

Race against time?

SA ignores racism at its peril

WE'VE seen it all: cries of 'kill the farmer, kill the boer', white snipers gunning down black protesters, black youths angrily chanting 'one settler, one bullet' at coloured marchers - just what are the prospects for a non-racial society in South Africa?

Is it simply the dream of idealists, a populist vote-catching slogan for political parties, the vain hope of white liberals - or is it an essential concept if we are to build a new and inclusive and democratic society?

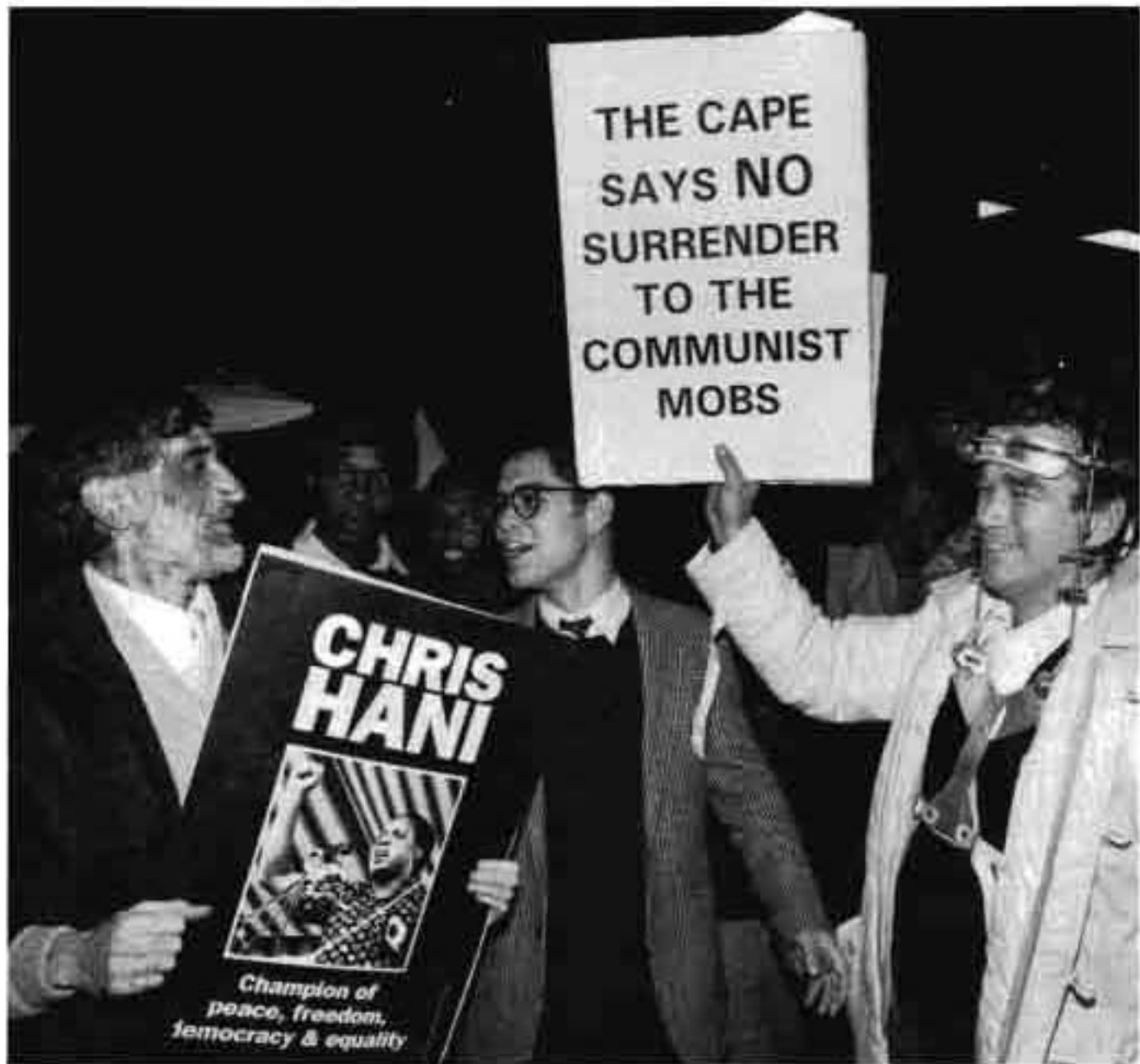
By **SUE VALENTINE**

Anthropologists tell us that there is no such thing as 'race' - it has no genetic basis. There is no such thing as the white race or the black race. By contrast, the concept of ethnicity does have some meaning - people have different languages and cultures, but these are aspects of ourselves that are learnt, they are not innate.

All too often ethnic identities are manufactured or constructed self-consciously by politicians in order to mobilise groups of people for specific social, political or economic goals.

However, no matter how essential to our ability to analyse, challenge and learn, the theories and the academic debates have little impact on the present level of day to day reality of most South Africans.

Speak to your average farmer, farm labourer, artisan, township youngster, mineworker, housewife or domestic worker - and you're unlikely to hear them affirming the theory that race does not exist. The very



Victory for racial and political tolerance? Opponents square up in good spirits in Parow.

fabric of our society has been organised along the notion of 'race'. To get beyond it to some promised land where human potential and individual differences are affirmed is definitely desirable, and arguably essential. But when, and how?

Just what is the ideal of non-racialism? Academic and political activist Neville Alexander has said, 'when we speak of non-racialism we mean that our position is determined by the scientific fact that "race" is a non-entity'. Perceptions, however, do not always dovetail with facts and reality. How we begin to ensure they do is part of the challenge.

Idasa policy and planning director Van Zyl Slabbert makes the point that one should draw a distinction between statutory non-racism - in which all formal obstacles on the basis of race are removed and an enabling environment is created - and the need to promote 'racial' and ethnic tolerance.

He is optimistic about the capacity of South Africans to accomplish this. 'By and large the majority of South Africans are capable of being tolerant. It is when you live in circumstances of economic decline and political instability that prejudices bubble to

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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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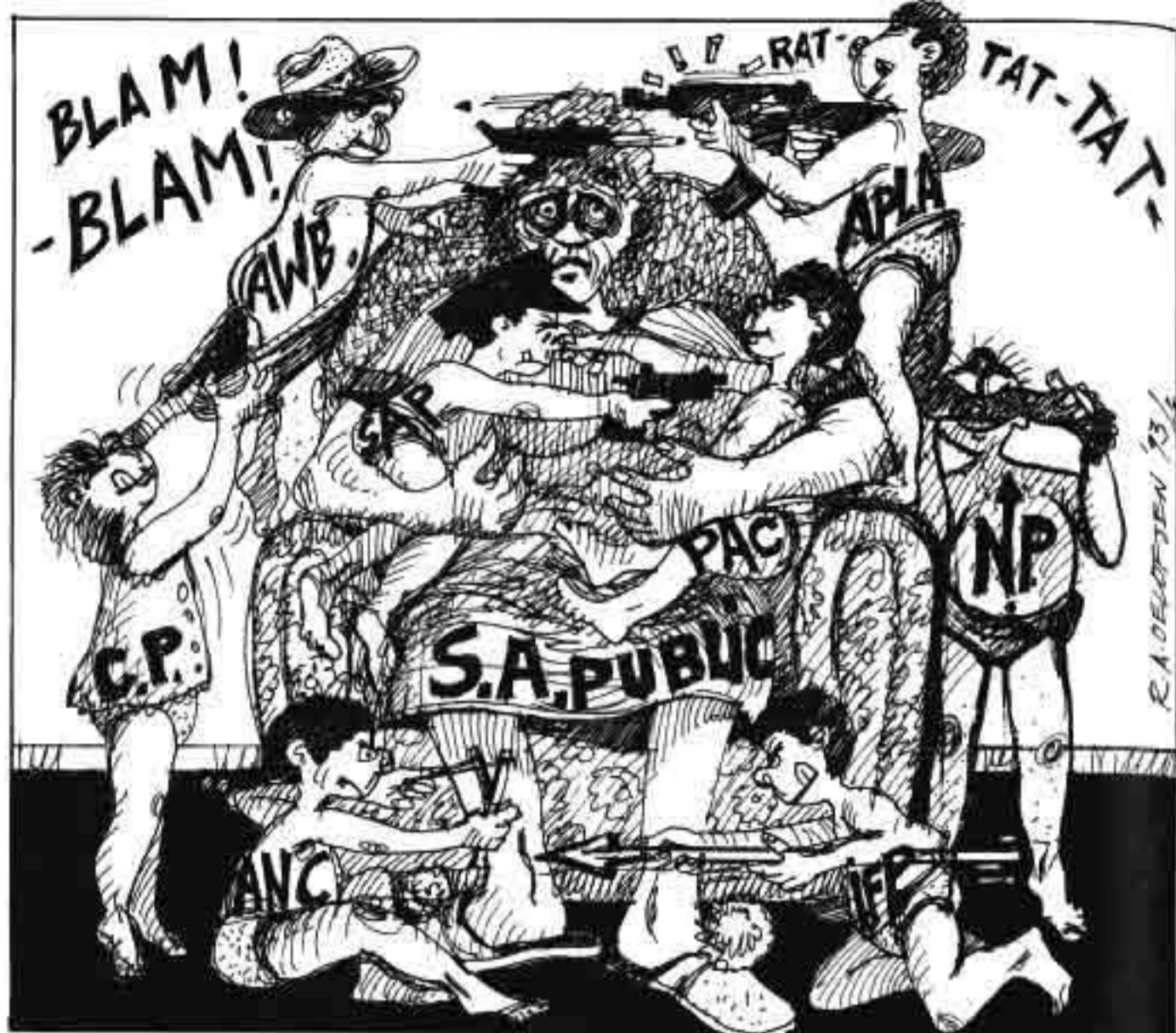
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Disarming view

The PAC battle-cry 'one settler, one bullet' is actually a call for disarmament, according to a conversation overhead at Idasa's recent economics conference. Most settlers have more than one bullet, you see.

- *Come and see my armoury?*

Street talk

In similar vein if more questionable taste, a new aphorism is causing hilarity on the streets: an Apla a day keeps the settler away.

- *Bitter medicine.*

The NGO whirl?

An Idasa staffer relaxing at a local hang-out with two friends of an evening was approached by a former university colleague who inquired, irritatingly: 'So, what are you guys doing, working or NGO'ing?'

- *A few sandwiches short of a picnic, nè?*

Good old days

The gory murder of an elderly Kuil's River woman was reported by a Cape Town newspaper with some unusual details. The woman was someone who 'hired and fired on average one domestic worker a month', and a senior detective at the scene warned the elderly that 'the days are gone when one can speak badly to people'.

- *Absolutely Gothic!*

Success recipe

A drive to plant palm trees in rural Nigeria was a roaring success, with local men participating in droves. Surprised organisers

Ja-Nee

later discovered that the jingle used to advertise the drive, describing palm trees as good and strong and lasting long, had been misunderstood by the men as applying to a prized part of their anatomies.

- *A useful fallacy.*

Maid in SA?

An advertising agency employee was asked why adverts about orally rehydrating small children were placed in glossy magazines like *Femina* rather than in grassroots publications like *Speak*. The employee replied that the advertiser wanted madams to tell their maids how to do it.

- *So much for the end of the reign of madam.*

Patriarchal faux pas

Recent TV coverage of interviews with nominees for the SABC Board underlined the fact that the patriarchy is alive and well and sitting on the Bench. Intent on winking out of a nominee whether he was a member of the Broederbond, his lordship said this was not an attempt to pry into the nominee's private life - whether he beat his wife was no affair of the appointment panel.

- *Could his lordship pull up his own socks, one wonders.*



Adrift between shadow and reality

AT LAST the firm prospect of a date for an election which will involve all South Africans! This will in part dispel the sense of despair and fear which has gripped so many in recent months. Further, the progress made by technical committees of the multi-party forum is significant, in particular the resolution giving the technical committee a mandate to formulate regulations on the structures, powers and functions of regions.

This has been an issue which has given rise to serious objections from Inkatha and this decision will certainly put to rest some of their fears, thus giving a decisive boost for the negotiation process. It is more than probable that as a direct result of this decision the IFP will not oppose the establishment of a Transitional Executive Council.

In addition, the decision of the forum to accept self-determination as a right will encourage the Conservative Party and the other right-wing parties to stay at the negotiation table. All in all, the readiness and willingness to compromise augurs well for an early date for an election and the appointment of a Transitional Executive Council. This will set the stage for a protracted election campaign culminating in April 1994.

Unfortunately the deliberations of the multi-party forum have far less impact on the general public than many other incidents that are taking place in South Africa.

Firstly, the on-going education crisis with schoolchildren going on the rampage, burning cars, boycotting classes, is a much more vivid image than the concept of party leaders sitting around a table. The strike by teachers, the dithering of educational authorities and cabinet ministers, the disgraceful inability to take decisive action regarding matriculation fees and salary negotiations have a far greater impact on the general confidence of the public.

The chronic state of black education is a breeding ground for bitterness and it should have come as no surprise that the feelings of hopelessness have spilt over on to the streets. It is equally understandable that scholars and teachers alike have come to the conclusion that no one takes notice of their grievances until they adopt radical and visible methods. No one can condone some of the actions and statements of Cosas, but attention must be given to the root causes and not merely the symptoms. Teachers generally, and black education in particular, have had a raw deal.

Apart from the constitutional area, it seems that government is inept and totally incapable of managing the transition. Months ago, all the warning signals were there of an impend-

ing educational crisis. These signals were largely ignored. Once again, we have the familiar scenario: demand is made, it is ignored, the crisis grows, polarisation increases and hey presto, bring in De Klerk and Mandela to clean up the mess. Judging from initial reaction from the teachers and from Cosas, no unilateral decision by even these leaders will suffice.

What is needed is an educational forum to deal seriously and realistically with long-standing grievances involving all the key actors and facilitators.

Secondly, the irresponsible statement by Peter Mokaba, 'kill the boer, kill the farmer' is drawing the inevitable and predictable reaction from farmers in many parts of the country. Their mass meetings, their tough statements, their call for curfews, road-blocks and a virtual call to arms further deepens the climate of distrust and tears apart community relations in rural areas.

Thirdly, the stepping on to central stage of former powerful generals raises the spectre of a unified right-wing bloc which threatens to subvert the negotiation process. Although they have moderated their position somewhat, the intervention by former generals is a cause for considerable concern and exacerbates the general climate of uncertainty which currently prevails.

Fourthly, against these manifestations of conflict there is the backdrop of continuing violence, daily reports of continued attacks on the homes of elderly people in suburban and isolated areas, coupled with the persistent killings in black areas. These all add to the general mood of pessimism.

The real question is, which is shadow and which is reality?

There can be no doubt that enormous progress is being made at the World Trade Centre, but it is a world which the overwhelming majority of South Africans never experience. Their world is the world of continuing unrest, increased unemployment and an awful feeling that the education crisis is only the tip of an iceberg.

Hopefully the appointment of a Transitional Executive Council will help to translate the shadowy negotiation process into the reality of security, education and better community relations. Certainly until such time as the public in South Africa can see a link between the world of formal negotiations and the world of daily life as it impacts upon them, the mood of uncertainty and insecurity will continue.



Prevailing mood ... uncertainty and insecurity.

CHRIS LEDOCHOWSKI, Southlight

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

TRAINING CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY

(Johannesburg)

Winter school

A week-long national winter school on democracy will be held for teachers from July 5 to 9. The venue is still to be confirmed but will be in the Johannesburg area. Teachers who are interested in attending should contact Vito Subramoney or Lufuno Nevhutalu at (011) 484-3694/7.

PRETORIA

Mediation skills

A conflict mediation skills workshop will be held over three days from June 7 to 9. The workshop will be facilitated by Ron Kraybill of the Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town. Contact the Pretoria office for more details.

N Tvl needs

On June 18 a workshop will be held in Pietersburg on the economic and development needs of the Northern Transvaal. People in the region who are interested in attending the workshop should contact the Pretoria office.

Regionalism

A conference on regionalism will be held from June 22 to 24. Constitutional experts will be invited to address the conference, which is co-hosted by the Spanish Embassy.

● An evening seminar on security in transition will be held at 7.30pm on June 8 at the Pretoria Holiday Inn. There will be speakers from the Afrikaner Volksunie, the ANC and the government. All welcome.

NATAL

Peace Corps?

A Future Forum meeting focusing on the creation of a Peace Corps for the youth of South Africa, as envisaged by the late Chris Hani, will be held at the Edward Hotel in Durban on June 2, from 12.15 to 2pm.

The speakers will be Phakamile Mankahlane, national publicity secretary of the ANC Youth League, and Kolbe Kolver, vice-chairperson of the National Party Youth Action.

The cost will be R25 per person, which covers refreshments. Reservations can be made by telephone at (031) 304-8893 or by fax at (031) 304-8891.

BLOEMFONTEIN

Election forum

An independent forum for electoral education will be launched in the Free State at the end of May. The aim of the forum is to co-ordinate democratic electoral education in the Free State. All non-aligned NGOs have been invited to participate.

● A weekend workshop on local government and regional development will be held at the Allemanskraaldam resort from June 11 to 13. The workshop aims to assist progressive organisations in the OFS to identify regional and local issues and needs.

WESTERN CAPE

For teachers

A schools in transition workshop will be held on June 9 at the Nompumelelo School in Guguletu. The workshop will develop a mission statement and will be attended by the staff of the Nompumelelo school.

PORT ELIZABETH

Pot-pourri

A seminar on the training and development of human resources, organised in conjunction with the Port Alfred municipality and the civic association, will be held on June 5 in Port Alfred.

● A conference on regional development needs analysis will be held on June 22 and 23, and a cross-cultural evening will be held at the Alexander Road High School on June 3 and 4.

Affirmative action

A series of workshops on corporate affirmative action will begin in July. Together with the Eastern Cape Economic Development Forum, Idasa will be inviting local business corporations to attend these workshops.

Public meetings

A public meeting to address the question of homeland integration is planned for mid-July. Bantu Holomisa of Transkei will be among the speakers.

● The issue of national interim mechanisms for transition will be tackled at a public meeting to be held late in July. Speakers from the SADF and Umkhonto we Sizwe will be invited to participate.

EAST LONDON

Nursing workshop

A workshop on the nursing profession and health delivery in a new South Africa will be held at the King David Hotel here on June 5. Letitia Rispel of the University of the Witwatersrand and Tembeka Gwagwa of the Durban Concerned Nurses of South

Africa will be the speakers. All health organisations in the area are invited to send delegates.

Land seminar

A breakfast seminar on land reform and regional development will be held on June 5 at the East London Holiday Inn. The speakers will be Rosalie Kingwell of the Border Rural Committee and Mike Coleman of Fort Hare. For further details and reservations contact the East London office.

Leadership skills

A student workshop on leadership skills and democracy will be held on June 18-19 in King William's Town. Schools in King William's Town and the surrounding rural areas are invited to participate.

● Idasa, in collaboration with the Border Kei Development Forum, will hold a workshop focusing on the need for literacy education in the pre-election period. The workshop hopes to facilitate the co-ordination of the various literacy projects in the Border area. More details from the East London office.

Education indaba

A conference on education in transition is planned for July 23 to 25. This is a follow-up to a seminar held in the area last year and the hope is that the conference will consolidate the work done since then and take the debates forward.

The conference will include delegates from all education service organisations, universities, labour organisations and civics in the area, and will address the education crisis both regionally and nationally. Franklin Sonn, rector of the Peninsula Technikon, has been invited to deliver the keynote address.

● A workshop on local government in transition, organised by the Gender Focus group, will be held on June 26.

Many thanks to those who responded to our appeal for ideas to improve Democracy in Action. We look forward to hearing from more readers.

Schools: youth talk it over

IS THE government spending enough money on education, and can it afford to spend more? This was the single most controversial question raised during a recent debate about the education crisis, organised by the Western Cape Youth Forum, a broad coalition of political and religious youth organisations.

Some 80 percent of the 300 people present were pupils from black high schools in Cape Town. Conspicuously absent were representatives from the city's white high schools.

Elaine Byloo, a representative of the Cape Town Junior Town Council, said 'economic discrimination' was a possibility in Model C schools. People in lower-income groups would not be able to afford the high costs associated with these schools.

Songezo Mjongile of the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) opened his speech with a call for 'free, dynamic and compulsory education'. He emphasised that black pupils were keen to learn and wanted to go to school, but that the 'disruptive' policies of the National Party effectively prevented them from doing so.

Many black parents were not in a position to pay for their children's education, he said. Dries Oosthuizen, National Party MP and chairperson of the parliamentary standing committee on education, replied that the government was spending one out of every five rands on education.

He was criticised by other speakers who said the current process of restructuring was not geared towards resolving problems such as overcrowding, teacher shortages and inadequate facilities, but in fact made them worse.

The meeting demonstrated very clearly that perceptions about the causes of the education crisis, and solutions, differed widely.

Big job for Idasa

A MAJOR ROLE has been assigned to Idasa in the new Open Society Foundation established by billionaire philanthropist George Soros with a three-year budget of some R50 million and a deadline of 1 July to become fully operational.

Idasa will provide basic office infrastructure and will manage the day to day financing of the foundation. Idasa director of policy and planning Van Zyl Slabbert will chair the board of the foundation.

The foundation will be run by executive director Michael Savage, who has been released from his duties as professor of sociology and acting deputy vice-chancellor at the University of Cape Town for two years.

The local Open Society Foundation is the latest of a stable of similar establishments set up by Soros in Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Albania, Estonia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Macedonia and

Moral and physical autonomy

At its recent national conference the Black Sash adopted a resolution on abortion.

The resolution noted 'the crisis proportions of the problem of illegal abortion and resultant suffering and death' and supported 'the principle of women's rights to moral and physical autonomy'.

It called for the introduction of a clause in the bill of rights and a Freedom of Choice Bill to prevent the state from restricting the right of women to choose an abortion should she so wish.

● The Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights is calling on all countries to recognise May 28 as a national day of women's health.

Organisations and individuals wishing to support the campaign should contact Dot Clemenshaw at 2 Buchan Road, Newlands, 7700.



Open Society Foundation board ... standing: Alex Borraine, Michael Savage, Khehla Shubane, Van Zyl Slabbert and Fikile Bam. Seated: Rhoda Kadalie, Helen Zille and Peter Sullivan.

elsewhere.

The foundation is committed to promoting the values, institutions and practices of an open, civil and democratic society. It pursues projects that have an institution-building impact, that emphasise sustainability and that are mutually reinforcing. The first such project is the establishment of an independent school of government at the University of the Western Cape.

Born in Hungary to a Jewish

family, Soros survived the Nazi occupation of his country and fled as a teenager from the intolerance of the communist regime.

He studied at the London School of Economics under the great Karl Popper, served an apprenticeship in merchant banking, and in 1969 set up an independent investment fund which he later called Quantum - now one of the largest and most successful investment funds in the world.

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Race against time?

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the surface.'

This sentiment is echoed by University of the Western Cape anthropologist Ben Cousins who sees greater potential for integration when there is economic growth and increased opportunity for all South Africans.

For him the hope of a non-racial future lies in giving some content to the talk about democracy. Democracy must mean more than the writing of a democratic constitution, it must afford people the right to organise according to their interests, the right to address differences without having to split off from society.

'South Africa has the challenge of building a culture of tolerance,' says Cousins. 'We must take on difference, acknowledge our differences and live with them. People do not have just one identity, we are all more than one thing. We must open the debate on multiple identities. Zulu workers are Zulus, but they are also workers.'

Slabbert also emphasises that non-racialism is an inclusive philosophy. 'But it can become an intolerant form of non-racialism



NIEHAUS: Black and white perceptions like night and day.

if it denies people's feelings of diversity and difference.'

Idasa executive director Alex Boraine makes the point that in order to achieve non-racialism, 'we need to deal with the reality, not the imagined'.

He identifies a visible shift in attitudes since the murder of Chris Hani.

'Whites seem to blame the ANC for the change, for mobilising black mourners and demonstrators on to the streets, but they forget that it was whites who pulled the trigger.

'At the same time young blacks are very aware that Hani was killed by a white person. It has triggered off feelings that have been suppressed and put on the back burner during the negotiations period. The reaction

now among black youths seems to be against the fact that they've been asked to trust whites in the negotiation process, but as soon as they do so, their leaders are killed.'

Boraine says one cannot deny the racial



SONN: Racism not necessarily on the rise in SA.

overtones contained in the rhetoric of student leaders or the mood at public rallies.

'We have got to deal with the depth of hurt and anger arising from generations of racial discrimination. Part of the apartheid legacy is in fact a pathology. It won't be dealt with from chatting together in the pub or over a cup of tea, we must do far more than that.'

'We have got to deal with the depth of hurt and anger arising from generations of racial discrimination'

Cape Town psychologist Julian Sonn says the extent of anger among black people towards whites in the wake of Hani's murder is not surprising.

'There is so much anger, Hani was a much-loved leader, one needs to understand the anger of black people and not overreact. The mischief-makers are aware of the powers they can unleash by killing off certain leaders.'

Sonn says he believes there are many positive changes occurring in South African society, he does not believe racism is necessarily on the rise - it has always been there.

'I feel hopeful. We can still work on the angle of racism now because people are not yet disillusioned. Perhaps if we get to two years down the line and we have still not addressed the issue, then it will be much more difficult to talk about it.'

He acknowledges that building a non-

racial society is difficult because differences along racial lines have been entrenched for so long. But nevertheless, he is confident.

'Racism is learnt behaviour and it can be unlearned. It is a process and engaging in that process is both necessary and worthwhile.

'Workshops with groups of people provide a structure and a model in which to talk about racist, sexist and classist conditioning. As adults we can make decisions about which beliefs we want to let go of and which beliefs we want to take hold of. We take on certain beliefs at particular times when they appear to serve a purpose. As conditions change, they can become dysfunctional and it makes sense for us to let them go.'

Against the backdrop of our painful and brutal history, it is perhaps acceptable that, confronted by the need for reconstruction throughout South African society, perceptions and gestures should take on a somewhat inordinate degree of importance.

The recent example of the tardy reaction by the South African government following the death of Chris Hani did little to help matters. Declaring a national day of mourning or a public holiday would have sent a significant empathetic message to an angry public. The gesture of a mere press statement from a holiday home spoke volumes.

In the United States many people remember where they were when they heard the news that President Kennedy had been shot. As a six- or seven-year-old I remember an afternoon radio programme being interrupted with the news of Verwoerd's assassination in Parliament. How many whites will remember where they were when they heard of the news of Hani's death, or when the Sharpeville killings were reported or the news of the student uprising in Soweto in '76?

Whites are quick to react to racist statements that target them. The media attention given to Peter Mokaba and Winnie Mandela's outbursts are recent reminders. However whites forget the racism which



KADALIE: Alienation intensifies racism among youth.

most black people endure as a daily experience.

Spike Lee's movie on the life of Malcolm X highlights the reaction of white society to calls by a black leader for blacks to defend themselves and put their own interests first.

We need to realise the degree to which racism, through the institution of apartheid, has permeated not only the structures of our society, but our beliefs and attitudes as well.

Even if whites do not feel directly responsible, white South Africans need to confront the harsh realities of what was done in their name with the intention of privileging them.

This is not to suggest an endless 'guilt trip' for whites, nor to justify a perpetual anger among those disadvantaged by apartheid. But to sweep emotions under the carpet is to

leave too much unsaid. We cannot wipe the slate clean because we cannot erase the past. What is done is done, but we must now begin a new chapter.

Despite the apparent contradictions between ANC policy and certain statements and actions of those claiming ANC membership, non-racialism as a *policy* remains unchallenged and firmly entrenched within the organisation, says ANC spokesperson Carl Niehaus.

However, he admits that building that culture is a difficult job made worse by limited time and resources, and a none too sympathetic media.

'In the medium term we can only hope for limited success. Only after the introduction of a new constitution can people experience what it's like to live under new conditions in which individual human rights will be upheld. I envisage a process similar to what has happened in Namibia and Zimbabwe.'

Against the backdrop of history and recent events Niehaus says it is nothing short of 'remarkable' that black people have stuck to the basic principles of non-racialism and that they are so willing to embrace white people who are willing to change. The recent ANC meeting in Parow, Cape Town, exemplified the spirit of non-racialism, said Niehaus.

'There is a lot of hope. If only white people realised how remarkable it is that there is so much goodwill after so many years of brutal racism.'

The other side of the coin is that in the white community there is not the same reali-



High spirits during the ANC's first meeting in 'white' Parow.

sation of the changes that need to be made to build a new society. They think they've made changes when they see Nelson Mandela on TV or they can buy *Mayibuye* at the corner shop, but that's only scratching the surface,' says Niehaus.

'The perception of what major change is in the white community and what it is within the black community is like night and day.'

Clear messages have to reach all South Africans on what non-racialism is all about and how it is being built in society. The media have a vital role to play in this process.

'If only white people realised how remarkable it is that there is so much goodwill after so many years of brutal racism'

'There are as many positive developments that can be shown on the eight o'clock news as there are negative ones,' says Slabbert, 'although they are not always rated as news.'

The gap between leaders and those on the ground must also be addressed. Certain Idasa fieldworkers report a growing degree of criticism of top ANC leadership who are seen as able to make fine speeches and mingle with dignitaries in hotels, but have forgotten what it means to have 'their hands in the dust'.

According to UWC anthropologist Rhoda Kadalie, the antagonism and growing racism among many young people today results

from a sense that they are mere observers of the process of negotiations.

'When they hear in the news that Mandela and De Klerk will receive an award from Clinton, they become angry. The negotiations process is perceived as an alliance between elite blacks and whites.'

Kadalie is also critical of the ANC's appeals to community and nation-building, claiming they are little different to the Afrikaners' preoccupation with 'die volk'.

'These concepts assume a homogeneity; they do not deal with notions of difference. They fall into the same trap which assumes that white women are divided along various lines, but black women all have the same interests.'

Finally, it seems, one comes back to the promise contained in the creation of a culture of democracy and tolerance, in which differences are acknowledged and embraced rather than denied.

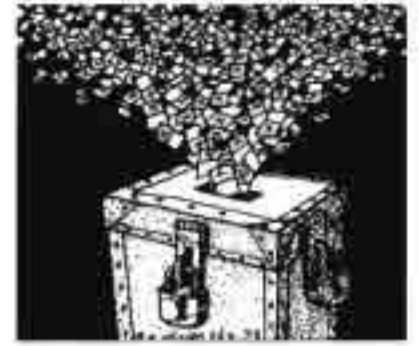
Perhaps, as Borraine suggests, something akin to a revival of black consciousness is needed. To ignore the smouldering issue of 'race' as it is perceived by South Africans is to court disaster down the road.

'Perhaps we have something to learn from the United States of the 1960s,' says Borraine. 'Martin Luther King called for reconciliation, whereas Malcolm X said it was impossible to achieve reconciliation at no cost.'

'If reconciliation comes without an honest confrontation with the past, it serves merely to cover up deeply held hurt and suspicions. We need a catharsis.'

Sue Valentine is Idasa's media director.

Free and fair ... and fast!



What do we have to do in South Africa to ensure that the forthcoming democratic election will be free and fair and its outcome accepted by all. SUE VALENTINE spoke to international election management specialist Ron Gould.

What should be the composition of an electoral commission?

There are several models. Some can be thrown out fairly quickly. For example, in some countries and in what is probably the least desirable model, a government department acts as the electoral body.

Another one which is probably not realistic for here, is an electoral commission formed of representatives of political parties. I think there are two things that mitigate against it: you don't want an extremely large body and you already have 26 political parties (in the negotiations forum). How you exclude parties becomes highly political. The other point is that you need top-notch people on the electoral commission and if you take top notch people out of the parties for full-time work on the commission, it will have a negative impact on the parties.

Setting those two aside leaves a couple of models which are very similar in type. One that is very popular and very successful (where the judiciary is considered to be impartial and non-partisan) is to have a member of the judiciary designated by all the players as chairperson, or to have a three-member panel as your election commission.

Sometimes you can have a member of the judiciary heading up a panel of respected members from elsewhere in the community – be it academia, the arts or whatever.

The third model is where the judiciary really doesn't play a role and you find some upstanding member of the community who is considered to be acceptable and non-partisan and around that build a group.

The chairperson should be all-powerful with the power to break a tie-hold or, where there can't be agreement, make a decision. It must obviously be a decisive person.

The smaller the commission the better. I've heard a number of concepts. One was that if you are going to have proportional representation both on a national and regional basis, and assuming there would be 10 regions (defined in some way or other), then you

might have an 11-person commission – a chairperson and 10. That's awfully large. The commission has to make very fast decisions in a number of areas and the larger the commission, the more difficult it is. If it were possible to have each member of the commission responsible for two regions, then you could have a six-person commission.

Would you see the National Peace Committee serving the purpose of the electoral commission?

I don't know the size of the peace commission. The critical thing is to get a body in there that has the trust and the confidence of everyone, even though they may at times rule against you and your group. You need that combined with the secrecy of the vote. You will never be able to convince people of the secrecy of the vote and how their views and their choice will never be found out unless they trust the people who are running the electoral commission. If the parties don't trust the body then the parties won't convince their people.

What would you do with a body such as the Department of Home Affairs? Could it execute the instructions drawn up by the electoral commission?

A double-barrelled answer: from what I understand, because the Department of Home Affairs is associated with the government and it is not totally trusted, it is not the kind of organisation everyone would have confidence in. On the other hand, it is your source of electoral operational expertise.

What I have seen work in other countries is that you remove the Department of Home Affairs from the government and place it under the electoral commission. They then become employees of the electoral commission, at least for the pre-election to post-election period. They are accountable to them and the election commission should have the power to fire them if necessary. In general terms, what I've found elsewhere and I don't know why it wouldn't follow here, these

people are professional bureaucrats. Whoever they work for they will follow what they're told to do, although obviously they will try to influence the process.

What if they're antagonistic to the process? If their jobs and salaries depend on them doing as they're told by the electoral commission, I should think you'd be very surprised at how co-operative they will be! And they have to look to the future too.

The reality is that there's a lot of talent there. What is more likely to happen is that there are changes in systems and approaches from what has always been done, that's where you'll have a lot of resistance. But in terms of trying to sabotage the electoral process, I think there's fairly little chance of that happening.

I understand that you recommend one polling station for every 500 people.

We're into terminology here. What I was saying was that 500 people is the largest number that can comfortably be handled in one day by one group of electoral administrators and one ballot box. If you anticipate 3 000 people at a polling station, then you would have six ballot boxes.

Besides one or two ushers at the door, you need three persons per ballot box so at a polling station with six ballot boxes you're looking at a minimum of 18 people.

All in all you'll need a massive number of people – at least 140 000 to serve as election officials. That's a lot of training.

Who would you see as the best possible agencies for voter education?

Very definitely non-government organisations (NGOs) – hopefully under some sort of co-ordinated umbrella so there is no rivalry and diffusing of resources rather than consolidating and using them to their greatest extent.

The parties also have an important role. Once you have your party registration process completed, you should then have a ballot design which is publicised with all the

parties' names and emblems in whatever order they're going to appear on the actual ballot. Then the parties can take that ballot and go to the people and say, 'this is us, this is our logo, here's how you mark the ballot'. They can do a great deal of civic education on that basis.

I gather that you favour the idea of a day-long election?

The ideal is that everything happens on one day because overnight leads to accusations of opportunity for fraud, ballot stuffing, switching boxes and so on.

If a one-day voting period does not permit that, then you may have to allow two days. Then there are variations on that theme because you can have no more than one day's voting in any one location, but you can have the process running over two days and have mobile polls and voting teams. If it does have to run over two days, then what you have to do is set up a roster with observers and international observers to ensure that election staff stay with the boxes at all times.

What role would you see for the security forces?

Ideally on polling day, if not during the election period, the security forces should be under the control of the electoral commission. That will take a lot of negotiation, education and training.

Generally they are not allowed to vote in uniform. In Central America they vote in their military bases, but that's not desirable because of pressure and intimidation to all vote the same way. Also when you start counting the polls you can identify which way the military voted, which isn't fair to them either.

The normal restriction is that the security forces are not allowed into the poll under any circumstances, except when invited by the presiding officer to quell any problems that arise. They should be schooled in what the electoral law says - how far they should be from the polls and so on.

But you have to have police and security forces of some sort, especially in instances such as this country where there is always the possibility of violence.



Ron Gould ... a challenge, but it can be done within a year.

With regard to ensuring that people accept the results of an election, what should be done beforehand and afterwards?

I guess whoever loses has great difficulty in accepting the results, no matter what you do. The bottom line is to be able to offset the accusations and the rumours by having as airtight an electoral system as possible.

An intensive education programme is needed, so that there's an understanding of the electoral process and the kinds of safeguards that are in there and the very important involvement of the parties as monitors of the elections.

The parties need to educate people, to create an understanding that there is not going to be more of the same when it's all over. Even if a party is in a minority, but represented, it means those people will have a voice and be playing an active and involved role. It's not loser loses all and winner takes all.

It is the responsibility of the parties to watch the election administrator's every move from the time the poll is set up and even before it opens, until the count is finished. Those kinds of things make it difficult for a party which has had monitors at the poll to say there was this abuse or that abuse, especially if they've been in view of

Voters' friend

Ron Gould is the assistant chief electoral officer in Canada and was involved in managing the 1984 and 1988 elections in that country, as well as the 1992 referendum.

He has represented Canada on electoral commissions in Central and South America, with members of parliament in Albania, with the Organisation of American States in El Salvador and the Commonwealth in Kenya. He also headed the United Nations mission to design the electoral framework, organisation and timing of all aspects of the Cambodian election.

the ballot box at all times.

But you also have all the things that happen down the line in terms of intimidation, interfering with party rallies and access to the media. In a lot of these areas, such as access to media and public information, the situation will not be equal, there is no way it can be, but there are certain things that can be levelled off.

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Dreams and deficits

After almost two years of planning, the Aspen Institute, based in the United States, and Idasa brought together 120 high-powered local and foreign economists to tackle the issue of South Africa's international economic relations in the 1990s. SUE VALENTINE reports on some of the discussions.

FOR THREE days delegates grappled with a range of weighty issues relating to South Africa's reintegration into the world economy. Discussions on the implications of trade agreements, international loans, protective tariffs, debt crises, exported growth and foreign investment hung heavily in the northern Transvaal air – almost as imposing as the sight of swollen rain clouds over the dry bushveld.

The opening address, due to have been delivered by ANC president Nelson Mandela, was read by ANC economics head Trevor Manuel.

Debates & speakers

Topics discussed at the conference included:

- Emerging trading patterns around the globe;
- The changing roles and functions of major international financial institutions, and their impact on developing countries;
- The implications for South Africa's domestic economic policy of using International Monetary Fund/World Bank resources;
- What South Africa's relationship with African regional organisations should be;
- The relationship between economic development in South Africa and the southern African region.
- What would make South Africa internationally competitive in the 1990s.

Speakers included Paul Krugman (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), John Williamson (Institute for International Economics, USA), Sanjaya Lall (Institute of Economics and Statistics, Oxford University), Raphael Kaplinsky (University of Sussex), Laurence Cockcroft (Oxford International Associates, UK), Duck-Woo Nam (former prime minister of Korea), Siphos Shabalala (PAC economics advisor), Benno Ndulu (African Economic Research Consortium, Kenya).

- Idasa, in conjunction with David Philip Publishers, will publish a book on the conference later in the year.

Appropriately attired for the bushveld, Manuel began by saying that he had assumed that ties were unnecessary at such a 'bosberaad' or 'strategic safari'. He said he wondered what it implied about differences in economic policy that he was dressed more casually than both South African Communist Party economist Essop Pahad and director of the Institute for African Alternatives Ben Turok.

The ANC president's address began with the observation that it was obvious that South Africa would not attract foreign investment until there was both political stability and a climate free of violence. However, to consider international trade without ensuring that quality goods and services were available to all South Africans at affordable prices was wrong.

Mandela was critical of South Africa's economic management which he said 'remained premised on waiting for windfalls ... increases in the gold price and other commodity prices'. These windfalls had been used to pursue 'the dreams of autarchy without any consideration of the costs'.

Nowhere was this more aptly demonstrated than in the decision to proceed with the Mossgas project, which would become viable only if and when the oil price reached \$35 per barrel. Meanwhile, throughout the century, the oil price had remained fairly stable at around \$20 per barrel.

The keynote address to the conference was delivered by Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Johan Jorgen Holst, the first Norwegian foreign minister to visit South Africa.

Reviewing why the struggle against apartheid in South Africa



ANC economics head Trevor Manuel with Va Slabbert of Idasa and Siphos Shabalala of the PAC



Stephen Lewis of Carleton College and Pauline of the Aspen Institute



Leslie Lipschitz (IMF), Peter Fallon (World Bank) and André la Grange (Development Bank of Southern Africa).



had become such an important international issue, Holst said the irony was that apartheid had been conceived and implemented by settlers from Europe, where the concept of human rights had been the principal idea shaping modern open societies.

He said South Africa had not only been an 'historical aberration', but had also projected an alternative to integration and civic society – an exclusive laager, rather than an inclusive society.

'Apartheid and ethnic cleansing are products of the same distorting logic. The idea that societies must be based on "ethnic purity" conforms to notions of imagined communities which divide human beings into "we" and "they", and the "they" become dehumanised.'

Holst said that South Africa was both a threat and a promise to international society; a threat insofar as it could retreat into the 'sterile confrontation of the past', and a promise to the extent that 'so many of the trends which shape the future of international society intersect in South Africa'.

Holst said in conclusion that there was only one viable approach to the challenge facing the world: to work together nationally and internationally. However, he also noted that institutions were no substitute for human commitment.

To meet the challenge there needed to be:

- the political will and ability to co-operate across national frontiers;
- evidence that the benefits of co-operation outweighed the possible constraints on freedom of action;
- cultural diversity rather than closed, uniform societies – citizens needed to be assured that there was no contradiction between international integration/co-operation and the deepening of cultural and national identity;
- improved capacity to work together – strengthened institutions, better communication and more rational working methods;
- a capacity for preventative diplomacy, crisis management and peacekeeping – the creation of a 'security net' to stop disputes from becoming conflicts and conflicts from escalating into wars.

The highlights of the conference were sketched by the president of Carleton College, Stephen Lewis jun., who was economics adviser to Pakistan in the 1960s, to the Kenyan government in the early 1970s, and economics consultant to the Botswana government from 1975 to the mid-1980s.

Remarking on the diversity of opinion and backgrounds among conference delegates, Lewis said the world and South Africa

should take note that, despite these differences, the conference had been free of rigid adherence to ideology and had suffered little posturing and position-taking. The ruling ideal had seemed to be the development and well-being of South Africa's citizens.

He said there had been a fair degree of consensus on the ills within the world economy, and on the view that growth should be export-oriented. However, there had been many differences over detail, including the question of how best to reduce protection and to organise an export economy.

Lewis stressed the importance of investment and that domestic saving was the key to growth. Foreign and domestic investment depended largely on certainty in the business climate. However, he warned against the tendency among developing nations to disguise oppressive policies by invoking economic development. 'All too often the motto is "Silence! Development is occurring".'

'Economists must understand the political realities, and political leaders must understand the restrictions under which they operate'

Noting the relative absence of discussion on fiscal issues during the conference, Lewis reminded delegates that the fiscal policies of a democratic government would be critical in maintaining macro balances.

Reflecting on the management of the South African economy over the past two decades, Lewis said a different handling of the economic boom of the 1970s would have given South Africa a very different economy from the one it had at present. 'You get out of trouble by staying out of trouble,' he added.

Warning against the myth that the 'magic of the market' would solve all problems, Lewis said government intervention in the economy was necessary. Tough decisions needed to be made in thrashing out the details of wage rates, exchange rates, and so on, in order to create a positive, win-win situation. A tripartite approach, involving business, labour and government, was a useful mechanism for forging policy, but how economists should work with politicians was an issue which deserved much consideration.

'Economists must understand the political realities, and political leaders must understand the restrictions under which they operate,' he said. 'Good policy and sustained good policy will come out of discussion.'

Sue Valentine is Idasa's media director.

A CANDID and sometimes provocative analysis of what South Africa could learn from the Latin American economies was laid before the conference by Eliana Cardoso, Brazilian economist and associate professor at Tufts University in the United States.

In a working group focusing on 'prospects and problems of using aid, international loans and domestic capital to alleviate domestic poverty', Cardoso argued strongly that the best policies to fight poverty were macro-stability (keeping the books balanced), transparent tax transfers (the tax you pay is spent visibly) and investment in education.

She said the horrendous Latin American experience with economic populism – heavy borrowing, macro-instability, protectionism, over-valuation – would help convince black South Africans that not all their expectations could be immediately fulfilled, and that economic populism was more costly than conservative macro-economics.

Cardoso said that while South Africa's gross domestic product per capita (\$3 050 in 1991) ranked alongside those of the better-off Latin American economies, disparities as severe as those in Mexico and Brazil were clearly visible when various indicators were broken down.

Drawing on Brazilian evidence, Cardoso drew three conclusions:

- income distribution can change dramatically in less than one year (in contrast to the belief that income distribution changes slowly except through war or revolution);
- macro-economics (rather than micro-economics and the labour market) explains short-term variations in income distribution – inequality varies cyclically, increasing with inflation and unemployment;
- minimum wage legislation does not contribute to better income distribution.

Cardoso stressed that, as the Brazilian case demonstrated, the best way to help the poor was not through manipulation of prices and wages, but through macro-economic stability and a transparent tax-transfer system.



Brazilian Eliana Cardoso with Bob Tucker, former head of SA Perm.

'Horrendous' results of economic populism

In his presentation to this session, SA Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals said there was no better way to answer the poverty problem than to provide better and more job opportunities.

Funds for aid and subsistence which were diverted from other possible uses could provide temporary relief, but in the long term, economic growth offered the only permanent solution.

'Economic populism is more costly than conservative macro-economics'

Stals said the financing of social upliftment programmes with foreign funds offered an acceptable alternative to the 'temptation' to create more money to supplement domestic sources.

When asked whether foreign aid would be good or bad for the South African economy, Stals said that while it would create balance of payment difficulties, it also offered a source of foreign exchange which could lead to a more relaxed monetary policy.

A summary of some of the points raised by Cardoso follows.

● The impact of minimum wage policies

Minimum wage laws aim at altering the distribution of income in favour of lower-income households. However, minimum wages can perversely benefit certain wage-earners at the expense of others.

For example, evidence shows that in Brazil increases in the real minimum wage widened inequality. A possible explanation for this is that an increase in the minimum wage reduces formal employment and increases the number of workers outside formal employment who receive less than the minimum wage.

● The impact of stabilisation on poverty

Just as populism stands for the false dream that growth per capita can exceed productivity growth, the question of

whether the poor suffer from adjustment programmes poses a false dilemma.

Adjustment programmes which reduce government spending and devalue currency have the effect of reducing real income and increasing unemployment in the short run. But adjustment is unavoidable in most cases, and the decline in welfare during such programmes derives in good measure from conditions that existed prior to such programmes – declining terms of trade, reduced external finance, increased debt service costs, and unsustainable deficits.

In the final analysis, inflation, stabilisation and adjustments are costly and the only consistent alternative open to governments is the maintenance of conservative macro-economic policies. On these grounds, the Colombian model stands out.

Although the benefits of policies are very slow to arise and poverty has not shown a significant improvement, they seem to be the most suitable in the long term.

● Poverty programmes

The fight against poverty needs to combine policies that allow the poor to increase current consumption, with investment to generate future growth of their income.

These policies must consider the links between income, health and education, and give special emphasis to female education.

Aid: Cuba counted out

CLOSELY questioned on conditions in Cuba by South African Communist Party economist Essop Pahad, Brazilian economist Eliana Cardoso warned against relying on foreign subsidies and loans.

She said that in 1989 Cuba was still as dependent on sugar production as it had been in 1959.

This situation had arisen because of the vast loans and subsidies Cuba had received from the Soviet Union, which had made it possible for a country with a poor economy to enjoy social indicators (health and education systems) that were among the best in the Western hemisphere.

The problem was that in 1992, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of Soviet subsidies, there were now food queues and children were going blind as a result of vitamin shortages.

Asked whether present conditions in Cuba were not the result of the continued United States blockade of the island, rather than the withdrawal of subsidies, Cardoso adamantly demurred.

She acknowledged that the excellent health and education system in Cuba was the product not only of communist bloc aid, but also the implementation of a socialist system which favoured equality and a good distribution of social benefits.

However, she stressed that 'the system worked well to provide an equal and minimum standard of living, as long as it could rely on the Soviet Union'. As a production system it did not work. The economy was totally dependent on sugar and there was no incentive to work. Absenteeism was a huge problem in Cuba.

She said in 1992 Cuba was an economy 'living off spare parts'. All the education that had been built up could sustain neither people nor their high ideals.

She said the US blockade had been in force for 30 years but the USSR subsidies had made it possible for Cuba to survive. 'The moment the subsidies disappeared, the whole system collapsed.'

Anxious not to be misunderstood, Cardoso stressed the importance of social programmes. 'We want social programmes,' she said, 'but we want social programmes that subsidise themselves.'



Dave Lewis and Dave Kaplan, both of the Development Policy Research Unit at UCT.



PAC president Clarence Makwetu and Helen Suzman.

given the evidence that women's education has a strong positive effect in reducing fertility rates and child mortality.

'Best way to help the poor is not through manipulation of prices and wages'

The debate on poverty programmes remains open. The questions revolve around two issues: firstly, the interpretation of various social indicators and secondly, how to understand the change in indicators - were

they driven by macro-economic developments or by social policies?

Poverty programmes may be a way of significantly improving the situation of the poor. The Brazilian example shows that education can account for much of the income disparity, while Bolivia, Mexico and Chile demonstrate that health and income generation are other important areas for policy focus.

In order to take the first step in alleviating poverty, these examples show that South Africa will need to combine aggressive poverty programmes with conservative macro-economic policies.

The links between ethnicity, identity and nationalism were deliberated at an international gathering in Grahamstown recently.

PETER VALE gives his impressions.

I LOVE my country too much to be a nationalist,' wrote the existentialist philosopher, Albert Camus. Perhaps the Algerian-born Frenchman knew something which many have only recently recognised – a sense of local origin is important because it helps individuals understand rapid change.

Certainly the rise of local social movements in various parts of the world – the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are the best examples – suggest that the nation-state, as we know it, is under some threat from below. But does this hankering – however it is dressed up – mean the re-emergence of ethnicity as a force in political mobilisation?

This question and the logic which underpins it, was at the core of a conference held (of all appropriate places) in the 1820 Monument in Grahamstown. Organised by Rhodes University's Institute of Social and Economic Research in conjunction with Natal University's Centre of Social and Development Studies, the conference was the third, and most ambitious, in a series to deliberate the links between ethnicity, identity and nationalism.

With close on 200 participants and some 70 papers from scattered disciplines to choose from, there was rich and political academic fare.

Expectedly some hoary old faithfuls returned: a South African academic who, by methodological sleight of hand, managed to show that ethnicity was played out during the old Union of South Africa only in cases when blacks delivered violence on other blacks. (Even this hard-bitten critic of social science had to carefully watch for the mirrors as he reached into the black box to draw these conclusions).

But these were the exceptions, most of the papers were of an extraordinary quality. This was not surprising since the gathering has taken two years to organise and drew participants from places as far afield as Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Brunel and Brighton. Africa was strongly represented with papers from Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia: not to mention, of course, many papers from South Africans.

Participants avoided defining ethnicity. But some argued that significant social barriers



The youth: alienation and arms are a lethal cocktail.

The right to

Why has it become the fight to differ?

ers demarcated group from group and that these are as important as those which distinguish individual from individual. If these Chinese screens are to be called ethnicity, then fair enough.

In this guise, ethnicity is essentially benign and, as a result, its reassertion is of the now-you-see-difference-now-you-don't kind: in this understanding, the genie of ethnic destructiveness has not been released from the political bottle.

To accept that ethnicity is harmless is to accept that difference is learnt at one's mother's knee. There was plenty of evidence to support this proposition, although some researchers were not prepared to ask mothers what messages were passed on in the

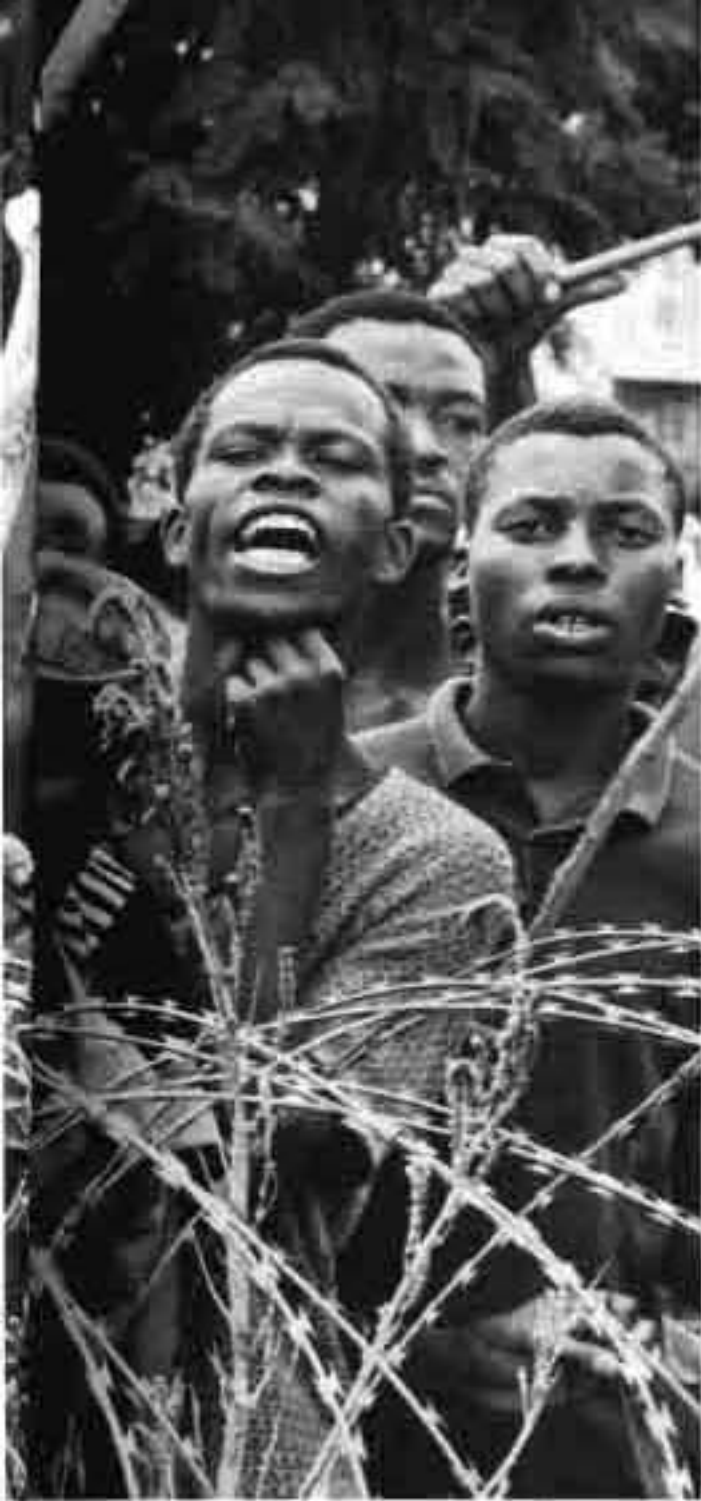
form of lullabies and children's games.

But is this so; is ethnicity benign and is difference merely harmless?

Look towards the Balkans and even closer to home, and it is obvious that the walls which separate group from group are not all benign: the killing fields of Natal and Bosnia tell a different tale to the one normally learnt in childhood slumber.

Why is it that the *right* to differ has become the *fight* to differ?

For this correspondent, the answer was provided in two fascinating presentations. The one was a study of Puerto Rican crack dealers in New York's Harlem; the other, a study of identity and warfare in south-western Ethiopia. Both papers were fine exam-



GUY ADAMS, Southlight

differ

ples of the ethnographer's craft: sensitive, insightful, conscious of wider conditioning circumstances.

In the Puerto Rican study, the sense of group and individual alienation of this immigrant community – a community who, paradoxically are US citizens – is simply astounding. Disaffection plays out in remorseless encounters with the establishment: each of these ends back in the belly of the underworld. Is it any surprise, then, that English is the language of the money-world, while Spanish is the language of the other? The message of the paper was simple, almost elegant; although the estrangement is acute, responses to it are astute.

The Ethiopian study drew backwards to correlate the rituals of the Mursi with the slow, but certain acquisition of the means to deliver death to their ancient foes, the Nyangatom (often known as Bume). The thrust of the argument is that the Mursi are keen to convert their means of killing from a World War II-vintage Mannlicher rifle to the

Kalashnikov semi-automatic. This development follows a Nyangatom massacre of Mursi women and children.

This upgrade will certainly deliver more to the killing fields of south-western Ethiopia but, in the opinion of the paper's author, will probably not affect the sanctity of the ceremony which bloods the young for war.

Alienation and arms are a lethal cocktail because they permit, in the absence of a strong state, wanton destruction in the name of difference. Through this, the rituals of ethnicity feed downward spirals which sap the very soul of society: this is the terror of ethnicity mobilised in the cause of power.

'The search for understanding the world of human relations may have only just begun'

Not surprisingly in a week in which Peter Mokaba and Eugene Terre'Blanche both used inflammatory statements to pump up the expectations of their supporters, the future of South Africa was very much on the minds of conference delegates.

By all accounts, South Africa's black youth are deeply alienated from both the country's ageing establishment and from the very process which is seeking to bring change. This, and the country's self-mutilation – most of it by hand-gun or the notorious AK-47 – periodically focused the conference on what, if anything, could be done in this particular mixture of alienation and arms.

The very fact of difference in South Africa is certainly more obvious than elsewhere in the world. And, far more importantly, ethnicity is more explosive because these very differences – and other symbols of race – have been used by apartheid to secure power and privilege.

For some, the golden thread of non-racialism will protect South Africa through the torrent which currently rages. And the point was made during the same week that both Mokaba and Terre'Blanche retreated from the ethnic abyss. But to accept non-racialism is to accept difference: after all, for the Umlazi shack dweller, English is the language of the money world, while Zulu is the language of the other.

The challenge is, surely, to ensure that difference does not become the language of mobilisation. If it does, then selective political memory clicks into the discourse and ethnic identities become increasingly set in stone. This is the beginning of the horrendous experience which, in the memory of

South Africans, is so close at hand.

But beyond South Africa's agony, there was a deeper yearning in Grahamstown: a yearning which goes to the very heart of what we – social scientists and others – think we know about the world.

In the countless efforts to avoid defining ethnicity but accepting that difference – even of the Chinese screen variety – was a fact of political life, some of the world's finest social scientists were strangely unable to express themselves in Grahamstown.

This, too, is not surprising.

The dynamic of recent changes has been nothing short of revolutionary; is it any wonder that it has taken some time for us to understand, let alone explain it. Before the collapse of state-centred communism, powerful conceptual ideas held sway. They were – or at least we thought they were – bridges to understanding the confusion we experienced about us, as bridges to the future.

But they failed to help understand change and its effects. If ethnicity is alive and living in every child how would we know it was there? How might an Australian anthropologist explain why Ayers Rock, the Aboriginal shrine, was more sacred than the Sydney Cricket Ground? How might an armed white policeman suggest to a township youth that he should – in the interests of their common South Africanism – lay down his AK-47?

These are not the questions of the idle rich; they reach into the home of every person in a world which seems more certain of tragedy than it did before Berlin's notorious Wall crumbled.

The lesson of Grahamstown was that, in many ways, the search for both understanding and description of the world of human relations may have only just begun. Because the bridges which theory promised have turned to dust, new ways of understanding the world will have to be explored. And the words which have so easily dripped from our lips – ethnicity, identity, nationalism: the list is endless – these will have to be carefully weighed and even more carefully weighted.

As they set out on this work, however, social scientists might draw comfort from the fact that some timeless liturgies will continue no matter what. During the conference white-daubed Xhosa youth engaged in a circumcision ritual – which far predates the arrival of the first British settlers to the Eastern Cape – on the very Gunfire Hill upon which the monument to South Africa's English-speakers is situated.

Peter Vale is research professor and co-director of the Centre for Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape.

By RONEL SCHEFFER

Why the media must love to be hated

DEVELOPMENT journalism is essentially critical and adversarial, according to Graeme Addison, head of journalism at the Natal Technikon. In a paper on the 'watchdog role' of development journalism, Addison argues that development journalists should identify with the grassroots and maintain an adversarial relationship with authority and a critical distance from development planners.

He draws a distinction – by no means cut-and-dried though – between 'journalism' and 'media work', the former being associated with the mass media, while media work finds its place in development organisations.

'Development journalism entails a process of social auditing. It reports on development projects, assesses them, and reflects their value for those whom they are supposed to serve.'

Addison notes the dilemma created for community media, many of which originated in the struggle against apartheid, by this critical function of development journalism and media work.

'It is a difficult transition from revolutionary rhetoric to the actual business of government. Will a critical inheritance translate into a lively culture of criticism in the future? One hopes so, and the issue is in the forefront of many minds in the media.'

Addison stresses that if 'the people' are to be served by the media, the 'people's voice' cannot be confused with the voice of government. 'An oppositional frame of mind – even if this does not translate into direct political opposition – is the best guarantee that social transformation will be carried out in the interests of the people.'

Development communications at large need to be critically driven, says Addison, although it is not always easy to ask plain questions, and extracting straight answers is almost certain to upset people in the project hierarchy.

'Time and again in the context of projects, media workers encounter evidence of confusion, lack of consultation, delays, losses, mismanagement, corruption and plain abuses of power. A critical input is needed to alert the communities, organisations, managements and sponsors to the signs of misdirection and malfeasance.

'It is often difficult for people working with organisations to air constructive criticisms. Their own ideology may inhibit them, but also the organisation may suppress information and debate.'

Addison says recent revelations about the large-scale corruption in the Department of Development Aid suggest that development is one of those areas where the press needs to be especially vigilant. With the coming of a majority government committed to social

spending, the risks of mismanagement and corruption are ever greater.

Addison says modern liberation movements have tended to mix the media worker's role with that of the journalist. The journalist as media worker is expected to mobilise, organise, activate and teach the masses.

'This remains controversial because it departs from the paradigm of journalistic objectivity. But, clearly, development journalism must spring from this approach.'

The creed of objectivity, Addison points out, grew up with the world's news agencies, which aimed to sell their stories to newspapers ranging across the political spectrum – so objectivity has an instrumental value rather than being a philosophical absolute.

In South Africa the Newspaper Press Union's code of conduct (rejected by professional unions) endowed the major newspapers with the role of common carriers of news, putatively free of bias or sectional interest.

'It was not so, of course,' says Addison. 'The corporate media elaborated a racially fragmented system of news and views in which sensitive items were either self-censored or "balanced" with the responses of state spokespersons.'

In the final analysis, says Addison, all communication personnel have journalistic responsibilities, while the social responsibilities of journalism imply some commitment to democratic values and social upliftment.

'The connecting link is the idea that communication serves the right of all people to know, especially to know about things that affect their lives directly – as development programmes are indeed designed to do.'

Addison concludes that the mass media have an important role to play in both mobilising support for programmes and in drawing attention to their shortcomings.

He uses as an example the *Sowetan*, which has been committed by editor Aggrey Klaaste to 'nation-building'. This commitment entails both support for liberation and a critical attitude towards the conduct of movements.

AT A conference on media and development at Rhodes University in April, there was an air of resignation about the contribution that the mass media could be expected to make towards development in South Africa in the immediate future.

It seemed that, at best, we can hope to influence the media to become 'development sensitive' and to gear itself for playing a greater role in this field in future.

The conference was arranged around the theme of 'Making media work for Southern Africa's development'. If this theme reflected elements of a rigid 'development brief for the media, it quickly became clear in the discussions that this was neither feasible nor desirable and that it would probably be resisted at most levels of the industry.

In fact, throughout the conference, which was hosted by the journalism department and AIA (Africa Information Afrique) news agency, there were voices protesting against a narrow instrumentalist view of the mass media, particularly as blatant agents for specific political programmes.

The loudest protests came from delegates from neighbouring countries, editors and academics who cautioned against what was referred to as 'majority phobia journalism' – reporting to please a perceived majority audience. 'Unless we tell the truth we do not give democracy a chance to thrive,' one of these delegates warned.

It was generally agreed that the mainstream media were trapped by outdated news agendas and that their journalists and managements still had to discover what role they could play in development, however broadly or narrowly one defines the concept.

Unrepresentative of the wider community and with low levels of specialisation and a poor investigative culture, the present body of journalists also seems hopelessly ill-equipped to make a meaningful contribution at this stage, even if only to tell the story of the development challenges facing the country. The conference heard, for example, that not a single corporate newspaper had a journalist deployed on the development beat, nor is there any sign of plans to do so.

This thoroughly gloomy picture was lightened somewhat by Shaun Johnson, political editor of *The Star*, who remarked that the flaws of the mainstream media were so well documented that people were overlooking and not taking advantage of the opportunities that had opened up in this sector of the media in the last few years.

Johnson argued that the interests of the



AIA editor Geoffrey Nyarota and Hein Marais of Work in Progress

A new(s) angle on development

media bosses and the majority of people were beginning to converge – and that it was therefore not unrealistic to assume that newspapers would become more relevant as development tools in the near future. 'The white-centric, Eurocentric gatekeeper is on the ropes and being overtaken by history,' he said.

Support for the latter contention came from Doret Jansen, group editor of *Klerksdorp Record*, the flagship of a network of freesheets serving towns – and now also townships – in that region. She said the transition to a more inclusive readership was not resisted by Perskor, or even the traditional readers, and the papers were showing steady growth in circulation.

Kumi Naidoo, director of education with Sached Trust, said the efforts of the commercial press in education, although probably well-meaning, had not yielded high educational value. He said Sached had recently been approached to take over the three educational pages that appear daily in the Africa edition of *The Star*.

'If newspapers throughout the country

begin carrying high quality, relevant educational supplements which address marginalised constituencies, then the education movement as a whole will also have a vested interest in supporting such newspapers,' said Naidoo.

The conference – mercifully perhaps – did not spend much time debating definitions of development. Some contributions did however indicate that horizons have been extended around what constitutes development, and how it could be achieved.

Addressing himself to the left of the political spectrum, Hein Marais, assistant editor of *Work in Progress*, said media on the left had yet to come to understand that development is not simply about housing, clinics, roads, wells, literacy, civics and so on.

'Fundamentally it's about enabling South Africans to live up to their potentials, to live their lives extensively.

'It means recognising that the disco every Saturday night might carry as much importance – development – as keeping the clinic on the go.

'The left's aversion to popular culture is

more than an embarrassment, more than an albatross around its proud neck – it's a basically authoritarian posture towards the mass out there, and the lives it lives.'

Marais said the left should be exploring the appeal of popular entertainment like soap operas and learn from this when addressing itself to the community. 'Why aren't we writing soaps that project the values we aspire towards, that we know the audience of Kwakhala Nonini aspires towards?' he asked.

Speaking on development priorities in the southern African region and realities that evade the media, Vivienne Taylor of the University of the Western Cape, said in many instances the gap between the media as agents of change and the people's concrete reality seemed to be increasing.

The media, she said, showed a tendency to look at the number and range of social problems rather than the intensity, the root causes and also those who are the most vulnerable. Rural areas, informal settlements, children and youth and women were among those priority areas that were not given enough attention, said Taylor.

She argued that quite often the importance of media in promoting social change was misconceived. 'The media, in part because of how it operates and the function it performs does not play a critical role in putting forward the origins, the root causes of social problems.'

However, as the southern African region attempts to promote regional integration and economic and social co-operation to address the development crisis, the media needs to determine the extent to which it can be a catalyst for change.

'News should not be only a collection of raw facts about the world, reflecting events with debatable but empirically determinable accuracy.

'It is an important part of the cultural system of modern society, particularly concerned with providing, in a preliminary fashion, frameworks for handling new and recurring problems of and for society.'

Whether the media could help to provide frameworks for new and old problems was an important part of the challenge. 'It calls for the directing of attention in a responsible manner towards some types and aspects of conflict and change,' said Taylor.

Ronel Scheffer is production co-ordinator in Idasa's media department.

**NEGOTIATE
FOR PEACE
AND
DEMOCRACY**



BY MOIRA LEVY

Liberation No 2: what difference to the poor?

A multi-party democracy without a strong civil society could amount to little more than a restructuring of the political elite. Africa learned this the hard way, according to a paper presented at a recent conference in Senegal.

AFRICA'S current 'democratic revolution', in which former one-party states are holding – or at least announcing their intention to hold – multi-party democratic elections, represents a political shift of some significance. International observers, funders in particular, have welcomed these moves with some relief, as signs of a process of reform which, if it achieves nothing else, will at least legitimise the continuation of their funding efforts.

However, for those on the ground, many of them rural peasants, the democratisation process represents not a turning point, but a logical and inevitable continuation of the decades of underdevelopment.

Their experience is being compared to the earliest period of post-colonial rule, replete as it was with broken promises and unfulfilled expectations. After multi-party elections in Kenya, Angola, Zambia, Cameroon, ordinary people, particularly rural peasants, are finding themselves in much the same position as before, facing top-down democratic drives which have much to do with securing old or alternative power elites, but little to do with land redistribution or social reform.

Their experience is summed up by Ethiopian professor Fantu Cheru, an economist based at the American University, in his phrase 'participation without empowerment'.

In a paper presented to a conference on civil society and democratic theory, held at the Gorée Institute, Senegal, he argued that the current campaign for multi-party reform in its present form is unlikely to bring substantial economic and political changes to the daily lives of the majority of people on the African continent.

Just like the struggle for independence that preceded it, the democratisation movement amounts to mobilising people of diverse class, social and political backgrounds under the leadership of an African middle-class elite. Also in common with the 'first liberation' of the 1960s is a tendency to emphasise struggle at the level of constitutional reform, where the focus is on vote-catching and building power bases, and to ignore civil society where ordinary people can be mobilised around issues that dominate their lives.

There exists widespread fear that the second liberation might turn out to be just as

disappointing as the first, and that the new democrats might turn their backs on the masses much the same way the leaders of the independence struggle had done.'

The lessons for South Africa ring out. Although Fantu's concern is with the peasantry who make up the bulk of the population of countries further north, his observations can be applied to South Africa on the eve of our first one-person-one-vote election.

He cites two truisms about multi-party democracy. Firstly, participation cannot be ordered from above but must be demanded and carried out from below and, secondly, democracy cannot succeed in conditions of absolute poverty. He lists the servicing of basic needs and providing of education as two prerequisites for its success.

'The central themes of the democracy debate have primarily focused on multi-party systems and on universal suffrage. The discussion involves very little treatment of how one goes about creating an "enabling" environment to sustain democracy.

While multi-party elections and universal franchise are important formal criteria, they are by no means sufficient to judge the democratic qualities of a society. In impoverished societies such as ours, democracy requires a change in the balance of forces.

The pursuit of democracy in itself is good. But in the African context ... political freedom and participation cannot be divorced from other kinds of freedom. There is an organic link between political freedom and freedom from hunger, ignorance and disease. People must see the results of democracy in an improved standard of living, better education, better housing and access to health and food items.'

Fantu points to an irony behind the upswing of democratisation in Africa; the 'success' of the new wave of democratisation is built on the failure of development. The politicians of today, like the leaders of the independence struggles of the past, have been able to draw on the support of the poor majority to advance their social adjustment programmes. Yet these new social and economic programmes often impose renewed hardships on the poor and usually do not

deliver what they promised.

This in turn fires local resistance to new democratic regimes that fail to live up to expectations – creating a new source of democratisation.

Having been victims of mismanaged and undemocratic state-sponsored development, the

masses of ordinary poor are increasingly attempting to bypass formal agencies and link up with different kinds of non-governmental organisations at a local level.

Fantu gives as an example the powerful Greens movement in Kenya under Dr Wangari Maathai, and the efforts by Kenyan coffee, tea and sugar farmers to bypass the parastatal and other official buyers by neglecting these export crops in favour of food crops for local consumption.

By rediscovering their self-reliance, these peasants become politically conscious and educated at the local level as they create new avenues for political and social mobilisation.

In Fantu's words: 'The delegitimation of the state has also opened up considerable room for the elaboration of new civil-society relations.

'This terrain has increasingly been occupied by civic associations, women's groups, peasants' associations, environmental groups and human rights groups' – in other words alternatives to the political party systems.

Their strategies cover non-payment of taxes, peasant insurrection, urban riot – what Fantu calls demands on the state through 'the politics of claims'.

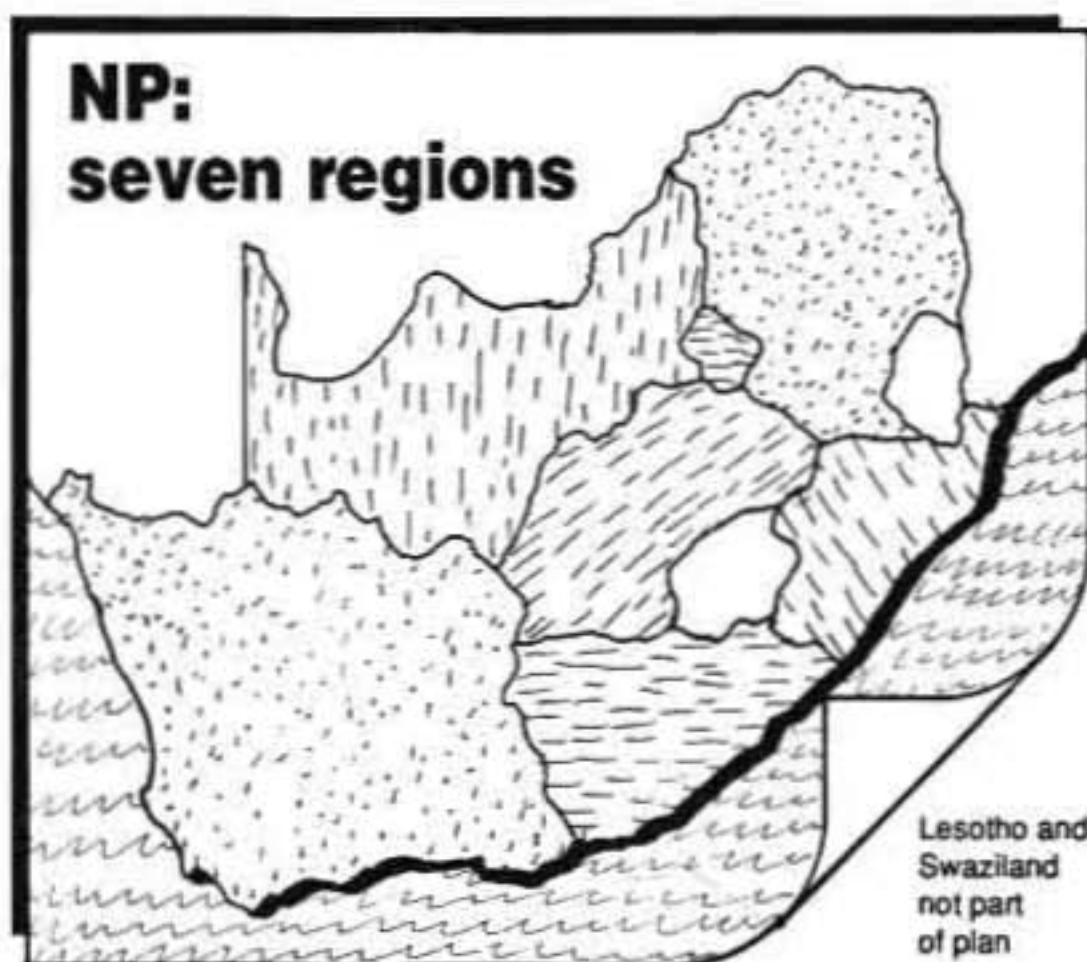
He warns that it is doubtful whether the leaders of multi-partyism in Africa recognise and understand the extent to which ordinary people are involved in the political struggle through un-ordinary, informal channels.

'Despite invoking the slogan of "popular participation" at every political rally, no clear directions are provided on how to involve grassroots organisations in a substantial way and to help them build local democratic capacities that will endure over time.'

His prophesy that such popular participation faces either being 'struck down or incorporated into centrally orchestrated organisation' sounds a lesson for South Africa. The future success of this country's democratisation efforts may well rest on how effectively these moves by the majority to bring about real change and accountable leadership are acknowledged, channelled and organised.

Moira Levy is a journalist in Idasa's media department.

Will a federal system produce good government in South Africa in the foreseeable future? RALPH LAWRENCE believes that it will hinder rather than further the cause of good government.



AT THE moment, the debate in South Africa about the desirability of federalism is concentrated on the objective of trying to reconcile competing political interests for the sake of an immediate general agreement that will entice, but also ensnare, the African National Congress and its allies. Hence the concern with 'regionalism'.

Now, I grant you, federalism has been touted for many a more respectable reason still, although in the cauldron of national negotiations such refinement is either lost entirely, or deployed purely as a weapon of political expediency. However, away from the hustings, we should ask ourselves whether federalism is, indeed, likely to bring about good government for the foreseeable future. I remain sceptical. Let me explain why.

What does federalism entail? At root, it imposes a territorial shape on society by political means, with mechanisms of governance established to enshrine this. Most typically, a system of dual political sovereignty is instituted whereby central government and regional or provincial governments are each granted constitutionally delineated powers that are both original and autonomous. Thus a central - namely, a federal - government's sphere of authority need not countenance interference from any regional government. And vice versa.

I stress this defining quality of federalism because as matters now stand in South Africa there is much play on the word 'regionalism'. In the current political lexicon, regionalism is meant to convey a form of distribution of political power that is neither wholly unitary nor fully federal, yet somehow captures the essence of both. To me, this is dangerous talk. You can fudge a political compromise by resorting to semantic shenanigans. Can we, however, afford to live with the ensuing confusion that will surely arise when the engineered hybrid becomes a political reality? It's very simple. A unified state which makes provision for dual sovereignty is ineluctably federal in nature; if, on the other hand, the same state grants regions powers that are not sovereign, substantial though they may be, the dispensation is a unitary one.

A recipe for rivalry & discord

The crucial issue is now: what would come of a system of dual sovereignty in a federal South Africa? Much hinges on how public revenue is raised and allocated on a nationwide basis. This is where I believe the constitutional niceties of federalism will be overridden by the imperatives of political power.

'A region's sovereignty can be readily blunted by federal command of the public purse'

For a country with South Africa's profile, intent on pursuing security, justice and development simultaneously - as any democratically installed government would have to - the mechanism of dual sovereignty bears the seeds of an inherent dilemma. In circumstances such as ours, comparable Third World governments have felt impelled to shoulder the burden of national economic

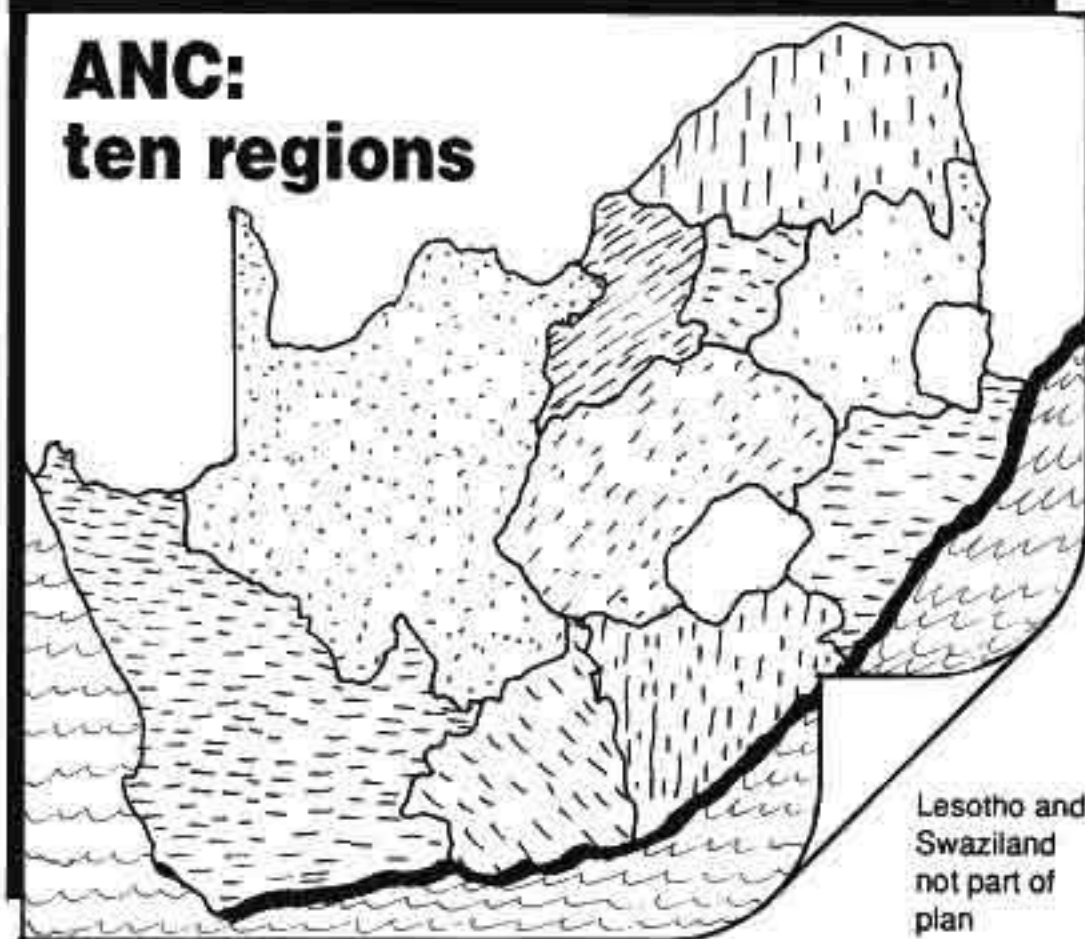
management. Argentina, Brazil, India, Nigeria, all federal states, are cases in point (and, while different in significant respects, the East Asian 'Newly Industrialising Countries' bear this out too). Economic statecraft has necessitated, at a minimum, setting the parameters for entrepreneurship, directing trade and investment, supplying infrastructure, and attending to education, training and social welfare.

Curious as it may appear, democratic regimes are highly reliant on finely tuned measures of economic statecraft because the citizenry are impatient to have their expectations met. To make this remotely possible, the rates of inflation, employment, borrowing, debt and investment, as well as the balance of trade, have to be juggled by the government of the day. Should it fail, or merely be perceived as inept, those in power would legitimately fear the price come the next election around the corner. Any nascent democracy in South Africa would surely be subjected to similar pressures.

The constant short-term requirements of political rule force a central government to dictate the course of national economic management. This implies also laying down the fiscal limits for every region. So a region's sovereignty can readily be blunted by fed-

Lesotho and Swaziland not part of plan

ANC: ten regions



Proposed regions as put forward by the National Party and the ANC.

Lesotho and Swaziland not part of plan



Ralph Lawrence

'The constitutional niceties of federalism will be overridden by the imperatives of political power'

eral command of the public purse. The sources of relief nominally open to regions in a federal arrangement disappear by administrative fiat.

What of taxes, you rightly ask? Well, regions often are able to raise independent revenue from sales and property tax, apart from local licensing fees and charges for public services rendered. Beyond this, they act as the glorified agents of central government in gathering monies for the federal coffers. For example, income and corporation tax, customs and excise duty fall into this category. A region's own source of revenue is very modest compared to its needs. In other words, it is highly dependent on federal largesse. However, regional governments can sometimes find a modicum of additional relief by resorting to compulsory loans, debentures and lotteries.

If not taxes, then how about loans? Foreign loans normally require the blessing of the federal executive, not least because the latter invariably has to stand as guarantor. So this option is effectively in the gift of central government, which will weigh up an application according to the priorities of its own macroeconomic policies, together with the prevailing national economic indicators.

Regions then rely on transfer payments

from the central exchequer. Effecting these causes political conflict. Most federal states create an administrative instrument for deciding who should receive how much. A body of this kind is a political creature in that its membership is, one way or another, settled by politicians themselves. So a particular region can have a beef about the composition of such a fiscal commission even though it might itself have had a voice in determining the outcome.

A fiscal commission normally disburses fixed payments to regions on the basis of a generally agreed formula. Even this is not plain sailing. For a start, the total sum available for distribution tends to be decided by federal government. And, surprise, surprise, guess who winds up with ever bigger slices of the pie? Why, federal government, of course. The evidence worldwide is overwhelming. Therefore, the regions are left to squabble over the crumbs. And squabble they do. Consequently, the regions are pitched into competition with one another, each seeking a tilting of the formula to suit its interests.

To complicate matters further, regions nowadays derive a shrinking proportion of federal transfer payments from a fixed arrangement. More and more emanates from discretionary grants administered solely by

the federal government itself. In the context of societies akin to South Africa there are several motivations behind this. As was originally intended, discretionary grants give central officialdom the wherewithal to respond to urgent needs; most obviously, relief from unforeseen disasters. The grants can also be used for projects which span regional boundaries – a transport network, a hydroelectric scheme, for instance. The trouble is that such programmes earmarked for development can all too readily become political footballs. Here a region is prey to federal government's favour. From a federal ruler's perspective this is rapidly reduced to, 'what's in it for me?'

What lends additional purpose to discretionary funding in developing states is government's imperative for national economic management. There can be no economic statecraft unless a government allows itself room for manoeuvre. By not fully guaranteeing transfer payments to the regions by means of a rigid formula, a federal government gains the breathing space it needs to respond to the exigencies any Third World economy confronts.

Because the stakes are so high, discretionary grants trail in their wake two pernicious lines of political conflict. Regions will each wage their private battles with the federal authorities, trying to convince them that a specific project in one area should be preferred to any other; and, of course, every region believes it is championing the most deserving case. Secondly, in lobbying federal government, a region is really trying to outdo rival claims from its counterparts, which fuels interregional discord. In the foregoing sketch I have attempted to open up a line of argument in order to facilitate a more thorough assessment of how federal governance would likely turn out in South Africa. My brief has not permitted me to make the case properly by arraying the evidence. Notwithstanding this, let me convey the nub of my argument.

Federalism rests on the notion of dual sovereignty. However, any region's sovereign powers will be alarmingly spurious since, for very good reason, the power of the public purse will be wielded principally by the federal government. Moreover, because this is so, intergovernmental relations will be imperilled by the subsequent conflict between central and regional authorities, compounded by rivalry among the regions themselves. In these circumstances, federalism is more likely to hinder rather than further the cause of good government.

Ralph Lawrence teaches politics at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg.



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CREATING A BALANCE

Landless in limbo

The contest between the AmaSwazi people, other black groupings, and white agricultural and tourist interests for land in the Drakensberg area around Winterton in Natal is one of hundreds of land disputes in South Africa. JEROME NGWENYA and CHARLES TALBOT examine the roots of this contest and offer some suggestions on how attempts at resolution might be approached.

The group of people under consideration refer to themselves – and are known to others – as the AmaSwazi. This in itself is of significance. Although the general perception is that the African people of modern KwaZulu and Natal are simply 'Zulu', the names of specific clans and chiefdoms still give people social identity and often indicate a particular history. This is so in the case of the AmaSwazi.

Such evidence as exists indicates that at the beginning of the 19th century they lived on the border of the Zulu and Swazi kingdoms, related to the Swazi royal house but giving political allegiance to the Zulu royal house under Shaka.

In the middle of the 19th century they were driven from their land by the Swazi king. Some sought refuge in the Free State, some in Lesotho, and some fled to the foothills of the Drakensberg in Natal. Here they settled, probably under Langalibalele of the AmaHlubi tribe, who had been appointed chief of the area by the Natal government.

In 1873 the Natal government accused Langalibalele of rebellion and broke up the Hlubi settlement. It is probable that it was in the aftermath of this that the land on which the AmaSwazi were living was sold to white farmers.

The AmaSwazi remained in the region as labour tenants, however, living on the land in return for giving a period of labour to the white owner (it is remembered as six months per year). While members of the tribe underwent a range of economic experiences – as rural producers, labour tenants, labourers on the roads and railways, migrant workers – their community was a close-knit one, with their Chief Shabalala playing a crucial role in insuring that they retained a particular identity.

As a result, the AmaSwazi can trace an unbroken history of land occupation in the

area of Bell Park and Kilfargie (these are farms in the vicinity of Winterton, on the way to Champagne Castle). They point to particular historical markers and grave sites, to an unbroken chiefly line, and to a reputation for reliability, hard work, and responsibility. They identify closely with clearly defined pieces of land and perceive them as theirs.

In 1962 the AmaSwazi were the victims of



Droogspruit: barren temporary home of the AmaSwazi.

a forced removal – uprooted and relocated to a temporary site called Connistan, which falls under the control of the AmaNgane tribe. The AmaSwazi managed to remain on this land peacefully until the mid-1980s, when conflict broke out between the two tribes.

'A solution seems remote and the people, the youth in particular, are increasingly restive'

The AmaSwazi appealed to the authorities for relief. The response in 1987 was relocation to a site called Droogspruit – barren, devoid of basic social services, and belonging to the powerful AmaHlubi tribe.

The AmaSwazi now find themselves in a

very difficult position. The likelihood of their continued occupation of the area known as Droogspruit is tenuous, to say the least. Any faith they might have had in the state is long gone. Their chief remains the chief, imposing discipline, appealing for order while he and his advisers seek restitution. But a solution seems remote and the people, the youth in particular, are increasingly restive.

Over the past 30 years the AmaSwazi have made representations to a series of land commissions, and sent representations to the heads of both regional and national government departments dealing with land affairs. Nevertheless they remain on a temporary site.

During 1992 they began a civil disobedience campaign to draw attention to their plight. This has fed existing tensions between the AmaSwazi and establishment interests in the area – the Natal Parks Board, the timber industry, local farmers and the tourist industry.

A resolution of this emotion-laden conflict, which exists not only between the needs of different groups of human beings but also between humanity and nature herself, will be immensely difficult. Nevertheless, it is essential that it be attempted.

The attempt will have to be a non-legalistic one, not least because of the unbridgeable gap between Western and African concepts of ownership and debt. It has been pointed out repeatedly that support for the Western notion of the sanctity of current ownership of land will simply entrench the injustices of the past.

Idasa and the Community Conflict Resolution Service of the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa (IMSSA) were called in to assist in the search for a resolution of the AmaSwazi conflict in the second half of 1992.

During initial meetings it became clear that an escalating conflict in the area would not serve anyone's interests, and that it was imperative that mechanisms be created to address the different issues. Establishment interests in the area realised that unless the fundamental issue of land for the tribe was addressed, the area could become conflict-ridden and dysfunctional.

A short-term committee was set up with representatives from the AmaSwazi and establishment interests to deal with the day to day issues of the situation, while an approach had to be developed to address the core issue – land.

The first complicating factor is the absence of any clear policy on land disputes. At present the only mechanism for channeling land claims is the Advisory Committee on Land Affairs (Acla) which, apart from its purely advisory status, has severely limited terms of reference.

Acla's brief is merely to advise on the allocation of South African Tribal Trust lands. This puts the AmaSwazi in a corner because all the Tribal Trust land in the region is already subject to claims and counter-claims from other tribes, while the land that they claim is not Tribal Trust land.

This situation is further complicated by the fact that at present there are approximately 63 landless tribes in South Africa, all of whom are waiting for some indication on how they might go about pursuing their land claims.

As a result of these two factors, Idasa and IMSSA have been working on developing a multi-disciplinary programme which could assist the interested parties to resolve this dispute. Idasa has facilitated the creation of a

multi-disciplinary team to work on the project, with skills including agricultural planning, legal advice, environmental assessment, history, agricultural economy, development planning, facilitation and mediation.

'Support for the Western notion of the sanctity of current ownership of land will simply entrench the injustices of the past'

As a result of the complexities surrounding the land claim and the variety of levels at which it will have to be tackled, the following combination of approaches will have to be used:

- issue-based – to enable identification of the most realistic and appropriate options which may be pursued;
- integrated – to ensure that key sectors and actors are involved at the appropriate levels;
- participative – involving local groups and individuals from inception to ensure capacity building and ownership of the process;
- strategic – to optimise opportunities.

The modus operandi must involve identifying key actors and interest groups and the issues which they tend to protect. It is at this level that alternative options for dealing with the land claim may be introduced and debated, and common ground established.

However, common ground on its own is often not sufficient to bring groups together around an emotive issue such as land. Additional incentive is likely to be required. This may be identified by linking common-ground issues to vested interests in order to achieve a sustainable balance between the

different groups.

Part of the strategy is likely to involve tackling issues surrounding the land claim on a variety of fronts, including, for example:

- engaging with all the major interest groups, particularly the AmaSwazi, and working through what they perceive to be the central issues and the resolution;
- identifying alternative land for settlement;
- establishing ownership, cost and past claims to the land;
- reaching agreement from all major groups on which block of land could be used for the permanent settlement of the affected tribe;
- locating possible sources of funding for land purchase, including possible compensation from a Supreme Court case and investment from major sub-regional interests (farmers, tourism groups, timber companies, and so on);
- gaining provincial approval for the establishment of a township on the land purchased that might be more informal or more closely settled than normal;
- undertaking a farm planning exercise and establishing different agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises that could be pursued on a viable basis;
- locating funding for capacity building, training and the establishment of a serviced settlement and a number of viable economic enterprises.

It is our local belief that, in the absence of a statutory mechanism to address problems of this nature, it is necessary to develop programmes and processes that can allow the different interest groups to create their own solutions.

Jerome Ngwenya is regional director of the IMSSA Community Conflict Resolution Service. Charles Talbot is regional co-ordinator in Idasa's Natal office

Local courts proposal gets good reception

By DANIEL NINA

Is there a need to establish community courts in the 'new' South Africa? Apparently such a need does exist, and the Eastern Cape branch of the SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco) launched its proposal on this issue at a recently held conference in Port Elizabeth which was hosted

by Idasa.

What is a community court? A community court – in terms of the Sanco proposal – represents a step beyond the organic mechanisms of dispute resolution currently in operation, like people's courts and street committees. The community court would be organised in a formal way under the Department of Justice in a new political dispensation.

The court would consist of a panel of judges which would be elected by the community itself. The judges would be guided by the principles of the bill of rights of the new constitution, the proceedings would be conducted in the local language, and matters would be resolved by common sense.

How did this idea develop? In February this year, the Eastern Cape region of Sanco decided to reorganise its existing anti-crime committees (ACCs). The ACCs are community-based bodies of voluntary members, which deal with crime prevention and intervention. The ACCs investigate criminal activities in the community and hand over alleged culprits to the police. In addition to the reorganisation of the ACCs, Sanco realised that the communities of the Eastern Cape also need to put into operation adequate mechanisms of dispute resolution.

A community courts workshop series was started in March with the support of Idasa. The intention was to work out a proposal for

More than a female complaint

By NDUMI GWAYI



The concept of gender has often created much confusion among women and the public in general. But where do the distortions lie in what has become known as the 'gender vs women' debate?

It is perhaps important, firstly, to mention that there is no concept like gender in African languages. Hence 'sex' and 'gender' basically have the same meaning (just like the the relative pronouns he/she). This initial confusion surfaced in discussions within our Gender Focus Group in the Border region, and levelling the playing field was therefore a logical step to bring everyone on board and to reach a common understanding.

As an advocate of human rights for all, I regard women's rights as crucial to a democratic future. It should be the responsibility of all South Africans, men and women, to redress current imbalances of power in this area. This understanding suggests a gender approach to addressing our societal misconstructions. Gender is an integral part of all forms of power.

While women do need to address issues affecting them as a biological and socio-political grouping, the tendency to categorise women often means that differences such as class and race are overlooked. These differences only surface in forums where gender relations are examined in the variety of settings in which they occur.

Thenjiwe Mtintso of the SA Communist Party once argued that the fight by 'black brothers and sisters against national oppression' was a misnomer without a focus on gender oppression. She referred to a particular trend in the liberation struggle that clearly defined the source of gender oppression and also espoused women's emancipation. Yet it fell short of defining 'the notion of non-sexist society seriously enough to unambiguously address patriarchal relations'.

It is therefore crucial that people explore ways of challenging the status quo at the level of power relations, and it is not possible for one section of society (women) to do this effectively on their own.

During her address to our Gender Focus Group on this debate earlier this year, Thoko Matshe of the Women's National Coalition said the social roles people play in society were at the centre of the concept of gender. These social constructions, she said, were loaded with psychological and physical traits that are artificial and attributed to all men

and women.

Gender roles are also oppressive to males in many respects and groups working with these issues would do well to take advantage of this strategic gap to broaden involvement in the struggle against gender oppression. We need a co-ordinated gender-awareness drive to ensure that a new political dispensation overcomes these stereotypes and makes power accessible across the board both legally and constitutionally.

Gender should not be used as a substitute for the term 'women' as this encourages emphasis on social life areas that are traditionally regarded as the domain of women.

Social relations should ensure that women's rights are addressed by all to encourage participation of all sectors of society in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Ndumi Gwayi is the regional director of Idasa in East London.

(The Gender Focus Group can be contacted through the East London office.)

a uniform model of ACCs and community courts for the Eastern Cape region. After three workshops, the delegates of Sanco were able to draft a proposal that satisfied their needs.

This proposal was positively received by all the participants in the conference. They included members of different NGOs working in the areas of crime prevention (Nicro, Cape Town), dispute resolution (Community Dispute Resolution Trust and IMMSA) and paralegal training (LHR and Community Law Centre). Members of the South African Police and the attorney-general's office in Port Elizabeth followed the proceedings with interest, and several academics also participated.

Keynote speaker Albie Sachs had eloquent words for the project, and compared this initiative with the popular tribunals of Mozambique, where ordinary citizens were involved in dispensing justice.

Nonetheless, Sachs was cautious as regards the implementation of the project of community courts and the need to protect the civil and human rights of each individual. In this sense, he argued that further discussions at the national level would be necessary before implementation.

Max Mamase, regional co-director of Idasa, strongly defended the need for community courts in a future political dispensation. He argued that this initiative had to be seen within the context of a developing civil

society, which is working for the democratisation of the government; a civil society which is working for the creation of structures which will decentralise power, allowing more participation to the private citizen.

Sanco will enhance its proposal with the contributions made during the conference and will then decide what to do with the final version of the proposal. Regardless of the outcome of the final draft, the conference has opened the debate on the topic and any restructuring of the judicial system will need to take this proposal into account.

Daniel Nina is a researcher with Vista University and co-ordinated the community courts conference.

Erwin: Economic forum the only route

THE National Economic Forum (NEF), the first democratic forum for negotiating economic policy for South Africa, is the only route for solving the enormous economic problems that face the country. So says Alec Erwin, national education officer for the National Union of Metalworkers of SA and the Cosatu representative at the NEF.

Addressing a recent Idasa Future Forum in Durban, Erwin said that without a democratic process through which negotiations between organised labour, organised

business and the government could successfully carry out economic structural change, our future could be very bleak.

He directed a specific appeal to Natal, which is one of the few regions that does not yet have a regional economic forum in place. He said that there was a clear choice – people could politic around the economy, while suffering and hardship continued unabated, or they could choose to thrash out their differences to revive the economy, and give the country hope.

The NEF now consists of

both long-term and short-term sub-committees which are negotiating a variety of issues crucial to economic survival.

Erwin said the short-term committee was close to agreement on a retrenchment policy which would require employers to consider all options for staff before retrenchment took place. In addition, work security funds would be set up to cushion the hardships of unemployment for retrenched workers.

Skills made redundant would be identified and retraining for self-employment

would take place, creating an active labour market and making unemployment a brief and useful period, rather than the end of the road for many people, he said.

The short-term committee was also negotiating around a social plan programme, in terms of which industries that were no longer viable would be gradually scaled down rather than shut down.

Long-term policies being addressed include issues such as the investment gap and a new trade policy.

Shelley Gielink, Natal office

Talks: Legal status urgent

URGENT priority should be given to creating legal interim local government structures to effect joint decision-making at the local level.

This was the feeling of some 230 delegates – representing civics, municipalities and the ANC in the Eastern Cape – who attended a conference on transitional measures hosted by Idasa in Port Elizabeth at the end of April.

Delegates said local negotiation forums were faced with a situation where municipalities were making decisions which had a bearing on matters debated in local forums. This would be avoided if interim structures with legal status were created.

Regarding the non-payment of services and rent, Sanco (SA National Civic Organisation) delegates argued that these were bargaining points that would be dropped when representative structures were in place and new tariff structures had been negotiated.

Max Mamase, Regional Co-director



Delegates listen to the debate.

Training voters

IDASA'S Training Centre for Democracy and Matla Trust pooled their resources recently to present a voter education workshop to some 150 people in KwaNdebele.

The workshop started with a briefing session on negotiations and attempted to clarify different electoral systems.

The most exciting part of the programme was a session on how to vote. Those participants who did not get a chance to role play the voting procedures were visibly disappointed. There was a strong commitment by all present to impart their knowledge to other people in their communities.

A fine example from Zastron, Matlakeng

UNEMPLOYMENT, poverty, homelessness, and sometimes severe racial tensions and polarisation, are problems experienced by many small towns in the Free State.

In the week after the funeral of Chris Hani, members of the Zastron/Matlakeng community came together for a workshop to determine the needs and expectations of various interest groups around development. A joint venture of Idasa and the OFS Peace Committee, the workshop also aimed to promote understanding and participation in designing an interactive planning process.

The OFS Peace Committee plans to establish local peace committees in all towns in the province to ensure peace through conflict resolution, and to initiate socio-economic reconstruction programmes. The purpose of the workshop was then also to determine the framework within which such a committee should operate.

Those present were a very representative group from the local community – political parties, civics, local authorities, the churches and police. It was remarkable that this group managed to agree on a common vision for their community – peace and harmony in an

economically viable atmosphere, guided by the principles of democracy, participation, accountability, joint responsibility and sound administration. Compulsory basic education (under one department) for all children in the area was identified as a strong need.

A local peace committee will be elected to carry forward the vision, goodwill, ideas and energy generated by the workshop. The people of Matlakeng and Zastron have set an encouraging example for the rest of South Africa.

Kobus van Loggerenberg
Regional Co-ordinator

Youth take on democracy questions

AS PART of Idasa's education for democracy programme in the Western Cape, four youth workshops will be held this year on issues related to democracy.

In an attempt to engage as many schools as possible in the programme, each workshop will involve some 40 pupils from different schools in the greater Cape Town area. The ideas generated and discussed will be drawn together in an informal youth-orientated booklet after each event. In this way, the participants will also contribute towards developing educational resources for themselves and their peers.

The workshops form part of



A discussion session during the first workshop.

a programme to further the growth of a democratic culture. As such, they are designed with a non-partisan focus on democratic values and principles. Programmes are built around interaction and encourage active participation and creative input from the students.

Pupils from 14 different high

schools recently attended the first workshop in the series, which had youth and democracy as its theme. Violence, racism, unemployment and disinterested youth were identified as the most burning issues among those discussed at the workshop. Many participants want to be involved in more workshops of this kind,

and saw the event as the beginning of a process they would like to take further. Our office is looking at ways to facilitate such a process and invite all interested students or teachers to contact Erika at (021) 462-3635.

The second workshop, on June 23, will focus on equality as a principle of democracy. The third workshop, on August 7, will focus on peace. The date and topic for the fourth event has not been finalised but it is likely to take place on September 22. Schools interested in participating may submit to our office the names of two pupils who would like to attend. If openings exist closer to the time, more pupils from each school will be accommodated.

Erika Coetzee
Regional Co-ordinator

Midrand: striving towards an ideal

THE RAPIDLY developing area of Midrand, between Johannesburg and Pretoria, is regarded as key to the economic development of the PWV metropolitan region because of its geographical position and industrial growth.

In 1992 Idasa was approached by the Midrand Town Council to facilitate a process - involving all players - to devise a coherent development strategy for the area. Identifying - and involving - the different role players in Midrand has been a slow process. In addition to the town council and chamber of commerce, there are 11 ratepayers' associations and a number of groups operating in Rabie Ridge and Ivory Park. Ivory Park, which started as an informal settlement east of the Ben Schoeman highway some years ago, now has in the region of 80 000 residents. In spite of limited low-cost housing projects and health and educational facilities, the area still

sorely lacks infrastructure.

Idasa has run two workshops for residents of Midrand and Ivory Park this year. In these workshops participants were asked to identify needs and problem areas, and to come up with a vision for the 'ideal' Midrand.

The level of agreement has been surprising and encouraging. Naturally there were differences in emphasis - while many of the rate-

BY BEA ROBERTS

payers are anxious to see a development plan for the underdeveloped areas of Midrand, the Ivory Park representatives want urgent attention to be given to the provision of basic services and the proclamation of Ivory Park as a town. However, what has become increasingly clear is that Midrand needs an acceptable and representative structure to deal not only with the nebulous issue of development, both in the short and long term, but with relation-

ships, communication systems, local government, and the relationship with the broader PWV region.

Realising that the Midrand process would take up much more time than originally anticipated, Idasa was given the go-ahead by interest groups to appoint a full-time project manager for six months. We were fortunate to secure the services of Patrick Maduna, a

former KaNgwane cabinet minister and a medical doctor by profession. During 1992 he was chairperson of Codesa's Working Group 3 on the constitution. His extensive experience of political negotiation, facilitation, and departmental management is invaluable to the Midrand process.

The process has been time-consuming, but rewarding, so far. Virtually all the role players have been contracted into the process and a process team is looking at a structure to

incorporate the ideas and visions of many hours' discussion. The ideal Midrand, as workshop participants saw it, is a place where conditions are such that residents can develop their full economic potential, sustain and increase their quality of life and have access to housing, adequate education and all goods and services.

Furthermore, Midrand wants to be a role model for accommodating political diversity and for joint decision-making processes that take into account the broad values and principles of all people.

In a mere matter of months the people of Midrand have already accomplished a great deal: a commitment to this process by all role players, a willingness to forget past wrongs and disagreements, and a resolve to devote substantial time and energy to achieving the 'ideal' Midrand.

Bea Roberts is a regional co-ordinator in Idasa's Pretoria office.



Renewing old ties ... Madame Danielle Mitterrand and French ambassador Joelle Bourgois (second from left) with Idasa staff in Durban - Shelagh Gastrow, Steven Collins, Charles Talbot and Simon Ntombela. Madame Mitterrand visited several Idasa offices during her recent visit to South Africa. Her association with the institute goes back to the 1987 Dakar initiative, which was generously supported by France Liberté, the foundation she heads.

Reconstruction needs local initiatives

LOCAL development initiatives are central to any process of economic reconstruction in the Border region, according to development experts who attended two recent breakfast seminars in East London.

'South African politicians looking to foreign investment as the panacea to economic ills should rather concentrate on encouraging indigenous business to ensure sustained economic growth,' said visiting Scottish academic, Mr Ivan Turok.

He expressed disappointment that political parties were not addressing economic policy issues in a manner which would 'restructure the economy in a meaningful way'.

'It comes back to indigenous development of gearing the economy towards the production of mass consumer goods for the black population and moving away from luxury goods.'

The small and medium-sector should be encouraged to expand, and larger companies pressurised into becoming more competitive, Mr Turok added.

Public spending support should be directed towards

upgrading township living conditions and providing residents with a means of generating income on a sustained basis within their communities.

Speakers at a seminar on finance for development questioned the traditional approach to development because it involved no strategic progress.

Mr Tito Mboweni of the ANC's department of economic planning said traditional development was project oriented, and made no advance towards changing the situation. He suggested goal-oriented planning for projects.

The director of Corplan, Mr Steve Topham, questioned the role of international aid agencies who were providing finance for development but which will increasingly shift from donating to intermediaries to a legitimate government once it was in power.

Mr John Barker of Amatola Finance Corporation, suggested tapping into rural saving to finance development.

The seminar series is jointly hosted by Idasa, Corplan, Border Rural Committee and the Rural Advice Centre.

Glen Bownes
Regional Co-ordinator

Training for party monitors

WHILE political party representatives talk about an election date at the multi-party negotiating forum, party election officers are sitting down together in Pretoria to talk about the election itself and the training of party election monitors.

They have been brought together by Idasa's Transvaal office at the request of the Swedish International Liberal Centre (SILC), which hopes to assist political organisations with training.

All parties participating in the negotiations were invited to send representatives to attend a consultative meeting on 26 April, where the programme, its aims, content and imple-

mentation would be discussed. Only the Conservative Party declined the invitation.

At the meeting SILC said that it understood the training of party monitors to include two components:

- * training party activists to understand the electoral law or rules of the game;

- * training party activists in the mechanics of voting so that they would be able to monitor voting stations on election day.

It is hoped that by the end of May a start can be made on the design of a training programme which would be implemented at national, regional and possibly local level.

Alice Coetzee
Regional Co-ordinator

Changing minds at work

AT THE end of a seven-hour 'Introduction to Democracy' course at Warner Lambert in Cape Town, a participant who confided during an earlier tea break that she had already made plans to emigrate to Botswana, was the first to volunteer to become part of a local peace-keeping initiative.

Such was the atmosphere during the course run by Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy for about 25 people, employed at different levels in the company.

One session involved participants in examining the development of South African

society and its effects on their families and themselves as individuals. This exercise made them think differently and more positively about where they came from and what their potential destinies were.

The programme also included practical planning on what they could contribute to the development and sustenance of a democratic country and culture.

The day ended on a very positive note with the whole group adopting the principle of community-mindedness, among a range of other values.

Geoff Brown
Tutor, Training Centre



New tutor

GEOFF Brown (left) has joined Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy in Johannesburg as a tutor.

Geoff was based at the Students' Resource Centre at the University of the Western Cape before moving to Johannesburg.

Previously he worked on the ANC Youth League's special committee on national youth unity. He is also a founder member of the National Youth Development Forum.

Opening a new window on world

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD: A NEW VISION. Report on a conference organised by the SA Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Southern African Studies. August 1992, 54 pages, published by SAIIA, Johannesburg.

THE CHANGING WORLD AND PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMACY. A report of a workshop organised by the Centre for Southern African Studies and the International Studies Unit (Rhodes University). February 1993, 77 pages, published by CSAS, Bellville.

SOUTH Africa's transition to a new democratic order is not a process limited to the domestic arena. Politicians and the public increasingly recognise the continuing vital role of the international community in the process of transforming South African society – a role that recently became prominent with the deployment of various teams of international observers and monitors throughout the country. Most South Africans now accept the necessity of the international community acting as mid-wife in the painful process of giving birth to a new order in South Africa.

However, there is not always a clear understanding of the parameters of world interest and involvement in our transition. Although it is not a popular argument it is necessary to repeat that the global interest and goodwill generated since 1990 will be of limited duration.

Given the fragile state of global politics and economics, interest is already shifting – away from Africa, towards new and potentially more damaging flashpoints (damaging to the industrialised West, that is). The future of the Russian Federation and Bosnia are cases in point. Equally ominous for South Africa are recent global economic developments. The end of the Cold War introduced accelerated trade bloc forming with concomitant protectionist tendencies, and the spectre of a coming trade war not far behind. This brings the further marginalisation of Africa and the only remaining global divide into sharper focus: that of North versus South.

Given these global developments, it would be naive and simplistic to expect post-apartheid South Africa to conduct its international affairs with more ease than in the past. A rude awakening awaits those

who believe (or hope) that South Africa will easily assume an uncontroversial and comfortable role in global affairs. A new government will inevitably be forced to make complex and even unpopular choices in the formulation of its foreign, economic and political policy. All the more reason, therefore, for South Africans to urgently concentrate their minds on South Africa's future international stance. I can gladly report that such thinking has already started. The two publications under review reflect a sense of urgency among academics, the ANC, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, for us to develop a better understanding of the momentous changes abroad and their implications for this country. This is coupled to a call for appropriate responses at home.

The two publications under discussion essentially ask whether South Africa can produce a new vision of its place in the changing world order and whether it has the capacity to make and carry out an effective foreign policy.

By ANTHONI VAN NIEUWKERK

South Africa and the World: A New Vision deals with the first question. It is probably unfair to expect a disparate group of 70-odd foreign policy specialists to come up with 'a new vision' after three days of workshopping. Instead, the group adoted a 'broad-canvas' approach, focusing on four issue areas – South Africa and the world; political and diplomatic; South Africa in the world economy; South Africa in Africa; and the making of foreign policy. The publication also carries two excellent essays by well-known academics Jack Spence and Sam Nolutshungu. This working approach produced not a new vision (the title does seem slightly misleading) but rather made clear what South Africa will face when preparing for a new relationship with the international community. It also highlighted a number of foreign policy options that might become available to the new government when making policy.

A remarkable feature of the publication was the measure of consensus reached. As a member of the workshop commented, instead of vast areas of disagreement, '... common goals emerged, a common reality was perceived and agreement was reached on methods of achieving the desired goals. Ideological differences appeared to be almost completely absent' (p 3).

What became clear throughout the pro-

ceedings was a realisation of the growing importance of economic affairs in foreign policy ('Geo-economics would come to replace geo-politics' or 'the primacy of economics', as participants put it). This means that states in their relations with one another would come to be guided by economic considerations above all else, and the comment was made that the direction of South African foreign policy in future would have to be determined by careful economic calculation.

Alas, the context for South African policy-making created by the current state of the domestic economy and international economic conditions in the 1990s does not look favourable at all:

- South Africa faces a harsh international trading environment because it is still dependent on primary and semi-processed exports;

- Most of its manufactured products are uncompetitive on international markets;

- Trading will be still more difficult with the development of somewhat inward-looking trading blocs;

- The continuing marginalisation of the South and Africa in particular will make it more difficult to find alternative markets;

- It would be almost impossible to attract new foreign investment before achieving a measure of political stability at home – not to mention economic growth; and

- South Africa might be offered significant quantities of aid for a short period during the establishment of a democratic state, but it is unlikely that concessionary finance will be extended for long.

Given these conditions, the workshop argued that a democratic South Africa should pursue economic opportunities wherever they arose, in the new markets of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, in the recovering markets of Latin America and in the growing Caribbean. But the most vital issue was relations with Asian countries, which are growing more rapidly than any other part of the world.

Sam Nolutshungu perhaps captured the essence of the task of South Africa's future foreign policy-makers when he asserted that 'for South Africa, as for every other country, foreign policy will be about negotiating a path between necessity and preference, between domestic needs and external constraints; and about bargaining with other actors, few of whom will submit passively to

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late or the dictates of the "market" or the "new world order", against the background of the overriding challenges of the domestic task of state consolidation and legitimisation'.

The Changing World and Professional Diplomacy deals with whether South Africa has the diplomatic capacity to make and carry out an effective foreign policy. The publication reports on a discussion on decoupling diplomacy from party-political interests and the necessity for a professional diplomatic corps which serves the entire South African nation. Its conclusion, in essence, says that it is important to recognise South Africa's diplomatic legacy: the 'upstairs' of state diplomacy, claiming skills

or competency, and the 'downstairs' of the diplomacy of the liberation movements, claiming legitimacy. Peter Vale, who summarised the proceedings, stated that if South Africa wanted a vibrant foreign policy, which reflected this society, it was necessary 'to discover the rich tapestry of our African-ness - both white and black African-ness'.

In discussions on how to transform the Department of Foreign Affairs, there were four suggestions - integration, amalgamation, absorption and restructuring. The world-wide trend, however, is towards restructuring departments of foreign affairs to take into account global change, and Peter Vale suggested that South Africa should consider it as well. The workshop

subsequently spent considerable time on the issue of transforming the foreign service, debating issues such as the skills diplomats need and entry requirements.

What the two publications make quite clear is that there is a pressing need for educating and training young people for the Department of Foreign Affairs. The question, however, is whether the South African academic community can rise to the challenge. Frequent suggestions were made - at these workshops, but also elsewhere - for the establishment of an academy or institution for diplomats. This has not happened as yet, and the fear is that we might miss the boat - can South Africa afford to?

Anthoni van Nieuwkerk is a researcher with the SA Institute of International Affairs.

AIDS: Slick photo-comic set to be hit with youth

ROXY: LIFE, LOVE AND SEX IN THE NINETIES produced by The Story Circle with the Medical Research Council's National AIDS Research Programme and the Progressive Primary Health Care Network.

THIS 'picture thriller', aimed at educating young people about how to avoid AIDS, elevates the photo-comic genre previously typified by titles like 'True Love' to serious (and seriously slick) heights. It is superbly photographed, gallops along in the monosyllables beloved of youth, and delivers its message with precision and panache.

Teenagers are the group most at risk from AIDS in South Africa: the fastest rate of infection occurs among people aged between 15 and 19 years old, and the most heavily infected population is aged between 20 and 24 years old. This is the group 'Roxy' aims to reach.

The comic is the stylish result of extended collaboration between artists, researchers

and the target group - the youth. It is a story woven together from high school students' facilitated explorations of their own lives, relationships, needs, concerns, fears and misconceptions about AIDS.

By SHAUNA WESTCOTT

Embedded in the story are little pockets of vital information - kissing is safe, anal sex is not, 'the best thing is always to have safer sex with a condom', and so on. The story was tested at various stages of its development and changes were made - mainly to dialogue - to make it more authentic.

Preliminary research has vindicated this approach, with young people of all sorts relating to and identifying with characters and situations in the comic. This was evident at a press conference about 'Roxy' attended by some of the students who



helped create it.

'Most of my friends are interested in this book,' said one student. 'There's pressure on us to be sexually active. We need to be informed before we make mistakes. Roxy's in our language, not boring grown-up stuff,' said another.

'My parents never spoke to me about this stuff - most of us had the same prob-

lem,' was another comment, and 'We never used to talk about this stuff but we found it's not bad to speak about it. We started being open and honest and compassionate with each other'.

Predictably, however, 'Roxy' has upset many parents and teachers, who find it too explicit or 'not educational'. An illustration at the back of the comic showing how a condom should be used is one of the things that has offended these adults, as have references to anal and oral sex, to drugs and to teenagers smoking.

The creators of 'Roxy' are thinking about producing media for parents that would address these concerns and help them on how to speak to their children about sex and AIDS. This would be an addition to the educational package about AIDS of which 'Roxy' is a part. The package includes a video, a classroom-based curriculum, and a teacher's training manual.

'Roxy' - the one component of this package that can go directly to teenagers without adult mediation - will be an insert in the June issue of 'Upbeat'. It will also be carried by provincial libraries and, the producers hope, by corner shops and youth organisation resource centres.

Shauna Westcott is a freelance journalist and editor based in Cape Town.

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Free, fair ... and fast

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Regarding the media, especially the electronic media which have been state-controlled for so long, do you have any 'recipes' for how to ensure fair play?

I think given the situation, and the complexity and difficulty in drawing up party financing laws, it's hard to envisage all those details. But there is a way in which the playing field can be levelled and some kind of a financial subsidy given (indirectly) to all parties.

If the election commission was given the power to decree that, for example, there be 10 hours of free time on every network - radio and television - which would be divided up by the parties according to a formula on which the commission would decide, that way everyone would have a balanced crack at the thing.

All the parties could get their time in whichever format they wanted - 15 one-minute spots or 30 30-second spots. You might even prohibit private advertising so that the richer parties don't get a supplementary edge - that will help level the playing field.

In Canada it's written into the election act, that parties get both paid time and free time on the air. The only thing then that you need is an arbitrator, and you can use someone from the electoral commission, who arbitrates between the party and the broadcasting station. In our law, the free time must be in primetime.

Normally you won't divide the time equally between all parties, the larger parties with more representation and more candidates in every region obviously should have more time. It'll be a challenge for the election commission.

Are there precedents for obliging the public service broadcaster to actually make voter education programmes?

You mean public service announcement type things? There's nothing in our Act, but it's a very good idea to look at. In Canada we have legislated partisan advertising, but no legislated public service advertising - adding that element would be very useful. Perhaps you could put together legislation to allocate a block of time for non-partisan, political, civic information.

In Canada we have one advantage over most countries, and it's just by the luck of the draw - we have a parliamentary channel. When there's an election, there is no parliament, so we have a television network

all to ourselves, 24 hours a day, for civic education. It doesn't necessarily have to be a high-powered affair. In our referendum, we had all sorts of small, weird and wonderful groups and some individuals made some very impressive stuff with a home video camera.

The issue here is how to convince our national broadcaster?

Well, once you put them under the control of the electoral commission, they're out of it. They are subject to following the rules - and in our law the penalties are incredible if you don't follow the rules. One of the most important elements in the election is public information.

What about the registration of voters?

This is a real challenge, especially because, as I understand it, you have no real handle on your total population. There is an estimate of 21 or 22 million voters, but I really haven't heard anybody say: a voter is or would be an 18-year-old, citizen and resident.

Some people were asking why 18 years old, and what was the norm around the world. It is 18. That's the age of legal responsibility under many laws and that's the law here. It's a rationale that stands up fairly well in court.

So you have 21 or 22 million voters, of which maybe four or five million have no voter identity or registration cards. Then the question arises, what will you use to identify a voter at the poll? The easy route is to use the existing cards and put

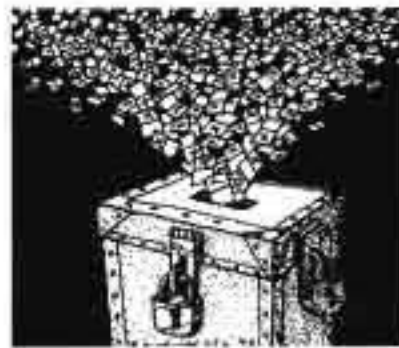
on a major effort to issue another 3 to 5 million, whatever is needed to cover the rest of the population.

The alternatives, in my view, are much more complex. If the time was there, you could abandon all the registration cards which have apartheid connotations and issue 21 or 25 million voter cards, but I don't think that's reality.

If it's impossible to issue 3 to 5 million voter cards, then the only other option is for the election commission to identify criteria which must be followed for a person to vote who doesn't have a registration card. It could be a driver's licence, a birth certificate vouched for by a chief or whatever.

Ideally if there can be one document used by everybody then they can use them for other purposes afterwards, that would be much more cost-effective.

After the various meetings you've had with different groups in South Africa, are you



optimistic about the prospects for peaceful, democratic elections?

Everything points to a high motivation to do this thing right, not to be another Angola. I've heard comparisons with Angola and the

trauma it's caused and I think that maybe Angola is perhaps one of the best things that ever happened to South Africa.

Nobody I've talked to yet wants that result from elections here. They want to set up a system that will guarantee that when the thing is over the country will continue in a peaceful vein.

And given what you've seen here compared to countries you've monitored such as El Salvador and Nicaragua?

In my estimation I think that the setting is much more positive than many countries at this stage of the game because you have parties talking together and negotiating around a table. Everyone is around the table but one, and the last one is softening. There are things being done outside of those negotiations, such as with your organisation, that are bringing diverse elements together to start getting things ready. I think it's very impressive.

There is so much momentum right now, the only frustration is that there is no focus for the release of that momentum because the fundamental decision hasn't been made. But I think the potential is all there.

Can it all be done within a year?

If the fundamental decisions on representation and voting (including proportional or national systems and defining regions if need be) can be done early enough, then the rest can fall into place with one caveat: that there is a logistical determination of what the registration process is going to be, what the registration document will be and how long that is going to take. If those two key things are determined early enough, it should be able to be completed within a year.

The rest of it - the training and system and so on - is relatively straightforward. It will be a challenge, but it can be done within a year. Less time is doubtful. Obviously the longer the better from the point of view of the electoral bureaucracy, but on the other hand, the longer you stretch it out the more chance there is that things will fall apart. So once that momentum starts you want to just keep rolling.

There appears to be an acceptance level for April '94 and even May/June '94, but there is the realisation that there is a lot of work to do.

Sue Valentine is Idasa's media director.

About real leaders and true understanding

IN RECENT weeks all South Africans have been subjected to a barrage of graphic images of murder, mayhem and mass action. Images of hard-faced, gun-toting AWB guardsmen are juxtaposed with those of grim-faced youth proclaiming war on the education system, while national servicemen stand sentinel on all the major roads leading into Cape Town.

Against this background, the big three in South Africa are seen to be providing little of the leadership and vision so desperately required. The one chastises and demands that Britain fulfil its historic duty to South Africa, the other genially opens an international conference and talks of the millions of tourists about to swamp the country. Meanwhile the third struts around Europe declaring himself to be 'the most important and widely respected political figure in South Africa'.

The ordinary South African (whatever he or she may be) can be forgiven for being confused, uncertain and angry about the future of this country as the talking heads at the World Trade Centre appear on television screens, proclaiming another 'imminent breakthrough' in negotiations.

It seems most South Africans weren't advised or warned of the violence and trauma that transition would entail, or the tremendous opportunities it could present.

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to spend some time with a deputy editor of a major Cape daily newspaper. I asked him whether it was possible for his newspaper to present transition in a positive light. I suggested a page on a daily, or perhaps just a weekly basis, of success stories of transition: integration in schools; integration of South Africans in urban areas; integration in the workplace; the positive response to various NGOs working in the townships. His reply was that although that sounded like a positive idea, it unfortunately didn't sell newspapers.

I came away from that conversation deeply troubled and recalled a trip to our neighbouring countries I had undertaken with a group of South Africans in August 1990. Over a 10-day period we visited Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia, meeting with government leaders, business personalities, trade unionists and members of political organisations. Each of those constituencies had one thing to say repeatedly about our country: 'Your successful transition to a democratic society means that our transitions will be successful.' The images of the violence emanating from South Africa had affected them deeply and wherever we went we were encouraged to do whatever we could to stop the violence.

At this stage, one has to ask the question whether South Africa does in fact have the quality of leadership with vision and commitment to create and inspire a new democratic society?

The assassination of Chris Hani and its violent aftermath has underpinned the deep resentments and racial polarisation brought about by decades of apartheid ideology. It is very

apparent that this same ideology has spawned a generation of bantustan leaders, civil servants, military officers and business opportunists whose vested interests are under severe threat from a new South Africa.

Never before in our history have we needed leadership with commitment to all South Africans as we do now - but where will we find this leadership and vision that we so desperately require? We can find it in our schools, where thousands of teachers have, through the decades, worked tirelessly to create a vision of a better society among their students. We can find this leadership in the non-governmental sector where countless numbers of people decades ago recognised the severe damage caused by apartheid and provided resources and a recourse to justice denied to most people in our country. We can find this leadership in the churches where there are those who have, for many years, preached a spirit of tolerance, understanding and harmony to all South Africans.

However, given the tradition of authoritarianism and personality cults that so dominates here, these voices are seldom heard. We have reached the critical phase in our transition, where a solution will be imposed upon South Africans. Before that happens it is absolutely necessary for those institutions and organisations within civil society to stand up and be counted.

At this critical time, we must hear the voices of those people who understand the deep needs, concerns and fears of most South Africans. We need not hear the guttural vehemence of a Eugene Terre'Blanche or the sloganeering of a so-called youth leader. The 'we demand' syndrome must be transformed into a 'we offer' mode of thinking.

Political solutions that are without a human face must be rejected. Constitutional restructuring and a vote for all must be seen for what they are - merely that. Without a sense of humanity and a culture and spirit of tolerance, empathy and understanding, those solutions will not provide peace, security and prosperity.

Perhaps the time has come for a conference of civil society to negotiate in tandem with the multi-party negotiating forum to provide public comment on the solutions being thrashed out in the debate and discussion at the World Trade Centre. Perhaps then the majority of voices will have some possibility of representation at that venue.

We must now produce creative solutions to the endemic state of near-anarchy and violence. We also need to bury our arrogance and look to other societies which have gone through similar processes, and the dreams and aspirations that emerged from those struggles.

Perhaps our country needs to be permeated with Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech, or the lone voice of an Alan Paton in the 1950s, or the voice of an Albert Luthuli. We cannot just stand around any more and watch the destruction.

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