a mistake and that the paper should have survived. Its ills, he stated, had been perceived as due to editorial incompetence, but it was found that the problem lay with management.

No matter who was to blame, the catalyst had gone out of South African journalism. The *Mail* may have been hated by many, but it could not be ignored and its readership showed it was read by English and Afrikaner, by blacks, coloureds and Asians.

What remains of the press today is unsatisfactory. It is too specialist to do the job: *Business Day*, as its name suggests, emphasises business and pays limited attention to political and sociological issues. The NP supporting *Citizen* is unlikely to be critical of the party and in any case survives on a diet of the Sapa and handouts. The morning edition of *The Star* is a morning version of an evening paper with little reflective handling of the news. *The Sowetan* is an early deadline black paper with limited news of significance.

Evening papers cannot do this job; they have to ride with the news as it breaks and try to assess it later when its impact has been overlaid by the next day's events. I think *The Star* tries, but its format and time slot in publishing are against it.

There are few reporters probing the possibilities raised by transition. Though censorship does not directly impinge on this area, the culture created by long years of repression and harassment of journalists have blunted these ideas.

This culture includes respecting authority so that when political bosses say something it is given prominence and, worse, I suspect that it is believed all too readily.

Critical faculties are not being exercised in assessing what the politicians are saying. Too much is accepted at face value. And when it comes from the security establishment the information is frequently regarded as sacrosanct.

Certainly, that is the attitude of the state-controlled SATV and radio services which are back to their old tricks of looking after the interests of the party. There was a short period when the SABC floundered around not sure of the direction it should take, but that period has gone. The opposition-bash-

ing programmes are back again. If ever there was a case for the SABC to be dismembered so that greater variety could be introduced, now is the time.

In a sense, all this was predictable. We have a government that started out on a constitutional negotiation process but rapidly turned it into an election campaign where it devotes its energies to scoring points off opponents.

It is not in the business of informing people so that they can make up their minds about their future. It is issuing information selectively and with an emphasis intended to get people to side and vote for it.

Public thinking has been conditioned by the country's long enslavement to thought constriction through censorship and the many other constraints brought about by compulsion to adhere to doctrine and this, of course, includes a requirement to conform to the dogmas of the liberation movements.

We have a long way to go. In terms of press freedom this country has not yet returned to the basic standards that applied in 1948 when the present government came to power. And it is worth recollecting that in those days, the media in this country had much the same degree of freedom as that which existed in Britain then.

Here is the prescription. I see little flexibility on the part of government. It has before it the list of media and other laws that the law commissioners have proposed should be scrapped or amended to conform to the bill of rights which they have drafted. The Media Council's list of recommendations, which duplicate some of the law commissioners' proposals, have also been handed to the Home Affairs Minister, Eugene Louw, but so far nothing has happened except a few vague promises.

This is hardly the background for a country embarking on the most important decisions of its life. But the government sees nothing odd in this situation. And – perhaps the most frightening aspect – neither do the people in the street. □

Raymond Louw is a former editor of the *Rand Daily Mail* and currently publisher and editor of *Southern Africa Report*.

## **Looking for broadcasting alternatives**

The Centre for Cultural and Media Studies (CCMS) at the University of Natal has established a broad-based working group to examine questions relating to broadcasting, deregulation, privatisation and future telecommunications policy in South Africa.

The group invites co-operation between academics in making information available swiftly to the public on the choices facing South Africa with regard to broadcasting and electronic media.

According to CCMS director Keyan Tomaselli the urgency of the exercise is motivated by the imminent report of the government-appointed task group on the

future of broadcasting in the country. The task group reports to the cabinet at the end of July.

The CCMS group is interdisciplinary, with student and staff representation drawn from the ranks of media specialists in cultural studies, education, sociology, business administration, electronic engineering, development studies, telecommunications research and drama studies. The group will co-operate with other organisations like the Film and Allied Workers Organisation and Campaign for an Open Media which are calling for the development of open, accessible and democratic media structures. □

# Lala ngoxolo Comrade Pro

The recent murder by masked gunmen of one of Idasa's former staff members, Pro Jack, near his home in Nyanga, Cape Town on June 19, 1991 shocked, outraged and saddened us all.

Pro Jack joined Idasa in July 1987 as one of our first fieldworkers in the Western Cape where he worked as a regional co-ordinator until January 1990.

He joined at a time when the institute was under extreme pressure from the government and other right wing sources. His contribution to facilitating contact between white and black South Africans was greatly valued.

In Cape Town circles Pro Jack was probably most widely known for the "township tours" he organised which allowed hun-



dreds of diplomats, foreign visitors and ordinary South Africans to encounter township life firsthand.

Pro Jack's assassination is a further indication of the deep political divisions that continue to exist in our country. It is Idasa's firm belief that the creation of a culture of democracy and political tolerance is a prerequisite for a peaceful transition to a stable political environment.

Actions of this nature can only exacerbate the violence that has permeated our political life for so many decades. Unless the powers that be put all their efforts into rooting out - from all quarters - the perpetrators of such actions, the spiral of violence, revenge and destabilisation of South Africa's political life shows no sign of ending. □

# Tours show pupils' hardships

The last time I was in a classroom was over nine years ago. Even then we felt we were getting a "raw deal" as black pupils - despite the many lives lost in the '76 revolt. When I left Alexandra High School in 1982, conditions were still bad - but there was always hope that the situation would improve in the near future.

Going back to the classroom, this time not as a pupil but as a tour guide during the Alexandra Education Tours arranged by Idasa in collaboration with the *Weekly Mail*, proved the situation to be far from improved.

The very first tour took place on May 21 and involved 10 participants. Two further tours, involving some 60 people, took place during May. Participants get an opportunity to visit schools and observe conditions and meet with representatives of major education groups and other organisations in the township.

Among the schools visited were the Eastbank High school, Minerva High, Skeen Combined School and the Dr Knak primary school.

Skeen Combined School is a dilapidated two-storey brick building where 700 pupils are crammed into 12 classrooms. In its poorly furnished classrooms, most with broken windows and leaking roofs, about 100 pupils share plastic chairs during lessons. The school has had problems with blocked mobile toilets on its premises for over two years, creating unpleasantness for both pupils and teachers.

The new high school, Eastbank High, started out on a very bad note in the beginning of the year - without a school building, the result of delays by the builders. It now appears that the school will only be ready next year, meanwhile the school is "squating" in different buildings that are a kilometre apart. Teachers have to move from one end of the township to the other during change of periods.

A teacher took us to a classroom where Std 7 pupils were sitting five to a desk, 120 of them in the room. About 80 percent of them didn't have any textbooks. The classroom was without windows, had dirty walls and the roof was ripped apart at one end of the rplight of the black pupils and their quest for

*Bookings for the Alexandra education tour can be made at Idasa offices at 39 Honey Street, Berea (Tel (011) 484-3694/7) or The Weekly Mail (Tel (011) 331-3321)* □

**Patrick Banda**  
Regional Co-ordinator

# Learning to be self-critical in Germany

At our very first meeting with our hosts, I was struck by the almost obsessive concern of the German federal government with the need for political education.

I suppose it does make sense when one remembers that Nazism was able to take root precisely because of the lack of political education amongst Germans at the time. Yet, the insistence of the government that its constituency must be kept informed of political issues and developments was a rather mind-boggling and new concept for me.

Our meetings with the Deutsche Industrie und Handelstag (DIH) and the Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI) dealt with the issue which seems to permeate all of German society - the free-market social economy. In the meeting with the BDI it became clear that the West was simply transplanting its systems into the five new states of the old GDR.

This was somewhat disappointing since there seemed to be no regard for what the new states actually wanted. Also, there seemed to be no systematic way of analysing and determining a development policy for the new states. This contradicts what I had learnt about the German systems - efficient, systematic and organised!

In Germany things are either white or they are black - there is no grey. You are either within the system or you are outside of it; you cannot be in-between. The constitution provides for strict regulation at all levels: from federal to municipal government, edu-

**The Friedrich Naumann Stiftung recently hosted an Idasa group in Germany. VINCENT WILLIAMS records a few impressions of the visit**

cation, finance and so on. However hard I probed, I could not find a single flaw in the system. Everything seemed so perfect!

Clearly, the Germans want to avoid a recurrence of their past and they are desperately searching for ways of doing so. However, it appears as if they have already made some mistakes with the process of unification.

My concern was that there seems to be too much optimism; almost to the extent that potential problems are being ignored. Everyone is aware that the process of transition in the ex-GDR will not be easy, but the absolute faith in the ability of the German system concerns one.

We met with two East German political personalities who were both clearly aware that there were problems in the GDR and that something needed to be done, but this was superseded by their sense of loyalty to their country. The lesson to be learnt here is the need to be self-critical; critical of our own personal beliefs and the systems which we advocate as an answer to the problems of our country. □

**Vincent Williams is a regional co-ordinator of Idasa in the Western Cape.**

# Border farmers rise to the challenge

## (...but they won't buy a one-man-one-goat deal!)



Stutterheim farmer

By Ronel Scheffer

**W**hen a not-so-progressive Eastern Cape farmer waves goodbye with a mock clenched fist salute, his sunburnt features radiating mischief, one knows things can't be that bad. The "one-man-one-farm" debate might still get off the ground in the white farming community – and it won't be short on irony or laughs.

John Matthews' good-humoured salute came towards the end of a two-day land workshop hosted by Idasa in the Border area in June. It captured the strong spirit of realism and co-operation among white farmers who seemed ready to divert resources to existing and prospective black farmers and to face up to any possible "sacrifices" demanded by a new land dispensation.

They listened with lively interest – and some protestation – to the views of the handful black farmers present, to the positions of the ANC, and to the advice of technical experts. With no dissenting voices, for example, the white farmers supported the following (urgent) land release package for black people:

- victims of forced removals must have their land returned or be compensated

- two million hectares held in trust for homeland consolidation must be made available as soon as possible to black farmers

- white farmers who are endemically indebted ("super uneconomic farmers") must be encouraged off the land and black farmers must get first option to that land

Admittedly, the 60 or so farmers who came to the Katberg workshop represented the more affluent and politically enlightened

section of the Border farming community who will probably not be much affected by such a release package. Yet, they were eager to take the discussions back to their communities, many of them deeply conservative. I heard one Afrikaans farmer – determined to take back the message – frantically organising for a partner to address his farming association.

Discussion at the workshop revealed three issues of potential immediate influence: the extremist voice among white farmers is over-emphasised on the national level; farmers are sufficiently aware of developments in land reform but need direct contact with organisations like the ANC and black farmers and rural communities to promote understanding; individual white farmers have "organised" themselves out of the debate on land

unions, the liberation movements' land committees, rural communities, Ciskei agricultural interests, service organisations and technical experts.

**T**he workshop itself covered vast ground: the nature of the present crisis in agriculture, the historical background to land dispossession, problems related to land hunger and options for a new land dispensation, including the proposals of the government and the ANC. Inevitably, not much was resolved in terms of "how", but there was some consensus about what needs to be done about land redistribution and land use in South Africa.

Key issues of consensus were the need for affirmative action to promote access to land for black people and for extension service support to new black farmers. Delegates also agreed on the necessity of a flexible approach to tenure systems, the importance of maintaining a vibrant commercial agriculture sector, the need to urgently determine a demarcation between land for agricultural and residential use and to find new definitions of "farmer" (to include rural women and part-time farmers) and "farmland".

The workshop started against the backdrop of a number of sobering statements on environmental and agricultural constraints in South Africa by Fort Hare ecologist Prof Jock Danckwerts which emphasised the need for realistic expectations about the availability of land and agricultural production.

He stated it plainly: "The ideological dream of peasant agriculture on a one-man-



Idasa regional director Hermien Kotzé with Jock Danckwerst of Fort Hare (middle) and Mike Kenyon (GRC)

reform, which will profit by their participation and has the potential to prevent solutions that are politically and not economically motivated.

The Katberg delegates – they all attended in their private capacity – decided to take the initiative forward to a more broadly-based conference in October where they hope to have formal representation from agricultural



Preston with his wife, Wendy, and the Rev Themba Sibeko of Balfour.

one-farm basis with self-sufficiency in meat and vegetables is farcical in South Africa – the environment cannot support it. If this approach were attempted, a more appropriate catch phrase would be one-man-one-goat, and a pretty miserable one at that," he added.

Dealing with the aspirations of the landless later in the debate, Rosaly Kingwill of the Grahamstown Rural Committee said rural black communities generally had a clear understanding of the macro-economic issues involved in agriculture but land remained an "emotional issue". To whites rural land represents units of production, to blacks communal tenure in the rural areas was a source of security.

More than half of the people living in the rural communities served by the GRC technically are landless and carry the disparaging title of "squatters", despite the fact that they were born in these areas. Kingwill said any new land policy would need to create legal access to rural land for these people who had no hope of being absorbed in urban areas like Mdantsane where unemployment was already running as high as 50 percent.

**'Unless they  
get involved,  
white  
farmers  
won't have  
any  
leverage'**

She said there was increasing support for strong local government structures in the rural areas to govern access to land, stock control and

criteria for land use. "The minute groups find out that they will have control over these issues, the ideas come out."

In response to whites farmers' complaints about conflict with their black neighbours, Bonile Jack, a former Director General of Agriculture in Ciskei currently farming in the Balfour district, said it was important to promote understanding between people who follow different tenure systems and to avoid generalisations about the practices of black rural people.

**H**istorian Dr Jeff Peires, who is the secretary of the ANC's land commission, urged white farmers to participate in the debate on land policies so that politically acceptable alternatives that are fair to black and white can be found. "Unless they participate immediately white farmers are not going to have any leverage in the medium and long term," he said.

He criticised what he called the "Father Christmas" syndrome which the government displayed in drawing up its White Paper on land reform without properly consulting all interest groups. The time was past when con-

cessions could be dished out to people. "Things have to be discussed," said Peires.

Sketching the history of dispossession in South Africa, Peires said it would be impossible to revert to the situation that existed in the country 300 years ago. "If we want to do that, it would mean that we will have to give the Lady Frere district back to the Bushmen and the people who live at Keiskammahoek will have to go back to Natal," he said.

However, there were many examples where land could be given back to the original occupants without any problems. Such a case was the Fingo people who were removed to Keiskammahoek from the Tsitsikama area where their land was still not being farmed viably by the new white owners.

Peires said it would appear that the peri-urban land hunger was more critical and urgent than that in the rural areas.

Dr Johan van Rooyen of the Development Bank of Southern Africa said experience in other countries had shown that it was important to make land transfers "dramatic and speedy". Policies that may appear politically convenient now could create problems 10 years down the line. Transfers also had to be accompanied by a comprehensive support programme and participants had to contribute financially towards the schemes.

Furthermore the "rules of the game" have to be clear and easily understandable with minimal redtape; ceilings need to be placed on land size and price and certain criteria must be established for access. Among these were productivity and political acceptability.

As the workshop was drawing to a close, John Matthews, a prosperous farmer dispossessed by the government's land consolidation programme in Ciskei, related a tale of opportunities lost to black farmers. His family had farmed in the Alice district for four generations before losing their land.

He told how he had "begged" former Ciskei leader, Chief Lennox Sebe, to identify 20 potential black farmers whom he could assist to establish themselves on a commercial basis on the land vacated by white farmers around Alice. "He held my hand for a while and then said no."

The result was that a district which used to provide 20 percent of the beef requirements of the city of Port Elizabeth was left to go to ruin. "And that to me is as much a sin as throwing people off their land," said Matthews.

He added: "Our history of land is bad in this country, we must try and put it behind us and do what we can about the future." □



Black and white farmers at the workshop

Ronel Scheffer is media director of Idasa.

# The best – and worst – of times

Over breakfast in the Moscow Hotel I asked a visiting Russian who had been working in New York for the past 10 years what had changed in the Soviet Union since he had left.

"Everything," he said. "They are trying to change everything."

That the Soviet Union is undergoing momentous political times is immediately apparent. When I boarded my Aeroflot flight in Madagascar I was handed a copy of the "alternative" weekly *Moscow News*, an experience somewhat equivalent to arriving on an SAA Jumbo and receiving the *African Communist* from the friendly air hostess. The cover story was headlined "The bloodshed goes on" with a large photo of grieving women against a backdrop of Soviet troops. The content generally – sympathy for Red Army deserters, scorn for the bureaucrats and the communists, support for the democrats. *Moscow News* was the alternative press in the early days of glasnost. Now Moscow is served by a number of contentious noisy opposition papers. When you speak out for the first time, you shout.

Everywhere in Moscow – politics. Switch on the TV and probably most channels are carrying it. Everyone has an opinion which they are keen to share with you. On the economy, the political personalities, the army and the KGB, the secessionist republics... most opinions differ from each other. Debate tends to be fierce and passionate. There is anger around.

This year has been crucial for democracy in the Soviet Union. Milestones have been passed. The first free democratic campaign for the presidency of the Russian Federation had just begun when I arrived.

As striking as the politics however is the poverty. Most people are poor. A standard salary is around 300 roubles. It is just enough to get by on – to pay the rent, to get to work, to eat – provided you have a state flat where the rent is very cheap. Outside the tourist hotels and churches shawled women with babies sit in stylised misery and plead for money. I was surprised by the number of beggars.

**The Soviet Union, like our country, is emerging from a long dark winter. DAVID SCHMIDT of Idasa gives his impressions of a recent visit to Moscow and Leningrad.**

In the grounds of the Kremlin stands the Tsar Gun, in its time the largest cannon in the world, and the huge Tsar Bell which cracked in the foundry. "The gun that never fired. The bell that never rang. The two great symbols of Russia," mused the philosopher Herzen in the 19th century. And as I watch the dead-eyed young woman in the GUM store across from the Lenin mausoleum slowly add up my purchases on an abacus while her colleagues stand around talking as the queue grows longer, I add to the list "The system that never worked".

The failure of the economic system is apparent everywhere. What is less apparent is what can be done about it. Every few months a new great economic plan is unveiled.

"In the Soviet Union, people don't work any more. They go to meetings or stand in queues," observed Igor my guide. Central to rebuilding the economy is fostering a work ethic and a sense of enterprise. Initiative has been crushed out of the vast majority of population over years of the great repression. They have never had access to wealth creating property, they have been excluded from economic decision-making, they have been given no responsibility, work has been about following orders and



The Tsar Gun in the grounds of the Kremlin.

plans to the letter of the law. Work as drudgery. When the coercive discipline of the past is lifted, people work even less.

The queue syndrome is part of this. While some queues like those outside the liquor stores, do reflect shortages, most I encountered were bureaucratic. They exist because of the absence of any sense amongst the ticket-sellers or shop assistants that the consumer is important. No one complains about the pace of service. If you do, you might not be served at all.

Bureaucratic red tape continues to severely limit the emergence of individual enterprise. But it is the absence of dreams that that seems to be more retarding in the long term. I notice that all the private cars in Moscow are dirty although it is spring and there is no water shortage.

Moscow is the saddest city. Virtually every young person I met was beset by despair. A profound hopelessness haunts the streets. People hang around on the corners and in the queues with no energy or joy. Prognoses about the future are inevitably grim.

Everyone told me that I should have been in Moscow three years ago. Then there was hope they say. The processes initiated by Gorbachev promised not only freedom but economic prosperity. Freedom indeed has expanded and been consolidated. The economy however has stagnated still further. Food supplies have fallen. Most disturbing of all for people who, if nothing else, have lived in the knowledge that prices will stay the same in perpetuity and one will always have one's job, prices are soaring and unemployment threatens. There is no longer any security.

Passivity and passion exist very close to each other in Moscow. The same people who illegally marched with courage and determination for democracy are also the people who express no hope in the future.

Russia is a study in contrasts. The manifest democratisation driven from below by the people, the economic stagnation and creeping impoverishment that threatens it. The passion of the people and the passive resignation. The best of times, the worst of



Moscow: now served by a number of noisy opposition papers.

times. Everything changes, everything remains the same.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union lays host to a range of ideological tendencies and factions – neo-Stalinist socialists, democratic socialists, social democrats, liberals...

Dr Alexander Buzgalin, professor of economics at Moscow State University, is a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU and an ideologue of a tendency called the Marxist platform. "The Marxist platform is not easily placed on the continuum between neo-Stalinist and liberal ideas," he says, "it is about finding a new approach, about finding a democratic basis for real socialism."

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### **'But it is the absence of dreams that seems to be more retarding in the long term'**

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A democratic basis for real socialism – this is the new language also of the South African Communist Party but what is the substance to the rhetoric?

"In the near future we will have a market economy. The construction of a new socialist project must accept the market as the system of economic regulation.

"The public and co-operative sector must establish their economic superiority over the private sector through real economic competition. This means by being more efficient."

The Marxist platform sees its future in terms of building an alliance with the mass democratic movement. "This movement is the only obstacle to a new dictatorship. It is too weak to take power itself, but it can prevent dictatorship."

At this point, however, the emerging independent trade union movement and others have generally aligned themselves with the Democratic Russia bloc, the broad coalition of non-communist forces that has spearheaded the drive for democracy within the Russian Federation.

Democratic Russia was formed in the build up to the March 1990 elections for all the major city and district councils as well as the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet. The Moscow Peoples' Front which had emerged as the most influential opposition grouping thrown up by the democratic ferment sparked by perestroika, pulled together the well-known independents who had broken with the Communist Party such as Yeltsin, Popov and Shobchak to form what was essentially an election campaign organisation that endorsed candidates for the more than 2 000 positions to be filled.

The bloc had limited infrastructure and no organisation or even contacts in vast areas of the Russian Federation. But because of the massive reaction against the Communist Party, Democratic Russia had great power and their endorsement was prized. Requests for endorsement came in from hundreds of candidates from across the federation. More than 200 candidates it endorsed were elected to the 800 places in the Russian parliament.

A critical strategic decision however was to concentrate efforts at the local city level. "Here are dormant democratic structures, let's take them over and democratise them." Gavril Popov was a national figure but chose to run for the Moscow City Soviet. Illya Zaslavski elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1989 ran at the district level in 1990. The "democratise from below" idea proved to be an inspired tactic. Democratic Russia supporters gained majorities in the city soviets of both major cities, Moscow and Leningrad. Popov, as soon as he was appointed chair of the Moscow City Soviet, immediately appointed the two key organisers of Demrussiya as his first deputies. The Moscow City Soviet had become a powerful organising base and de facto headquarters of the movement.

Yeltsin, like a number of important non-communist leaders, is not formally part of the Democratic Russia movement or any of its constituent parties, even though they continue to form his primary electoral infras-

tructure. "This does create a very awkward situation, because it means that they are not accountable," acknowledges a Democratic Russia activist, "but I consider it to be a transitional phase. You must realise that the concept "party" has very negative connotations here in the Soviet Union. It works for Yeltsin to be above party politics."

Yeltsin recognised early on that new rules for the political game had been thrown up by transition. While Gorbachev manoeuvres, Boris Yeltsin talks to the common people. No serious Soviet leader will ever again be able to ignore the common people.

"What's the main result of perestroika?" asks Adam Mishin in the *Moscow News* of May 12. He answers: "The swamp has been stirred to life, air bubbles are coming up to the surface and strange noises are being heard. 'Hi there, swamp creatures! You mustn't live like this!' And the echo reverberates, 'Like this...'"

If there is one certainty about transition, it is that it amplifies the contradictions and crises that precipitated it. The Pandora's Box is opened and releases not only the capacity for co-operation and compromise but also the ethnic chauvinism, base prejudices and violent urges repressed in the soul of the people.

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### **'No serious Soviet leader will ever again be able to ignore the common people'**

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The despair overshadows the possibilities of the new. This was true in Moscow. It is also true in Johannesburg. People have less hope in the future now than in the darkest days of repression.

The overwhelming memory of my brief visit was of democracy being built. It is the glasnost which we still have to attain here with our closed political cultures.

I was often humbled by the seriousness with which some people took the democratic project. I was also stimulated and inspired. And I am glad Adam Mishin concluded his article in the way he did. "Surprisingly", he writes, "hope is still alive. Emaciated and shaky, it's still there, stirring within me. And I am thrilled."

The Soviet Union like our country is emerging out of the long dark winter. The creatures of the night still prowl in the thickets. The trees are bare. The weather report warns of possible further frost. But the grass is growing again. □

David Schmidt is the regional director of Idasa in the Western Cape

## Pretoria flocks to land debate

Idasa and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) in Pretoria were joint hosts of a recent evening seminar on the land question.

About 300 people representing all political persuasions attended the meeting which was addressed by Prof Andre van der Walt (Unisa), Ms Aninka Claassens (Centre for Applied Legal Studies) Mr Paul Farrel (NP MP) and Prof Albie Sachs.

Farrel highlighted the fact that all land expropriated by the government in the past, and still in its possession, would be made available to "farmers of colour" on very reasonable terms, with the help of an advisory commission.

Claassens argued that there are values common to both black and white communities which could be used as criteria for the redistribution of land.

Prof Sachs said he believed a complete change of government in South Africa would occur in the next year or two. The current government was spending much time and effort on redrafting legislation which will, as a matter of course, be changed, he said. This would happen because the government had not sought to consult as broadly as possible with those most directly affected by the legislation.

The majority of the questions raised were directed to Farrel, and this confirmed to us the importance of giving people the opportunity to speak directly to the legislators; and of the significance of the kind of meeting which focuses on current debates.

Kerry Harris  
Regional Co-ordinator

## A new director in Jhb

**B**orn in Lydenburg but raised in Atteridgeville, Pretoria, former UDF leader Titus Mafolo has more than paid his dues to "the struggle". But he says his move to Idasa, as regional director in Johannesburg, is just another part of this process.

A year after matriculating in 1976 he was detained for two months, the first of several spells in detention without trial over the next 10 years.

During the late '70s and early '80s Titus helped organise a range of activities in Pretoria's townships, from candle-making and water-drilling projects to establishing and editing a community newspaper.

In 1984 he was appointed the Pretoria and Northern Transvaal co-ordinator of the UDF's million signature campaign and in 1985 he became treasurer for the Transvaal.

In 1990 he served as the Mass Democratic Movement's link with the bantustans and met with all the homeland leaders except Chief Buthelezi and Lucas Mangope.

Like certain other new Idasa staff members, Titus



Titus Mafolo

has encountered some criticism for joining the institute. He offers the following as the reasons for his decision:

"Joining Idasa is a challenge in more ways than one. Firstly, there are those who may think one is abandoning the ongoing process of building and nurturing democratic structures that have played a crucial role in bringing about political change in our country.

"But you can bet your boots that people who have spent half their lives struggling and fighting for a non-racial democracy - and building the necessary structures for that purpose - will never jump out of the trenches. We have so internalised this process that without it we would feel as if an important organ of the body had been removed.

"Secondly, there may be a belief that work in an organ-

isation like Idasa is less important. Incorrect. Idasa is a product of the struggles and sacrifices of our people everywhere, but particularly in the townships and villages.

"Idasa, being a product of the turbulent 1980s, has, through its tireless work, booked itself a central seat on the transition bus that is taking us to the new era of democracy and political tolerance.

"As a facilitator and educator, Idasa must help free us of fear, mistrust, intolerance and suspicion. It can do that effectively if its staff is involved in the day to day activities of the people, so that there is no artificial divide between the struggle of our people against apartheid (which is still alive and kicking hard!) and Idasa's work.

"Idasa is well positioned not only to facilitate discussions and debates on important questions facing us, but also on setting in motion a process whereby disadvantaged people are developed so that they can also take part in the construction of the road to democracy."

Welcome on board Titus!

## Vyandelike verlede moet bely word

**A**frikaners en swart Suid-Afrikaners moet 'n sleutel in hul gemeenskaplike verlede vind sodat die deur tot 'n ware nuwe Suid-Afrika kan oopgaan, volgens dr Beyers Naudé.

Sonder 'n belydenis oor hul vyandelike verlede uit dié twee oorde, sal pogings tot versoening faal, sê dr Beyers. "En die belydenis moet opgevolg word deur konkrete dade."

By 'n onlangse openbare vergadering in Parow oor versoening,

gereël deur Idasa, het dr Naudé en aartsbiskop Desmond Tutu saamgestem dat rekonsiliasie ontmoontlik is tot tyd en wyl Afrikaners hul apartheidsverlede behoorlik verwerk het.

Die waarheid, belydenis en vergifnis is noodsaaklike elemente van dié proses, sê die kerkleiers. 'n Mens kan nie betekenisvol om vergifnis vra voor jy 'n grondige begrip van jou misstappe het nie. Daarom is dit van uiterste belang dat

veral blanke Suid-Afrikaners meer te wete moet kom oor die onreg en pyn wat apartheid hul swart medeburgers besorg het.

Dr Beyers het gesê hul geskiedenis van konsentrasiekampe behoort Afrikaners uniek bevoeg te maak om die hartseer van apartheid te verstaan. Hoewel dit ontmoontlik is on ten volle restitusie te doen vir die onreg van apartheid, is dit belangrik dat Afrikaners dit tenminste teenoor swartmense erken.

Dr Johan Heyns, voormalige NG-moderator, het gesê apartheid het op wanpraktyke uitgeloop en restitusie was noodsaaklik.

Aartsbiskop Tutu het gesê daar is geen plek vir eiegeregtigheid in Suid-Afrika nie, almal kom onder die oordeel. Die waarheid is wat alle Suid-Afrikaners moet nastreef.

Ronel Scheffer  
Media Direkteur



## Defenceless Driefontein scores a victory over tardy police

**The SAP regularly protest that they are falsely accused of inaction by communities that fall victim to violence. However, this article – on the fate of a small community terrorised by a political/criminal gang – bears out claims of police ineffectiveness.**

By Charles Talbot

On the last night of March this year the peace was rudely shattered in the small community of Driefontein on the Natal North Coast. Khela "Wise-man" Ntshingila was the victim of an attack which left his home almost completely destroyed. This signified the start of a forced recruitment campaign by "renegade" Inkatha Freedom Party activists.

The Driefontein community, which includes both ANC and IFP supporters, responded to this crisis by contacting the SAP and hoping that the perpetrators would be brought to book. This was not the case, and the violence just seemed to escalate. The Community Conflict Monitoring Service (CCMS) operating from the Idasa office in Durban was asked to assist in trying to deal with the problem.

During the ensuing weeks and until mid-May, the community was witness to four murders and numerous other offences including kidnapping, arson and intimidation. An attempt was made to deal with the problem through the political parties within the sentiment of the January "Peace Accord" between the ANC and IFP leadership. A meeting was organised, addressed by prominent local leadership of the ANC and the IFP; both spoke out strongly against this violence.

But the violence continued. On May 16, CCMS staff along with members of the Black Sash and the Community Research Unit (CRU) visited the Umhlali police station. This visit was as a result of the community's ongoing complaints of police inaction. Having spoken to the station commander and members of the Central Investigation Department (CID) it was established that 13 vio-

lence-related dockets emanating from the Driefontein area had been opened. (One of the cases for attempted murder had been thrown out of court for lack of evidence.)

This didn't add up – so much smoke and so little fire?

With the assistance of a major agricultural interest in the area, Idasa was able to bus 98 "complainants and witnesses" to a neutral venue where a legal team from the University of Natal, Durban's Legal Aid Centre and members of the Legal Resource Centre were on hand to process the complaints. This information was compiled in a memorandum which was handed over to the police.

The memorandum has resulted in the opening of a further 35 dockets. (Nearly three times as many as recorded by the local police station.) The investigation was carried out by the Durban-based Unrest Investigation Unit, who also took over seven dockets from the Umhlali CID, and another four from the Tongaat CID. Of all the cases reported, one individual, Pasha Khuzwayo, has been implicated 19 times and his brother Musa 15 times. In fact, Pasha Khuzwayo was the person whose attempted murder charge had been withdrawn due to lack of evidence.

In a matter of two weeks 14

people have been arrested and at least three have been refused bail. Peace has since returned to Driefontein.

That first attack on March 31 was allegedly carried out by Pasha Khuzwayo and his associates; the same people have been charged with the attempted murder of Musa Cebisa on 1 April, as well as the assault and intimidation of Rose Ntibane on the same day.

Until the intervention of Idasa and the action of the SAP Unrest Investigation Unit, the community was left in the hands of this well-armed political/criminal gang.

There are three theories as to why this situation was allowed to develop:

- In these times of political violence a policeman's job is made much more difficult.

In some cases this may be true, but in Driefontein both the ANC and the IFP in the community were united on the issue of stopping this violence in Driefontein. There was an obvious willingness to co-operate with the police.

- Many people from Driefontein believed that the staff of the Umhlali police station may have taken a political decision to support the perpetrators of this violence.

According to this theory, the reason cases never developed into prosecutions and the apparent impunity with which

these criminals were allowed to operate, was perceived to be the result of a hidden political agenda of certain individuals within the police force. Members of the community complained of the absence of any follow-up investigation. This theory is supported by the fact that a police officer based in Umhlali told members of the community that they should

try and report their problems to the SAP in Durban because the cases would be shelved in Umhlali.

- The third theory would merely be to say that the Umhlali police responded unprofessionally.

In discussions with a local police officer the concerned community leaders were advised to chase this small group out of the area. At later meetings it was alleged that the same officer advised the leaders to burn down the houses of the gangsters, and later to form a secret group to kill these criminals. The leaders argued that this was a police matter and declined.

For whatever reason, the Umhlali police were ineffective in dealing with the crisis in Driefontein, and this illustrates the need for the creation of mechanisms which will make justice more available to the general public. These mechanisms will need to play a dual function of building community trust through increasing police accountability to the communities. The violence will continue for as long as the police are perceived as political players and not as public servants. □

Charles Talbot is a CCMS Co-ordinator in Durban.

# Civic forum to back up democratic Durban

**A**t a recent conference in Durban 260 representatives from some 40 organisations agreed to go ahead with a civic campaign to create a democratic city in the greater Durban area

The DFR (Durban functional area), as it has become known, has as its core the city of Durban but stretches north, south and west to encompass some 3,5 million people and numerous municipalities and local authorities. Parts of it fall within KwaZulu.

The representatives, all dele-

gates to a Conference for a Democratic City, heard Khehla Shubane of the Soweto People's Delegation outline the formation of the Wits Metropolitan Chamber. Spelling out the challenges of the Chamber, he also pointed out the way that civic groups had been stretched to match the resources of the existing municipalities in expertise and staff resources.

In Durban, delegates were cautious about such a broad negotiating forum. They determined, through plenary discussion and a series of commissions

and task forces, on a set of demands and responses to existing initiatives within the city.

**T**he major agreement, however, was to call on organisations with an interest in civic affairs to become subscribers to a "Campaign for a Democratic City" document which is circulating at present. Subscription to this document, which spells out principles and objectives, will entitle organisations to a seat in a civic forum. This forum will steer the campaign and give greater strength to civic groups.

Amongst the demands made by delegates at the conference was a call for training in local government administration. This is a relatively new demand but is becoming increasingly important as more and more cities and towns establish negotiating forums and local arrangements for governing their areas.

A report on the conference and copies of the "Campaign for a Democratic City" document are available from the Idasa office in Durban.

**Paul Graham**  
Regional Director

## Different priorities at Port Alfred

**M**y overall impression was the extent of the "local government debate" that the seminar took on board. Inevitably there were more questions than answers. That the seminar fell short on "solutions" was not necessarily a criterion for its "success".

Discussion, debate, dialogue between as many people as possible at grassroots level to inform the political strategies of the different organisations, more modestly, were Idasa's stated objectives.

Idasa regional director Max Mamase put matters frankly: "Fundamental restructuring is not merely deracialising and democratising. That would simply be Africanising (as in Zimbabwe). Fundamental restructuring addresses the question of the legitimacy of the negotiating process." His remarks could well have summed up the view of the civics - but did it find any resonance among

**In June Idasa's Eastern Cape office hosted a local government seminar in Port Alfred which attracted municipal officials and civics from Grahamstown, Bathurst and Kenton-on-Sea. Civics' representatives also came from Alexandria, Alicedale, Paterson and Riebeeck-East.**

**Speakers at the event tackled issues such as local government negotiations, delimitation, the autonomy of local government, housing policy and training and administration. One of the participants, DR NORMAN LEVY, who is currently setting up a local government institute at the University of Natal, gives his impressions of the event.**

the spokespersons for the (white) municipalities? It would be wrong to suggest that they did not, but priorities were different. The civic representatives stressed the need for legitimacy, the spokespersons for the municipal authorities, financial viability.

More questions were asked than answered and because priorities were dif-

ferent, it was not always clear to the civics that sufficient focus was being given to the need to redress the inequalities of the apartheid city. All parties showed a willingness to talk but the framework of understanding was heavily divergent. That is not to say that tough questions were avoided or that exchanges weren't frank. How to determine a capacity or a tax base to pay for needed services? Providing the basic services of electricity, sewerage, water and refuse removal was elementary enough but how and who was to ensure this?

Boundaries were likewise a major problem; where did a town begin and end?

Commuter patterns, class factors, political and social factors all needed to be addressed. Gravitational studies weren't enough. Boundary disputes were serious enough to break metropolitan authorities like Johannesburg.



Delegates at the Port Alfred seminar

# Interim structures urgent for Pretoria groups

## Different priorities

From Page 18

If the seminar was short on solutions it was because the legacy of the apartheid city had left deep scars and big gaps and not entirely for want of ideas: the functions and powers of local authorities and the provision of new legal structures were all contentious matters still to be settled, as were the provision of health, policing and transport.

**W**hat system of local authority government was appropriate to our politics? Should we conceive of a local authority structure in the British mould? How is the executive constituted? Do we want a mayor, indirectly elected by councillors or by the people? Should we have a ward system that is racially divisive?

Then there was the whole question of staffing and training: affirmative action to overcome the 100 percent shortage of treasurers and double that shortage of town clerks. These questions were put by Mark Swilling of Planact in his keynote address. But others took them up too. Swilling also spelt out the strengths and weaknesses of the local government negotiation process: on the one hand there was substantial reconciliation of people previously kept apart, "bottom-up" change, community involvement, representative democracy and mandates. On the other hand there was the serious problem of the whole service system, the "culture of boycott" (a "weakness" not necessarily shared) and the incapacity of the civics to match the resources of established bodies to manage the process of change. This was a theme taken up again and again by the representatives of the civics.

On the subject of human resource development, basic training, professional public management training and affirmative action was needed - not only in local government but to develop people for the professions.

Workshops on negotiations, local dynamics, city boundaries and human resource development extended the discussion on these matters. But ultimately there remained more questions and a need to talk again. This was the view of one of the Grahamstown town councillors: "We don't discuss things of common interest. Since 1988 (when he was elected) there had never been a joint discussion with civics. There was a need to set up a communications forum in the region and this was a good start." I agree. □

Idasa and the Community Law Centre (of the Institute for Public Interest Law and Research) held a very successful local government conference for greater Pretoria at the end of May.

We called this conference to give all political groupings, communities and individuals the opportunity to air their views, be informed and start preparing themselves for local level negotiations on future local government structures in the area. An equally important objective was the bringing together of people on an equal footing by independent and neutral facilitators.

We were delighted to have participation from the full political spectrum, including the civics and government institutions such as the Department of Planning and Provincial Affairs and other groups such as Planact, Groundswell, the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the National Energy Council.

Helen Zille, a consultant to the Cape Town City Council, and someone with many years of experience in facilitation, chaired the conference. The two main inputs were provided by academics Khehla Shubane (Centre for Policy Studies, Wits) and Chris Heymans (Development Bank). Responses and political input were given by Pretoria-based "major players" representing the ANC, Democratic Party, Pretoria City Council (NP) and the Civic Association of the

Southern Transvaal. The CP, Inkatha, the PAC and the SA Communist Party were also invited to give input, but for a number of reasons, did not do so.

Contributions were also

it is imperative that players are on an equal footing in all deliberations.

During group discussions and the ensuing plenary - eight small groups met to focus on the implications of



Chris Heymans of the Development Bank speaks at the Pretoria conference.

made by major players from other regions, who outlined the paths taken towards local government negotiations in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

Themes which emerged strongly throughout the conference included that the present system(s) of local government cannot continue, and must be transformed; this negotiation process would have to take place concurrently with, and be informed by, negotiations on the national level. Each region would have to find a structure suitable for its particular needs, and each may undergo a process which develops quite differently from any other.

The process (as an interim measure), rather than the product, is where the stress should be laid until such time as national negotiations give clearer direction to the debate; and

input for Pretoria - there was consensus that negotiations on interim structures dealing with immediate issues should proceed as a matter of urgency. A specific proposal emerged in the plenary and was unanimously accepted - Idasa and the CLC were requested to take the negotiation process a step further through canvassing the establishment of a Pretoria Forum. The objective of this forum would be to attempt to create an acceptable process in which all players and interested parties may freely participate. This forum should not be seen as a counter action of any sort, but rather as complementary to any initiatives already undertaken by the Pretoria City Council and the civic associations of greater Pretoria. □

Kerry Harris  
Regional Co-ordinator

## Breaking down more barriers in the E Cape

**W**hat might have been just another Idasa scholars weekend broke new ground when 40 students met at the Tsitsikama Lodge in May.

Among the group, drawn largely from the prefect bodies of previously "white" schools in Port Elizabeth and from the SRCs of schools in the local black townships, was a school-girl from Port Elizabeth's most conservative Afrikaans school in the heart of Algoa Park – the PE stronghold of the Conservative Party.

In addition, the weekend's agenda (drawn up by the scholars themselves) made no attempt to skirt the sensitive educational and political issues which have been stifled in secondary schools for far too long.

Whether it was a discussion of the crisis in education, a debate about a single education system, the one-act play each



PE students: working things out together.

group had to produce, or the rules of volleyball, the students' enthusiasm never flagged.

They proved how effortlessly they could transcend the problems created by the past and how little fear, and how much trust, can be generated when the political matters in our lives are confronted head on in honest and open debate.

A senior Afrikaans teacher, Ms Lauraine Nordin, who joined in the weekend's activi-

ties said it had been fascinating to see how the initial suspicion and tension had given way to open discussion.

For herself, the willingness of black students to talk about their experiences and frustrations and to admit to their own mistakes had been a pleasant surprise.

"I was more or less prepared for attacks on myself, because I represent the regime, I represent the Afrikaner, and I was

pleasantly surprised to see that they were opening their discussions, that they were also prepared to listen to me. That I found very interesting."

Commenting on a conversation she had had with the lone pupil from Algoa Park, Ms Nordin said she had noticed how the other students' understanding had helped her dispel many of her fears.

"I spoke to her again at the end of the weekend and asked her outright: 'Is jy nou nog so bang soos wat jy Vrydag-middag was?'"

"She said: 'Nee, ek is nie meer so bang vir hulle nie, want ek sien hulle nou as gewone mense en ek sien hulle nou ook as vriende.' That means so much, because I think it has opened up a whole new world to her, and hopefully she'll discuss this with the others." □

Keith Wattrus  
Regional Director

## Thoughts from a passing foreigner

**O**n our journey we heard this somewhere: "Foreigners who spend a week here write a book about South Africa; those who spend a month here write an article; those who live here for a year keep their mouths shut." Our visit was brief, but it was far more powerful than classrooms and lectures, and we are grateful to Idasa for arranging our programme.

We had been quite affected by the 24 meetings with 35 consultants focusing on apartheid from various perspectives – journalists, politicians, theologians, church leaders, activists, scholars, public servants and others in human services.

We visited people living in the townships of Manenberg and Soweto; we stayed with families in Mamelodi for three nights and worshipped at All Saints Parish. Gracious white

**A psychology professor from North Park College, Chicago DR HADDON KLINGBERG recently visited South Africa with five students who had raised their own funds for the trip. Idasa's Pretoria office arranged their itinerary. Here are some of his impressions.**

families hosted us in their cities.

It is natural for us to reflect on South Africa since our return home. But we now view ourselves and our own country in a new light. America has its wonders and problems, and we have become more aware of both.

We agree that the best part of our trip was the people – "coloured", black, white – especially those who opened their thoughts, hearts and homes to us. We wish we could be more like many we met.

In a township I interviewed a black student and had tea with his family in their home. They appeared both stunned and joy-

ful when I invited the young man to apply for admission to North Park. We are now processing the application, hoping that he will come to our college in Chicago.

**T**he family told me that this offer is a great gift, and I tried to explain that it would be a great gift for us also: the chance to have someone from South Africa stay with us for a time, help us feel our own need for understanding across barriers, help us rethink our own self-satisfaction, and kindle respect and affection for those whose pilgrimages can teach us so much. □

## PEOPLE IN POLITICS

*Need information about the political environment?*

*Trying to design a seminar or conference?  
Looking for partners with whom to work or negotiate?*

Shelagh Gastrow, author of *Who's Who in South African Politics* is providing a service through Idasa for people and organisations committed to ensuring that South Africa becomes a democracy in which all points of view can be articulated.

**For more information contact Shelagh Gastrow at (031) 304-8893.**

# Useful insights crucial to land policy

By Anne Vaughan

**A HARVEST OF DISCONTENT: The Land Question in South Africa**, Michael de Klerk (editor), Idasa, 274 pages, R 25,00.

This book, ably edited by Mike de Klerk, comprehensively reflects the themes discussed at the Idasa workshop on the land question held in the Western Cape early in 1990. Despite rapid political change which has brought about some substantial shifts in perspectives on the land question, the book remains relevant. It contains valuable original work on the ecological dimension of land use, and on the tangled plethora of legal rights in land consequent upon apartheid legislation. The bulk of the book consists in sections on ownership and tenure and production options.

The strength of these contributions lies in their depiction of some of the contemporary realities which will shape future policy. However, the book does not take sufficient cognisance of the way perspectives on the land question are shaped by economic and class interests. Nor does it deal coherently with recent and emergent land policies which derive from those interests.

In her introduction to the arguments in Cross and Letsoala's papers, Claassens says that these authors counterpose "the traditional land ethic which holds that everyone has a right to land" to the Western property ethic of individual accumulation. This juxtaposition is helpful in explaining contradiction and conflict. What is not helpful is an implicit (perhaps inadvertent) conflation of opposing land values with specific empirical realities ("black" and "white" rural areas) and with racial groups.

The point that is missed in this unfortunate conflation - which is crudely evident in Letsoala's piece and which hovers uncomfortably close in Cross's wide-ranging analysis of tenurial forms - is that these ethics are thoroughly interpenetrated in the "black" and "white" rural areas. Cross shows some recognition of the interpenetration in her account of communal patterns of occupation on black freehold land. Letsoala is inhibited from any such perceptions by her romanticisation of indigenous forms of tenure which appreciates neither the wide potential for corruption of tribal authorities institutionalised by the apartheid state, nor the marginalisation of women through deeply entrenched tribal patriarchy.

How are these land ethics thoroughly interpenetrated? The impetus for freehold is



strong in parts of the bantustans, particularly where commercial crop production has taken strong hold. In the white areas, on the other hand, the traditional ethic is vibrantly present, and has underpinned rural people's resistance to removal and dispossession (Claassens).

Intensifying social differentiation has become a characteristic feature of the bantustans. This tends to be masked by generalised accounts of the destruction and degradation caused by state policy and capitalism (examples of such accounts are scattered throughout the book).

A consequence is that conflicting land demands derived from emergent class positions cannot be identified and understood.

The tendency to associate land ethics with the rural racial divide can only further obfuscate the economic values and priorities which underpin different land demands. Claassens notes that the chapters on ownership and tenure "focus on the social and political aspects of the land, rather than its productive value". This abstraction of productive value from a consideration of tenurial forms is part of the problem. It is when land becomes commercially productive that a new dynamic begins to inform attitudes and transactions.

**W**hat contribution does the book make to an understanding of rural development policies and ideologies?

By way of historical contextualisation, we have several potted accounts (Cross, Letsoala and Cooper) outlining segregationist land policy - the Land Acts, betterment schemes, the Tomlinson Commission. There is also an enumeration - illustrated by graphic historical vignettes - of some of the "wars, laws, trickery and physical brutality" which constituted the process of conquest and dispossession (Claassens).

But what about contemporary policies? Here there is nothing really coherent. However, if the insights from Marcus and Cooper are put together, a reasonable - if

rudimentary - sketch of state policies in the 1980s and 1990s can be derived.

Marcus homes in on "freehold land tenure which goes hand in glove with promoting individual small holders" as the key feature of contemporary policy. This strategy is associated with the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) which Marcus calls "the major 'development' arm of the state", and it represents a definitive shift away from the emphasis on large-scale business-intensive projects previously sponsored by the DBSA. Cooper comments briefly on the DBSA's farmer support programme, which he criticises because it is "targeted at richer farmers, and does not do much about starvation in the bantustans". According to Marcus, the development strategies of business are essentially the same as those of the state, except that business is willing to go somewhat further by incorporating blacks thoroughly into the market in land.

The composite policy picture is, however, open to criticism because it simplifies and underestimates current complexities.

Responses to the release of the White Paper have illustrated that it is too simple to identify the DBSA with the state, and to make only a quantitative distinction between the policy line advocated by the state and by business. There are elements within the state which are deeply entrapped in an old racist paternalism and which cling relentlessly to bureaucratic control. These are the origins of the White Paper. Both the DBSA and business (in the shape of the Urban Foundation) have expressed extreme disquiet at the absence of creative development initiatives in the White Paper. The policy of encouraging and sustaining small commercial farmers as promoted by the DBSA and business should be seen as an element within a strongly emergent neo-liberal economic paradigm.

The DBSA has been a locus of development research and practice since the early 1980s, as illustrated in the chapters co-authored by DBSA personnel (Vink and Kassier on Agricultural Policy and the South African State, and Van Zyl and Van Rooyen on Agricultural Production in South Africa). DBSA research should not be underestimated even though one may often wish to reject the accompanying paradigms and ideologies.

The lacunae of analysis notwithstanding, the book contains information and insights crucial to future policy formulation. □

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## Bond's central theme panned?

Patrick Bond of Yeoville, Johannesburg, writes:

**T**hanks for the attention you gave to my book, "Commanding Heights and Community Control". Just briefly, I would answer a few of Pieter le Roux's (reviewer) objections as follows:

He is by-and-large right that the book gives an appearance of eclecticism, and like him, the Trotskyist left are beginning to tackle me on this. However, there is a central theme that he didn't take seriously (though I think I state it quite clearly in various places): the financial system is the circuit of capital where the economic crisis is displaced, though not resolved, and that creates both power and vulnerability and hence the most portentous prospects for community control.

Because the productive circuit has been so badly neglected these past years, it is now the financial circuit (the SA Reserve Bank, Perm, DBSA, World Bank and others) which seems to have adopted an unusually large responsibility for leading both the economic restructuring and the formulation of a social contract. My critique of these econocrats' export-led vision was, I hope, the most convincing section of the work.

If I may say so, while I find Le Roux's own thinking on social democracy very interesting and rigorous at an abstract level, the current crisis of social democracy and the barriers to social contract formation (here or anywhere) are left unexplored. My work sets out to confront these head on, notwithstanding the risk of taking a normative position outside the realm of acceptable dialogue.

So it is with:

- inflation (where in fact I do make clear that a Keynesian reflation involving social welfare guarantees would be needed to expand the safety net to protect the poor from price increases, not to mention price controls on staple goods);

- delinking (where my position is not substantively different than Gunder Frank's historical argument, as well as Samir Amin's or even the Economic Commission on Africa's current stand on global markets, notwithstanding tiresome comparisons to Albania)

- a theory of overaccumulation (still, I think, quite a fresh approach to SA, having only been applied by Clarke in 1978 and also now by Meth), to which I add some rela-

## Solid boost to women's cause

By Paul Graham

**A** package of six workshops for women has just been published by Idasa. The idea for them came from a conference Idasa ran in Harare for women in the days when it was very naughty to talk to the ANC and people could lose their jobs and their reputations for doing so.

While the political situation has seemingly changed a lot since then, the struggle for the equality of women and men has not made any substantial progress. So the publication of a workshop guidebook, posters and pictures entitled "Women in a new South Africa" is very relevant.

The production team of Jane Jackson, Barbara Hutton, Bridget Pitt, Shauna Westcott and Welma Odendaal have put together an attractive manual for workshop facilitators which looks at "The Double Shift", "Women at Work", "Women and Violence", "Women and Health", "Women and Education" and "Women and Law". Each session is laid out so that the workshop outline is clear and so that a facilitator can guide a group through discussion, drama, small and large group work and a variety of group exercises or learning games.

Using an educational model based on Freirean codes - simple line drawn pictures and short typical stories or anecdotes - the manual allows women the chance to learn from one another. Although each session stands alone, the producers do have the intention that they form a whole. On their timing the total time for all six sessions is 14 hours - and could comfortably fit into a two-day residential course or 6 evening sessions.

It is a simple and solid contribution to the struggle of women to free themselves. At the beginning of the manual they thank "the former education and training officers of Fedsaw and the current ET officers of the ANC Women's League" and the whole kit has a sense of having sprung out of already tried education experiences with women.

It is not a package to be bought and kept on a shelf but is "user-friendly" in a number

of ways. I hope it will be used and that those who use it will write to Idasa to talk about how they have done so.

When you get a copy there are some small warnings that might help.

The timing, although comprehensively laid out with each step in each workshop identified, is probably overly optimistic. Expect some steps to take longer, particularly if you are working with a larger group.

If you plan to go through all the workshops in sequence, spend some time imagining how they will go so that you can add your own creativity. They are a bit too similar in style and pace. At times the instructions have a persona of their own and facilitators will need to rework these sections.

In the workshop on "Women and Violence" details are given about Rape Crisis in the Western Cape. Those using it in other areas will need to research what support organisations there are in their area.

There are some disappointments. In six short workshops only certain things can be achieved. Each of us will have our own priorities. I would have liked to see the session on violence deal with political violence as well as personal violence; and the session on health to go beyond reproduction. Given the difficulties the country is facing, sessions which helped in bridging the barriers between women of different class and race and in learning about democracy would have been good. Perhaps the team will be able to build on this first effort with a second package.

Finally, I look forward to a programme which is accessible to men and women. My enthusiasm for this package (which is a model for what educational packages for a new South Africa can be) was tempered by the knowledge that those who wittingly and unwittingly contribute to "the heavy load" are excluded from the workshops.

*The package may be ordered (R14,66) from Idasa's Media Department at 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray, 7700 (Tel 021-473127).*

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tively original arguments about space and finance.

On Le Roux's final lines about social democracies' "great success": Jack Lewis has at least shown in a recent paper that the Western mixed economies are not all that he implies. Has he written anything that begins

to engage with such well-warranted scepticism? What does he make of the global slowdown in growth that began in the mid-1970s? I think overaccumulation theory may offer the best answers to the limits of Keynesianism, but if Le Roux has a different approach, I'd be interested to hear it. □

# 'n Bron van blanke hoop

Deur **Anthoni van Nieuwkerk**

**SOUTH AFRICA: MY VISION OF THE FUTURE** deur M G Buthelezi, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1990. 147 bladsye plus indeks.

**H**oofman Mangosuthu Buthelezi is waarskynlik die mees kontroversiële politieke leier in Suid-Afrika. Sy volgelinge – hoofsaaklik Zoeloes – beskou hom as 'n man van onkreukbare karakter en vaste beginsels; iemand wat die beste vir alle Suid-Afrikaners wil beding. Selfs blankes kyk deesdae met belangstelling, of ontsag, na Buthelezi en sy organisasie, Inkatha, se "gematigde" en "rigtinggewende" uitsprake.

As dit waar is dat 100 000 blankes reeds by Inkatha aangesluit het, dan kan dit heel waarskynlik aan die hand van twee faktore verstaan word: eerstens Buthelezi se uitgesproke verbintenis tot die kapitalistiese stelsel, en tweedens, die feit dat hy homself as 'n belangrike speler op die nasionale politieke toneel gevestig het.

Maar wat sê Buthelezi self? Hoe lyk sy politieke oortuigings, sy siening van die toekoms? "South Africa: My vision of the future", geskryf deur die hoofman self, kan miskien aan ons die geleentheid bied om meer van Buthelezi se politieke persoonlikheid te wete te kom.

Die boek bestaan uit agt hoofstukke, en dek onderwerpe soos: sanksies en disinvestering; kerk en politiek; die dood van apartheid; swart verdeeldheid; besigheid in Suid-Afrika; en 'n aanval op die ondersteuners van die bevrydingstryd (die "forces of darkness").

Die boek maak dit duidelik dat Buthelezi nie ten gunste van sanksies en disinvestering is nie; so ook opponeer hy boikotte en isolasie, die sosialistiese ideologie, politieke priesters, en apartheid. Waarvoor staan hy? die boek maak dit duidelik:

*My vision is of an all-embracing government of the future which will cut across all barriers; a government which will have what the Americans so beautifully call checks and balances.*

As Buthelezi deel van 'n post-apartheid regering in Suid-Afrika kon wees, dan sal hy onder andere:

- Poog om rekonsiliasie en eenheid teweeg te bring
- Demokratiese en verantwoordelike leiers rondom hom vergader om hom te help regeer
- 'n Regstaat (bill of rights) institusioneeliseer
- Vrye ondernemerskap bevorder om sodoende ekonomiese groei en werksgeleenthede teweeg te bring
- Suid-Afrika laat inskakel by die internasionale ekonomie
- Pan-Afrikanisme bevorder deur middel van ekonomiese hulp aan Afrika



Hoofman Buthelezi: kontroversiële gematigde.

- eerlikheid, common sense en patriotisme bevorder, "...because I want to see a happy South Africa in which people are proud of their achievements".

**D**it is opvallend dat 'n paar sleutelwoorde deurgaans in die boek gebruik word, en die basis vorm van 'n paar onderwerpe waarna telkens teruggekeer word. Die woorde met 'n positiewe konnotasie sluit in Westerse demokrasie, vrye ondernemerskap, en kapitalisme. Die woorde met 'n negatiewe konnotasie sluit in sosialisme, revolusie/revolusionêre, en eenparty-staat. In 'n sekere sin kan hierdie politieke terme as Buthelezi se hoof- of mees-teroortuigings beskou word. Dit vorm die kern van die politieke oortuigingstelsel (of, om 'n mooi Potchefstroomse woord te gebruik, sy lewens- en wêreldbeskouing).

Wanneer Buthelezi die politiek van die land ontleed, werk sy "negatiewe" oortuigings oortyd. Volgens hom is daar tans 'n stryd aan die gang vir die "minds of

people", en die stryd word gekenmerk deur twee kante: diegene wat 'n sosialistiese eenparty-staat nastreef en diegene wat 'n veelparty kapitalistiese demokrasie nastreef.

Eersgenoemde gebruik geweld om hul doelstellings te bereik (maar faal hopeloos daarmee), en laasgenoemde gebruik Westerse demokratiese waardes. Dit word gaandeweg deur die boek duidelik dat Buthelezi 'n eenvoudige kognitiewe beeld van die politiek en konflik in die land aanwend om sin te maak van die realiteit. Sy beeld van die vyand sentreer rondom die woorde revolusionêr, sosialisties, totalitêr. En dit is nie moeilik om die skakel tussen "die vyand" en die ANC raak te sien nie.

Die vlag van geweldpleging in onlangse jare kan miskien in hierdie konteks verstaan word. Buthelezi se groot bekommernis is dat hy en sy party die gevaar loop om uit die politieke herstruktureringproses uitgerangeer te word. En die lokomotief wat hom van die spore probeer loop, identifiseer hy as die sosialistiese, revolusionêre ANC. Volgens hom probeer die ANC hard om die mite van 'n tweekantige

onderhandelingsstafel te bevorder.

En hy vra: "Where does this leave Inkatha, the PAC, Black Consciousness organisations, the DP, the CP, various other black, Indian and Coloured political parties and numerous interest groups already in existence...?" Buthelezi verwag dat die ANC en hul bondgenote alles gaan probeer om die mededingers vir mag (soos hierbo genoem) te elimineer en te marginaliseer. Dit is in hierdie konteks wat Buthelezi se aanwending van Inkatha as instrument van etniese mobilisering gesien moet word.

'n Finale indruk van die boek is dat hard probeer word om 'n beeld van Buthelezi te skep as iemand wat goedbedoeld alles vir almal wil wees. Dit herinner 'n mens aan die sagte-fokus advertensies in pienk en blou wat soms in verbruikerstydskrifte verskyn. Die boek is nie die beste voorbeeld van objektiewe ontleding nie. □

**Anthoni van Nieuwkerk** is 'n navorser by die SA Instituut vir Internasionale Aangeleenthede.

# 'I'm still shocked about how little we knew'

**Much has been written about the "failure" of socialism in Eastern Europe, and particularly in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). On a recent visit to Germany, Idasa's KEITH WATTRUS learnt about the reasons from the horse's mouth – a veteran GDR diplomat, Dr Hans-Georg Schleicher.**

There is no simple answer to questions about the failure of the socialist experiment in East Germany, according to Dr Hans-Georg Schleicher, a former GDR Ambassador to Zimbabwe. "And I would be very sceptical of anyone who said they have one," he said. In fact, he pointed out that serious discussion of the issue was still limited in the former GDR, it being overshadowed by current political events.

As little as two years ago, the GDR had seemed to be a functioning society; yet now new facts and information about that period have surfaced. "We as diplomats were better informed, but I'm still shocked to realise how little we knew," was the former ambassador's lament. Schleicher, a GDR diplomat for 20 years, was also his country's representative in Namibia at the time of the implementation of UN Resolution 435.

As a consequence of the unification – because he had been a Communist Party ideologue – he has now lost his position, not being "trusted" with holding office in the new dispensation.

He could not point to any "road to Damascus" experience in coming to understand the shortcomings of the GDR. Since he started school in 1949, things had seemed to improve, although he was ever conscious of the insufficient supply of consumer goods. "And there was always the condition of social justice which justified acceptance of harsh conditions," said Schleicher.

From abroad, as a diplomat, the GDR had always looked "nice and stable". But during the restive 1980s he had become more critical, especially after Gorbachev's "perestroika" appeared to be having no impact in the GDR.

"So what failed? Socialism? Did we have a socialist society in the GDR?" Dr Schleicher asked. He put forward four possible explanations, but we were left with the overriding impression that the reasons were manifold and the problem had to be seen in its complexity.

His first explanation dealt with historical aspects. The Soviet model (which incidentally had been deformed by Stalin's despotism) became the paradigm from which Eastern countries could not escape. Among East Germans existed the vain belief that their country would become more powerful economically than West Germany. "We failed

to understand the capacity and ability of capitalism to develop," Dr Schleicher noted.

The lack of democracy had been the biggest failure of the system in the GDR, he said. "A society cannot be implemented against the will of the people."

The system had become a regulative one which operated purely on a top-down basis. "I remain convinced that Honniger (former GDR president) and others really thought that the policies they were implementing were the best for the people of the GDR; but they should have asked them!" declared Dr Schleicher.

He believed that it was the persistent claim that socialism created a harmonious society that prevented people from confronting the hidden problems within their society. Moreover, the information policy and the complete lack of free speech in the GDR served to hide more deeply all problematic issues. "One of the absolute weaknesses of socialism was that it was de-democratised; creativity, and the ability of people, was suppressed," complained Dr Schleicher. Even emerging environmental groups were considered a threat.

The GDR maintained great solidarity with Third World countries, making a name in Africa because of this support. The former ambassador referred to many cases of conscious and unselfish assistance given to Africa. "Yet, in retrospect," Dr Schleicher asked, "how could we prescribe to Africa when we had not yet succeeded at home?"

"Back at home, the principles in which we believed had been violated by totalitarianism," he continued. State force had become a substitute for social structures, which were no longer in evidence.

"How could the GDR collapse so easily amidst all the security structures in existence?" was a question put to Dr Schleicher. He replied "Simply put, these structures of power were all hollow and nobody could be called to rally around in defence when it was required of them."

Dr Schleicher's second explanation dealt with the role of the Communist Party. "There was never any question that the power of the state was in the hands of the Communist Party," he commented.

The party began as a centralistic cadre party working under conspiratorial conditions, from thence it developed into "so-called" democratic centralism. Even in the 1950s, when the extremes of Stalin were removed, its undemocratic nature continued; the party elite monopolised socialism as a kind of "thing" which it owned.

"The apparatus of the party created a picture which the leadership wanted to see; that of a healthy, happy and successful society," said Dr Schleicher. In his opinion, the best example of this was the Youth Festival in Berlin in 1989, when hundreds of millions of marks were spent on a huge propaganda exercise. "Just six months later the people went to the streets and toppled the leadership."

The third explanation for the failure of socialism in the GDR related to the East German economy. Dr Schleicher told of the disproportionate efforts and results. For the individual there was also no balance between results and his/her earnings in terms of purchasing power. "It is now clear that social security doesn't in itself provide stimulation," he remarked.

"To simply tag capitalism as a dying society was to ignore how successful that dying society has been. Our reliance on dirigism and voluntarism has, on the contrary, proved disastrous."

The last factor in the failure of socialism, according to Schleicher, was the strong personal relationships between East and West Germans. "This is also one of the most important factors: it was really only a matter of time before the two countries were united." □

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